theFormed.life

Cross before Crown

On the way with the Son of God

DISCIPLINE: PRAYER

GOSPEL OF MARK COMPANION JOURNAL PT. 1

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

Welcome back to the Gospel of Mark! In our sermon series and study on the first eight chapters of the Gospel of Mark, we were prompted by the question, “Who Do You Say That I Am?”, which Jesus posed to his disciples. This study of the second half of Mark’s Gospel begins and ends with a confirmation of the answer to this question.

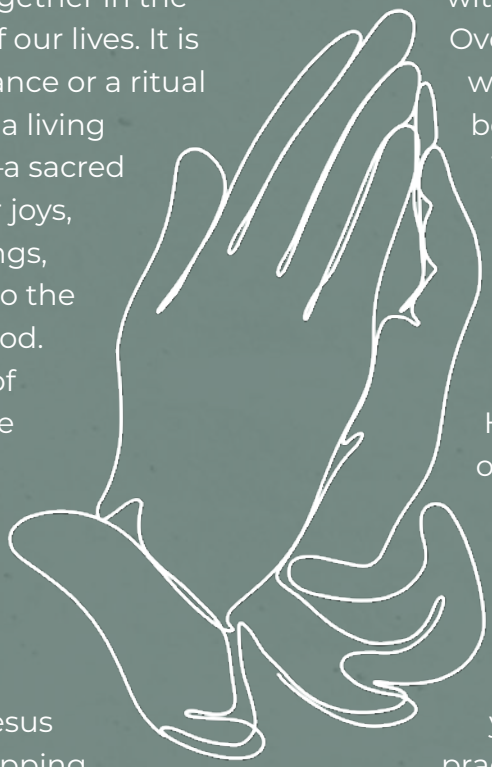
In Jesus' transfiguration (Mark 9:7) we hear the voice of God from the cloud pronouncing, “This is my beloved son; listen to him!” In the closing chapters as Jesus breathed his last on the cross (Mark 15:39), the centurion responds, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" Jesus’ identity is not a secret to be discovered in the second half of Mark, so a new question becomes the driving force behind this gospel. What does it actually mean to follow the Son of God?

Mark invites us to go “on the way” with Rabbi Jesus as he journeys toward Jerusalem and onto the cross. Our apprenticeship to the Son of God means following him to the "Cross Before Crown."

The Discipline of Prayer

Prayer is the oldest and most relational discipline and, yet, it feels like the most abstract. Prayer is the ancient practice by which heaven and earth are stitched together in the quiet spaces of our lives. It is not a performance or a ritual to perfect, but a living conversation—a sacred weaving of our joys, sorrows, longings, and praises into the very heart of God.

In the Gospel of Mark, when the pace of Jesus' life races and the demands of ministry never seem to slow, we see Jesus continually stepping away to pray—before miracles, after ministry, in moments of anguish, and even on the threshold of the cross. Prayer was his lifeline, and it is ours, too.



Prayer can become a practice that weaves the knotted threads of our lives into a beautiful tapestry that reflects the reality of God's presence with us and care for us.

Over the next several weeks, walk the slow and beautiful path of prayer. There are different styles or practices that can help to develop greater awareness and more sustained interaction with our Heavenly Father. Some of these are: invocation/invitation, lament, lectio divina, intercession, visio divina, and the use of prayers others have written. Trust that as you take up these small practices, the Holy Spirit will guide your mind and heart, forming a beautiful tapestry of communion with the living God. May your life, thread by thread, become a prayer itself.

Lord Jesus,

I open the doors of my heart and life to you
Fill me with your presence
Flood me with your love
Invade my life with your care
Let your kingdom come
Let your will be done
In every part of my life
As it is in Heaven
Until your will is what I live
And your face is all I see

Amen.

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 - Pray in Everyday Spaces

Tuesday - Pray for Others

Wednesday - Pray Using Scripture

Thursday - Pray Through Struggles

Friday - Pray Using Art

Saturday - Pray With Inspiration

Sunday - Pray in Community

MONDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN EVERYDAY SPACES

READ: Mark 9:2–13

What did the passage reveal to you about the person and character of Jesus?
What is implied by God's command that we listen to Jesus?

Read or listen to the blog on *theFormed.life* or use this QR code.

theFormed.life

FOCUS:

Prayer of Invitation | As you prepare for your day, invite Jesus to be a collaborator in every activity.
Whether large or small, in work or relaxation, remind yourself that God is present.

PRAY:

Invite Jesus into your vocation or areas of responsibility.

TUESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY FOR OTHERS

READ: Luke 9:28–36

What does Luke's account of the transfiguration add to your understanding of what happened? How would you describe it to a friend? Peter was content with camping on the mountaintop, yet Christ moves on to the valley of the people. What might this communicate about Jesus' focus?

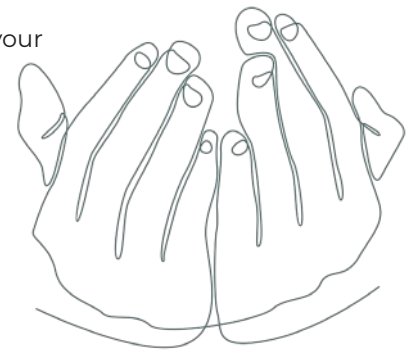
FOCUS:

Prayer of Intercession | Spend time in prayer for other people and for specific places.

Observe your route to work or where you typically run errands. Identify places/spaces of brokenness. What people or details seem to draw your attention? Let God guide your gaze.

PRAY:

Ask that God's beauty and restoration would break into your life, your city, or anywhere you sense brokenness. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you to become specific in your prayers as you seek to notice the spaces and people around you.



WEDNESDAY ____/____/____

PRAY USING SCRIPTURE

READ: Mark 14:32–42

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he told his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. He said to them, "I am deeply grieved to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake." He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will." Then he came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you stay awake one hour? Stay awake and pray so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Once again he went away and prayed, saying the same thing. And again he came and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him. Then he came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The time has come. See, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up; let's go. See, my betrayer is near."

FOCUS:

Pray Using Lectio Divina | Using this ancient practice, read Scripture slowly, inviting the Holy Spirit to be your guide as you read.

1. Read the passage slowly, twice, and invite God to meet you through the story.
2. Enter the scene with your imagination. What does it sound, feel, taste like? Notice Jesus, the people, the setting, and where you find yourself.
3. Let your heart respond to Jesus, sharing whatever rises within you.
4. Write down words or phrases within the passage that stick out to you.

PRAY:

Use what God has brought to your attention through the Scripture as your prayer.

THURSDAY ___/___/___

PRAY THROUGH STRUGGLES

READ: Matthew 17:1–13

FOCUS: What struggles have you encountered this week? What emotions surface when you think about it? Sadness, anger, fear, tenderness, remorse, or frustration?

PRAY:
Begin by sharing with God your struggles, including physical and emotional pains, and then allow him to meet you right where you are today. End by proclaiming the truth about who God is and consider his love for you. Call to mind one thing you're grateful for and end your prayer with thanks and praise. This could be for family, a special friend, health, vocation, or even just the ability to draw breath into your body.

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY USING ART

READ: Mark 9:2–13

FOCUS:

Pray Using Visio Divina | Visio divina is the practice of praying with your eyes open, placing your attention on a piece of art. The image for each week depicts key moments of the journey Christ took to the cross. Consider Christ's sacrifice and what that means in your life.

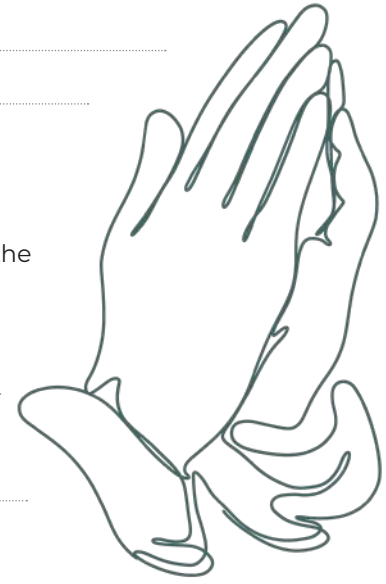
Use this QR code or visit *theFormed.life* to view this week's art.

This week's art is *The Transfiguration* by Raphael.

Consider visiting the Four Chapter Gallery at the Downtown Campus. Pray for the artists and our downtown community.

PRAY:

Take a deep breath and close your eyes, thanking God for the gift of art and artists.



SATURDAY ____/____/____

PRAY WITH INSPIRATION

READ: Exodus 33:18–23, 34:5–7

Where have you seen mountain moments in Mark? What are the parallels? What does God reveal about himself?

FOCUS:

Pause and reflect on the prayers of Christ followers who have gone before us—those whose lives were shaped by deep communion with God. Be inspired by their words and let their longing, trust, and devotion stir your own heart to pray with renewed faith and desire.

PRAY:

Take, Lord,

receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, my whole will, all that I have and all that I possess. You gave it all to me, Lord; I give it all back to you. Do with it as you will, according to your good pleasure. Give me your love and your grace; for with this I have all that I need.

– Ignatius of Loyola

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN COMMUNITY

READ: Mark 9:2–13

FOCUS:
Come early or stay after to connect with your church family, and get your heart in a posture to receive from God and his people.

PRAY: Pray for your fellow congregation members.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- **Seeing Jesus More Clearly** – The disciples witnessed Jesus' glory in a moment of discouragement (Mark 8:31–33). How has God revealed his presence to you in difficult seasons? How can seeing Jesus more clearly sustain you when life is hard?

- **Cross Before Crown** – Peter wanted to build tents, thinking glory had arrived (Mark 9:5–6), but Jesus knew suffering had to come first. Share a time when you wanted to fast-track God's plan for your life. How does embracing the reality of present struggles while holding onto the promise of future glory shape your faith?

- **Listening to Jesus** – The Father's voice instructs the disciples, "Listen to him!" (Mark 9:7). In the noise of life, how do you actively listen to Jesus? What helps you discern his guidance when facing uncertainty or hardship?

- **Hope in the Journey** – The transfiguration points to both suffering and ultimate victory. How does knowing that suffering can be transformed into glory give you hope today? What practices help you stay anchored in God's promises when life feels overwhelming?

Jesus Transfigures

SERMON NOTES:

MONDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN EVERYDAY SPACES

READ: Mark 9:14–29

How did Jesus explain what it means to be great? What does this reveal about his desire for his disciples?

FOCUS:

Prayer of Invitation | As you prepare for your day, invite Jesus to be a collaborator in every activity.

Observe your daily environment, at home or wherever you spend a lot of time, and notice the physical space. What stands out to you?

PRAY:

Pray for the physical space(s) around you, whether it's an office, a school, your car, or your home.

TUESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY FOR OTHERS

READ: Luke 22:24–30

What does Luke's account of the dispute add to the understanding of Mark's account? What does this passage reveal about Jesus' perspective?

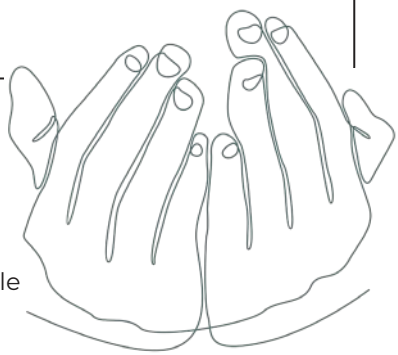
FOCUS:

Prayer of Intercession | Spend time in prayer for other people and for specific places.

Observe your home. Take a few moments to be still and notice what catches your eye. What people or details seem to draw your attention? Let God guide your gaze and respond by writing or sketching what you see and sense.

PRAY:

Ask that God's beauty and restoration would break into your life, your city, or anywhere you sense brokenness. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you to become specific in your prayers as you seek to notice the spaces and people around you.



WEDNESDAY ____/____/____

PRAY USING SCRIPTURE

READ: Mark 14:32–42

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he told his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. He said to them, "I am deeply grieved to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake." He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will." Then he came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you stay awake one hour? Stay awake and pray so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Once again he went away and prayed, saying the same thing. And again he came and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him. Then he came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The time has come. See, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up; let's go. See, my betrayer is near."

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3. Let your heart respond to Jesus, sharing whatever rises within you.
4. Write down words or phrases within the passage that stick out to you.

PRAY:

Use what God has brought to your attention through the Scripture as your prayer.

THURSDAY ____/____/____

PRAY THROUGH STRUGGLES

READ: Matthew 19:13–15

FOCUS: What struggles have you encountered this week? What emotions surface when you think about it? Sadness, anger, fear, tenderness, remorse, or frustration?

PRAY:
Invite God to meet you where you are today. Confess your sins and also the areas where you struggle. Imagine letting go of those struggles and handing them over to God. End with thanksgiving for your blessings.

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY USING ART

READ: Mark 14:32–42

FOCUS:

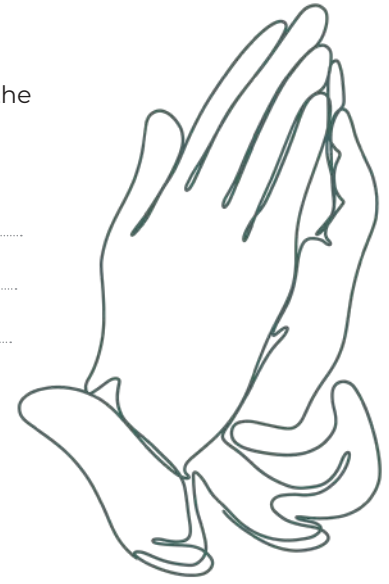
Pray Using Visio Divina | Visio divina is the practice of praying with your eyes open, placing your attention on a piece of art. Consider Christ's sacrifice and what that means in your life.

Use this QR code or visit *theFormed.life* to view this week's art.

This week's art is *Christ in Gethsemane* by Heinrich Hofmann.

PRAY:

Take a deep breath and close your eyes, thanking God for the gift of art and artists.



SATURDAY ____/____/____

PRAY WITH INSPIRATION

READ: Proverbs 13:10

How did Jesus confront the disciples' thinking?

FOCUS:

Christians throughout history experienced deep communion with God and their words can be used to enrich our prayer lives. What comes to your mind and stirs within you as you think about their inspired prayers?

PRAY:

O my God!

I offer You all my actions this day for the intentions and for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I desire to sanctify every beat of my heart, my every thought, my simplest works, by uniting them to His infinite merits; and I wish to make reparation for my sins by casting them into the furnace of His merciful love. O my God! I ask You for myself and for those whom I hold dear, the grace to fulfill perfectly Your holy will, to accept for love of You the joys and sorrows of this passing life, so that we may one day be united together in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

– Therese of Lisieux

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN COMMUNITY

READ: Mark 9:14–29

FOCUS:
As you experience worship today, consider how God might be calling you to grow closer to your church family. This could be through a 1:1 relationship, a volunteer opportunity, or signing up for an event or class.

PRAY: Pray for your campus staff.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- **Dependence on God –** The disciples couldn't drive out the demon, not because they lacked authority, but because they lacked dependence on God through prayer (Mark 9:28–29). When have you tried to handle something on your own, only to realize you needed God's help? How does prayer cultivate true humility in your life?

- **Faith and Surrender –** The boy's father cries out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). How does this tension between belief and doubt resonate with your own faith journey? What practices help you surrender your uncertainties to God?

- **True Greatness –** The disciples were fixated on status rather than service (Mark 9:34–35). Jesus radically redefines greatness as humility and servanthood. In what areas of life do you struggle with pride or comparison? How can you intentionally adopt a posture of humility toward others?

- **Serving the Last and Least –** Jesus calls his followers to receive and serve the "least" (Mark 9:37). Who in your community might be overlooked or undervalued? How can humility move you toward caring for those who might otherwise be ignored?

SERMON NOTES:

MONDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN EVERYDAY SPACES

Watch the video on prayer on *theFormed.life* or use this QR code.

READ: Mark 10:1–12

How did Jesus explain Moses' instructions? What was God's original plan for marriage before sin entered the picture?

FOCUS :

Prayer of Invitation | As you prepare for your day, invite Jesus to be a collaborator in every activity.

Observe co-workers, family members, or the people with whom you regularly collaborate. What brings them joy and what seems to disrupt or upset them? What do they long for?

PRAY:

Pray for your co-workers or the people with whom you share life (school, church, neighborhood, etc.).

TUESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY FOR OTHERS

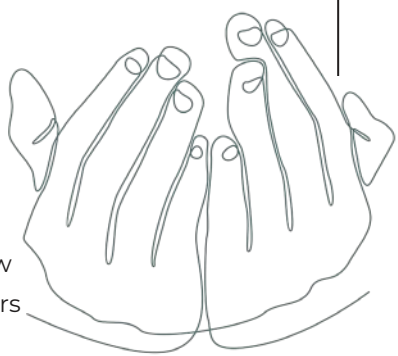
READ: Luke 16:14–18

What does Luke's account of Jesus' response to the Pharisees add to the understanding of Mark's account? Luke mentions their deeper motivations (lovers of money). How does this insight help us understand Christ's response?

FOCUS:

Prayer of Intercession | Spend time in prayer for other people and for specific places.

Sit on your front porch, look out your window, or walk to a neighborhood park. Take a few moments to be still and notice what catches your eye. What places, people, or details seem to draw your attention? Let God guide your gaze and respond by writing or sketching what you see and sense.



PRAY:

Ask that God's beauty and restoration would break into your life, your city, or anywhere you sense brokenness. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you to become specific in your prayers as you seek to notice the spaces and people around you.

WEDNESDAY ____/____/____

PRAY USING SCRIPTURE

READ: Mark 14:32–42

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he told his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. He said to them, "I am deeply grieved to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake." He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will." Then he came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you stay awake one hour? Stay awake and pray so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Once again he went away and prayed, saying the same thing. And again he came and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him. Then he came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The time has come. See, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up; let's go. See, my betrayer is near."

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3. Let your heart respond to Jesus, sharing whatever rises within you.
4. Write down words or phrases within the passage that stick out to you.

PRAY:

Use what God has brought to your attention through the Scripture as your prayer.

THURSDAY ____/____/____

PRAY THROUGH STRUGGLES

READ: Matthew 5:31–32

FOCUS: What struggles have you encountered this week? What emotions surface when you think about it? Sadness, anger, fear, tenderness, remorse, or frustration?

PRAY:
Begin by sharing with God your struggles, including physical and emotional pains, and then allow him to meet you right where you are today. End by proclaiming the truth about who God is and consider his love for you. Call to mind one thing you're grateful for and end your prayer with thanks and praise. This could be for family, a special friend, health, vocation, or even just the ability to draw breath into your body.

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY USING ART

READ: Mark 14:53–64

FOCUS:

Pray Using Visio Divina | Visio divina is the practice of praying with your eyes open, placing your attention on a piece of art. Consider Christ's sacrifice and what that means in your life.

Use this QR code or visit *theFormed.life* to view this week's art.

This week's art is *Christ Before Caiaphas* by Zacharias Dolendo.

Identify something arts-related in the community to attend in the next month. Invite a friend and/or "pencil it in" on your calendar. Pray for the artists and/or local businesses you encounter.

PRAY:

Take a deep breath and close your eyes, thanking God for the gift of art and artists.

SATURDAY ____/____/____

PRAY WITH INSPIRATION

READ: Genesis 2:24

In what ways might a marriage reflect the nature of God himself? Why do you think Jesus brought Moses into this discussion? How did Jesus explain the relationship between the law and the will of God?

FOCUS:

Pause and reflect on the prayers of Christ followers who have gone before us—those whose lives were shaped by deep communion with God. Be inspired by their words and let their longing, trust, and devotion stir your own heart to pray with renewed faith and desire.

PRAY:

Lord,

make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, harmony; where there is error, truth; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

- Francis of Assisi

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN COMMUNITY

READ: Mark 10:1–12

FOCUS:
Come early or stay after to connect with your church family, and get your heart in a posture to receive from God and his people.

PRAY: Pray for your campus volunteers.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- **God's Design for Marriage and Singleness –** Jesus points back to creation to affirm God's original intent for marriage (Mark 10:6–9), and also affirms the goodness of singleness (Matthew 19:10–12). How does viewing marriage and singleness through God's design rather than cultural norms shift our perspective? What are some ways both call us to faithfulness?

- **Following Jesus in Difficult Teachings –** Many of Jesus' teachings on humility, service, and power are well-liked, but his sex ethic can feel difficult and countercultural (Mark 10:10–12). Why do you think that is? How do we remain faithful to Jesus even when his teachings challenge our assumptions?

- **The Meaning of Marriage –** In a world where relationships are often centered on personal happiness, Jesus presents marriage as a sacred covenant reflecting God's love and faithfulness. How does seeing marriage this way impact the way we view commitment and sacrificial love (both in marriage and in other relationships)?

- **Grace and Redemption in Brokenness –** Divorce is a painful reality for many. How can we hold both Jesus' high view of marriage and the deep compassion he shows to those who struggle? What does the gospel say to those who have experienced brokenness in relationships?

Jesus Reaffirms

SERMON NOTES:

MONDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN EVERYDAY SPACES

READ: Mark 10:17–22

What can you learn about Jesus from his actions in this story?

FOCUS:

Prayer of Invitation | As you prepare for your day, invite Jesus to be a collaborator in every activity.

Observe your boss or someone in your life with whom you share responsibility. What is his/her demeanor on a daily basis? What brings him joy? What does she long for?

PRAY:

Pray for someone in your life who manages or has responsibility for people.

TUESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY FOR OTHERS

READ: Luke 18:18–30

What does Luke's account of the rich young ruler affirm of Mark's account? In what ways does the rich young ruler's hesitation to follow Christ mirror your own? What may Christ be inviting you to let go of?

FOCUS:

Prayer of Intercession | Spend time in prayer for other people and for specific places.

Consider your school, the neighborhood school, and/or the school(s) your loved ones attend. What might be needed in terms of prayer or resources?

PRAY:

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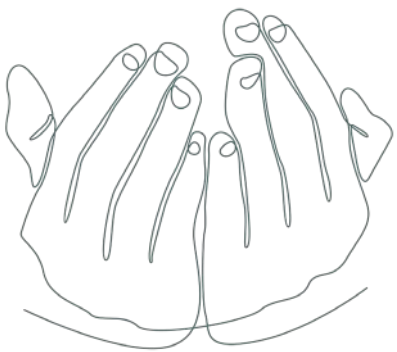

WEDNESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY USING SCRIPTURE

READ: Mark 14:32–42

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2. Enter the scene with your imagination. What does it sound, feel, taste like? Notice Jesus, the people, the setting, and where you find yourself.
3. Let your heart respond to Jesus, sharing whatever rises within you.
4. Write down words or phrases within the passage that stick out to you.

PRAY:

Use what God has brought to your attention through the Scripture as your prayer.

THURSDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY THROUGH STRUGGLES

READ: Matthew 19:16–22

FOCUS: What struggles have you encountered this week? What emotions surface when you think about it? Sadness, anger, fear, tenderness, remorse, or frustration?

PRAY:
Invite God to meet you where you are today. Confess your sins and also the areas where you struggle. Imagine letting go of those struggles and handing them over to God. End with thanksgiving for your blessings.

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY USING ART

READ: Mark 15:1–15

FOCUS:

Pray Using Visio Divina | Visio divina is the practice of praying with your eyes open, placing your attention on a piece of art. Consider Christ's sacrifice and what that means in your life.

Use this QR code or visit *theFormed.life* to view this week's art.

This week's art is *Jesus Christ Condemned to Death (part of "Stations of the Cross")* by Edward Arthur Fellowes Prynne.

PRAY:

Take a deep breath and close your eyes, thanking God for the gift of art and artists.

SATURDAY ____/____/____

PRAY WITH INSPIRATION

READ: Deuteronomy 15:10

What was the attitude of the wealthy man as he came to Jesus? What was the attitude of the wealthy man as he left Jesus? What attitude does Jesus have toward the wealthy man?

FOCUS:

Christians throughout history experienced deep communion with God, and their words can be used to enrich our prayer lives. What comes to your mind and stirs within you as you think about their inspired prayers?

PRAY:

O gracious and holy Father,

give us wisdom to perceive you, diligence to seek you, patience to wait for you, eyes to behold you, a heart to meditate upon you, and a life to proclaim you; through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.

– Benedict of Nursia

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN COMMUNITY

READ: Mark 10:17–22

FOCUS:
As you experience worship today, consider how God might be calling you to grow closer to your church family. This could be through a 1:1 relationship, a volunteer opportunity, or signing up for an event or class.

PRAY: Pray for new people attending your campus for the first time.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- **Jesus' Love and Challenge –** How does knowing Jesus gave this hard command to the rich young ruler out of truly seeing and loving (Mark 10:21) change how you feel about it? Imagine Jesus meeting you in the same way (really, take a moment and imagine that). How does that change how you feel about hard challenges he gives you?
- **What Owns Your Heart? –** The rich young ruler genuinely wanted to follow Jesus, but his wealth held him back (Mark 10:21–22). How do you know what the things are in your life—money, status, comfort, or control—that might compete with full surrender to Jesus? How can you practically reorient your heart toward God?
- **Dependence vs. Security –** Jesus teaches that entering the kingdom means becoming like a child—completely dependent on God (Mark 10:15). How does dependence on God challenge the way our culture views security and success (e.g. finances, career, achievements)? Where do you struggle with trusting God over trusting your resources?
- **Losing to Gain –** Jesus says it's hard for the wealthy to enter the kingdom (Mark 10:23–25), not because wealth itself is wrong, but because dependence on it can hinder faith. What does it mean in practical terms to "lose" in order to "gain" in God's kingdom (Mark 10:29–31)? How might generosity shift our mindset from scarcity to abundance?

Jesus Rewards

SERMON NOTES:

MONDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN EVERYDAY SPACES

READ: Mark 10:46–52

What other story in Mark does this passage remind you of? What is Jesus' consistent message?

Read or listen to the blog on *theFormed.life* or use this QR code

FOCUS:

Prayer of Invitation | As you prepare for your day, invite Jesus to be a collaborator in every activity.

Observe your work environment or a place where you regularly do business. Do you know its stated mission and values? Consider if those align with your beliefs and what's important to you.

PRAY:

Pray for your workplace or an organization where you do a lot of business or spend a significant amount of time (e.g. a favorite restaurant or coffee shop, a nonprofit).

TUESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY FOR OTHERS

READ: Luke 22:24–30

What is Christ's view of power and authority?

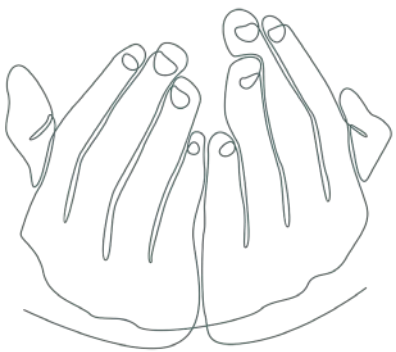
FOCUS:

Prayer of Intercession | Spend time in prayer for other people and for specific places.

Observe a loved one as they participate in an extracurricular activity. Take a few moments to be still and notice what catches your eye. Let God guide your gaze and pray about what you notice.

PRAY:

Ask that God's beauty and restoration would break into your life, your city, or anywhere you sense brokenness. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you to become specific in your prayers as you seek to notice the spaces and people around you.



WEDNESDAY ____/____/____

PRAY USING SCRIPTURE

READ: Mark 14:32–42

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he told his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. He said to them, "I am deeply grieved to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake." He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will." Then he came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you stay awake one hour? Stay awake and pray so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Once again he went away and prayed, saying the same thing. And again he came and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him. Then he came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The time has come. See, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up; let's go. See, my betrayer is near."

Pray Using Lectio Divina | Using this ancient practice, read Scripture slowly, inviting the Holy Spirit to be your guide as you read.

1. Read the passage slowly, twice, and invite God to meet you through the story.
2. Enter the scene with your imagination. What does it sound, feel, taste like? Notice Jesus, the people, the setting, and where you find yourself.
3. Let your heart respond to Jesus, sharing whatever rises within you.
4. Write down words or phrases within the passage that stick out to you.

PRAY:

Use what God has brought to your attention through the Scripture as your prayer.

THURSDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY THROUGH STRUGGLES

READ: Matthew 20:20–28

FOCUS: What struggles have you encountered this week? What emotions surface when you think about it? Sadness, anger, fear, tenderness, remorse, or frustration?

PRAY:
Begin by sharing with God your struggles, including physical and emotional pains, and then allow him to meet you right where you are today. End by proclaiming the truth about who God is and consider his love for you. Call to mind one thing you're grateful for and end your prayer with thanks and praise. This could be for family, a special friend, health, vocation, or even just the ability to draw breath into your body.

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY USING ART

READ: Mark 15:16–20

FOCUS:

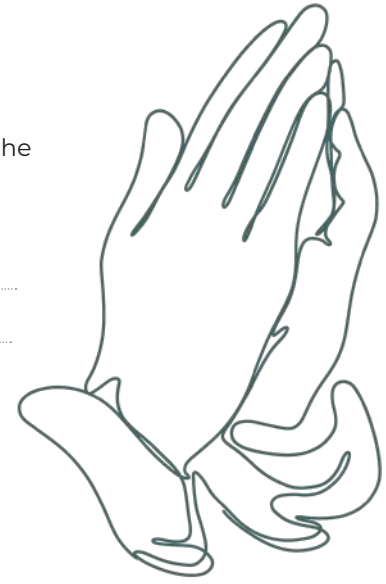
Pray Using Visio Divina | Visio divina is the practice of praying with your eyes open, placing your attention on a piece of art. Consider Christ's sacrifice and what that means in your life.

Use this QR code or visit *theFormed.life* to view this week's art.

This week's art is *The Mocking of Christ* by Jacopo Bassano.

PRAY:

Take a deep breath and close your eyes, thanking God for the gift of art and artists.



SATURDAY ____/____/____

PRAY WITH INSPIRATION

READ: Isaiah 51:17

What are the contents of the cup? Where do we find mention of this cup in Mark?

FOCUS:

Pause and reflect on the prayers of Christ followers who have gone before us—those whose lives were shaped by deep communion with God. Be inspired by their words and let their longing, trust, and devotion stir your own heart to pray with renewed faith and desire.

PRAY:

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,

That my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, That my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, That I love but what is holy.

– Augustine of Hippo

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN COMMUNITY

READ: Mark 10:46–52

FOCUS:
Come early or stay after to connect with your church family, and get your heart in a posture to receive from God and his people.

PRAY: Pray for the pastor giving today's message; for energy and confidence to bring the word of God to the people.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

What Are You Asking for? – Jesus asks both James and John (Mark 10:36) and Bartimaeus (Mark 10:51), "What do you want me to do for you?" If Jesus asked you the same question, how would you answer? In Mark, their answers reveal their hearts—wanting power vs. sight. What does your answer reveal about your spiritual priorities?

Faith That Sees – Bartimaeus, though physically blind, had spiritual sight—he recognized Jesus as the "Son of David" (Mark 10:47). In contrast, the disciples struggled to see Jesus' true mission. Where do you need Jesus to open your spiritual eyes?

The Mercy of Jesus – Despite the crowd's attempts to silence Bartimaeus, Jesus stops and calls him forward (Mark 10:49). How does this story illustrate Jesus' mercy and concern for outsiders? How can we reflect that same mercy to those who are marginalized or overlooked, instead of viewing them as a distraction or annoyance?

Following Jesus After Healing – Bartimaeus didn't just receive his sight; he immediately followed Jesus on the way (Mark 10:52). How should encountering Jesus lead to deeper discipleship? What's one way you can respond to his work in your life with greater faith and obedience?

SERMON NOTES:

MONDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN EVERYDAY SPACES

READ: Mark 11:1–33

What does this passage reveal about God's desire for his house?

FOCUS:

Prayer of Invitation | As you prepare for your day, invite Jesus to be a collaborator in every activity.

In what ways are the places you spend a lot of time contributing to the flourishing of the community/world around you?

PRAY:

Ask God to show you ways to contribute to the human flourishing of the community/world around you.

TUESDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY FOR OTHERS

READ: Luke 19:45–48

What is Christ's view of his father's house? What implication does that have for our church and our own homes?

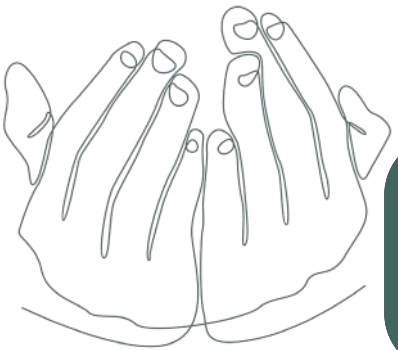
FOCUS:

Prayer of Intercession | Spend time in prayer for other people and for specific places.

Think about something you enjoy doing. Take a few moments to be still as thoughts come to mind. What is the environment involved in that activity?

PRAY:

Ask that God's beauty and restoration would break into your life, your city, or anywhere you sense brokenness. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you to become specific in your prayers as you seek to notice the spaces and people around you.



WEDNESDAY ____/____/____

PRAY USING SCRIPTURE

READ: Mark 14:32–42

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he told his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. He said to them, "I am deeply grieved to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake." He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will." Then he came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you stay awake one hour? Stay awake and pray so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Once again he went away and prayed, saying the same thing. And again he came and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him. Then he came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The time has come. See, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up; let's go. See, my betrayer is near."

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3. Let your heart respond to Jesus, sharing whatever rises within you.
4. Write down words or phrases within the passage that stick out to you.

PRAY:

Use what God has brought to your attention through the Scripture as your prayer.

THURSDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY THROUGH STRUGGLES

READ: Matthew 21:12–13

FOCUS: What struggles have you encountered this week? What emotions surface when you think about it? Sadness, anger, fear, tenderness, remorse, or frustration?

PRAY:
Invite God to meet you where you are today. Confess your sins and also the areas where you struggle. Imagine letting go of those struggles and handing them over to God. End with thanksgiving for your blessings.

FRIDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY USING ART

READ: Mark 15:20

FOCUS:

Pray Using Visio Divina | Visio divina is the practice of praying with your eyes open, placing your attention on a piece of art. Consider Christ's sacrifice and what that means in your life.

Use this QR code or visit *theFormed.life* to view this week's art.

This week's art is *Stations of the Cross 5* at Church of Saint John the Baptist at the Béguinage in Brussels. Simon of Cyrene carries the cross.

PRAY:

Take a deep breath and close your eyes, thanking God for the gift of art and artists.

SATURDAY ____/____/____

PRAY WITH INSPIRATION

READ: Isaiah 56:4–8

What were God's intentions for his house? What does this show us about the value God places on prayer? What does this show us about the value God places on ethnic unity? How does Jesus echo this in Mark?

FOCUS:

Christians throughout history experienced deep communion with God and their words can be used to enrich our prayer lives. What comes to your mind and stirs within you as you think about their inspired prayers?

PRAY:

Lord,

grant that I may always allow myself to be guided by You, always follow Your plans, and perfectly accomplish Your Holy Will. Grant that in all things, great and small, today and all the days of my life, I may do whatever You require of me. Help me respond to the slightest prompting of Your Grace, so that I may be Your trustworthy instrument for Your honour. May Your Will be done in time and in eternity by me, in me, and through me. Amen.

– Theresa of Avila

SUNDAY ____/ ____ / ____

PRAY IN COMMUNITY

READ: Mark 11:1–33

FOCUS:
As you experience worship today, consider how God might be calling you to grow closer to your church family. This could be through a 1:1 relationship, a volunteer opportunity, or signing up for an event or class.

PRAY: Pray for the Lord to speak to you through the worship music and the message.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- **Expectations vs. Reality –** The people expected a Messiah who would take political power, but Jesus entered humbly and then confronted the dysfunction of the temple (Mark 11:1–17). Share times when you have expected Jesus to fit your own desires rather than who he truly is. How do you know today if you're struggling to embrace the real Jesus?

- **Fruit vs. Facade –** Jesus rebukes the fig tree as a symbolic critique of the temple (Mark 11:12–14, 20–21). The temple looked impressive but wasn't fulfilling its purpose. What does this teach us about genuine faith vs. empty religion? How can we ensure our faith produces real fruit instead of just appearances?

- **Jesus and Righteous Anger –** Jesus' cleansing of the temple and his frustration with the fig tree show his intensity (Mark 11:15–19). What makes Jesus angry and how does that challenge our view of "meek and mild Jesus"? On the other hand, should we use this passage as a justification for our angry outbursts? What does true righteous anger look like for Christians?

Jesus Arrives

SERMON NOTES:

Resources

- ***How to Pray : A Simple Guide for Normal People*** by Pete Greig
- ***How to Hear God : A Simple Guide for Normal People*** by Pete Greig
- ***God on Mute*** by Pete Greig
- ***Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*** by Tyler Staton
- ***Why Your Work Matters*** by Tom Nelson
- ***Mark for You*** by Jason Meyer
- ***A Theology of Mark's Gospel: Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God*** by David E. Garland

Sweet Hour of Prayer

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer!
That calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my Father's throne,
Make all my wants and wishes known.
In seasons of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter's snare,
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer!
Thy wings shall my petition bear
To Him whose truth and faithfulness
Engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since He bids me seek His face,
Believe His Word and trust His grace,
I'll cast on Him my every care,
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

-William W. Walford

Prayer can become a practice that
weaves the knotted threads of our
lives into a beautiful tapestry that
reaflects the reality of God's presence
with us and care for us.

ChristCommunity
an Evangelical Free Church

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DOWNTOWN
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LEAWOOD
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OLATHE
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SHAWNEE
13330 W 62nd Terrace, Shawnee, KS

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