

Summer 2020 Devotional Guide

Through the Unknown

Day 1: Steadfast God

“I will lead the blind by a road they do not know, by paths they have not known I will guide them. I will turn darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I will do, and I will not forsake them.”

(Isaiah 42:16)

→ The Lord walks with us even in uncertainty. What in your life do you feel the most worried about? Why?

→ Even when we feel scared or worried, God is still with us. What do you do to feel better when you are worried?

Read: Mark 7:31-37

→ What stands out to you? Write down your thoughts and observations about the story. If you prefer, draw a picture to help yourself imagine it.

→ If you've been to camp before, we sing songs about Jesus healing. In the Chapel song, "I saw the Light" we sing,

*Just like a blind man, I wandered alone
Worries and fears I claim for my own.
Then like the blind man that God gave back his sight...
PRAISE the Lord I saw the light!!*

→ Does this song sound similar to the story you just read? In what ways?

→ How does this story and the song relate to what you know about Jesus? What does the story and song tell us about Jesus?

Read: Mark 10:46-52

→ What stands out to you? Write down your thoughts and observations about the story. If you prefer, draw a picture to help yourself imagine it.

→ In this story, the man asks Jesus for healing and Jesus heals him *and* tells him that his faith is what healed him! What does this story tell us about our faith? About Jesus? About healing?

Prayer Prompt: What in your life feels like darkness that God can turn into light? Pray for these things and feelings and ask for God to bring his light into your life.

Day 2: God, our Guide

“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”

(Isaiah 30:21)

→ God is our guide and our leader. Who are impactful leaders in your life? List a few (teachers, parents, coaches, older siblings, or others). What qualities do these people have that make them good leaders? What do you appreciate about them?

→ What does it mean for you to let God lead your life? In what ways does God act like the other leaders in your life?

Read: Exodus 14:3-14

Some important things to know while reading:

1. The Israelites are known as God’s chosen people.
2. The Egyptian people had enslaved the Israelites (God’s people) for years. The Egyptians were very unkind to God’s people for a very long time.
3. The pillar of cloud reference in verse 19 and 24 is representative of God’s presence with the Israelites (God’s people).

→ The Israelites doubted God, but God is powerful, and he is our refuge and protector. Can you think of one example in your life where you doubted God, but he provided in a surprising way?

→ Is there something in your life right now that you feel doubtful about, but God can provide a way for you?

→ Through Moses, God commands his people to be still. God doesn't want you to strive because God is the only one who can free us. He freed his people from the mean Egyptians, and he has the power to free you from sin through Jesus on the cross.

→ What does it mean to you that God can free you from your fears and doubts?

Read: Exodus 14:15-31

→ Despite doubts from the Israelites, the Lord led His people through Moses across the Red Sea, through a path unknown to them, and delivered them from the hands of the Egyptians.

→ What is one way in your life that you are trying to earn God's grace by works rather than receiving it as the free gift that it is? How can you find God's grace in surrendering your need to achieve?

→ Moses tells his people to trust God. He says that if we can just be still, God will fight for us (Exodus 14:14). What does it mean for you to be still and let God fight for you? Why does God want to help us when we feel sad or scared?

Prayer Prompt: What is something in your life that you worry about? Pray and ask for God's peace and protection in that part of your life.

Day 3: Walk with God

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the path that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.”

(Matthew 7:13)

→ Sin is walking our own path even though we are blind and not trusting in God who is our guide.

→ Can you think of some examples in your own life where you chose your way instead of the right way? Or when you choose your way even though you knew it was wrong or would hurt people?

→ When we hurt people, or do things that are wrong and hurtful, we sin. What do you think of when you hear the word sin? What is an example of sin in your life?

→ What does it mean that the gate is narrow? Where do you think the gate leads to? Who are the people who get to enter the gate?

Read: Jonah 1

→ What stands out to you? Write down your thoughts and observations about the story. If you prefer, draw a picture to help yourself imagine it.

→ Jonah fled from the Lord's call, and the Lord caused calamity upon Jonah through a raging storm around his ship. When we flee from the Lord's call, our sin sends storms after us, into our homes, our families, and our souls.

→ Can you relate to this part of Jonah's story? Can you think of any examples in your own life where you choose your own way instead of God's way?

→ How do you think this situation would have gone differently for you if you would have chosen God's way rather than your own?

Reread: Jonah 1

→ Does anything new stand out to you while reading the story for a second time? Write or draw about it here.

→ In the second half of the chapter, Jonah also slept through the storms. Sometimes, we too get tired of doing the right thing and listening to God. But it is important to know when we mess something up, and how God can help us fix it!

→ Is there something in your life that you need forgiveness for? Go, and ask them for forgiveness. If you can't ask them, pray to God and ask him for forgiveness.

Prayer Prompt: Pray for forgiveness, Jesus on the cross offers grace freely and for all.

Reflect on and pray these verses:

He has not punished us as we deserve for all our sins, for his mercy toward those who fear and honor him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far away from us as the east is from the west. He is like a father to us, tender and sympathetic to those who reverence him. For he knows we are but dust.

(Psalm 103:10-14)

Day 4: Trusting God

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

(Proverbs 3:5-6)

Read: Luke 23:26-31

→ Christ sacrifices Himself on the cross for our sin. This is the ultimate act of grace, because Jesus gave up everything for us, even to the point of death.

→ Jesus is trustworthy. His painful death was not to help himself, but all of us. What does it mean for you to trust someone?

→ How do we trust the Lord as our savior and our guide?

Read: Luke 23:32-43

→ There were two people with Jesus, one was mean and one was kind. Jesus knew their hearts, and the kind hearted person trusted in Jesus’s plan. Why do the feelings in our heart matter to God? How does this story show that?

→ The kind hearted person is promised Paradise with Jesus. What does Jesus mean when he says this to the man?

→ When this man trusts Jesus, he finds salvation. When we trust in God's plan, we find too salvation. What does salvation mean for you and your life?

Prayer Prompt: If you have yet to, pray to Jesus that you love and trust him, and receive grace and salvation.

If you already know Jesus in your heart and life, pray asking how you can better love him.

Day 5: God's Guidance

*"For we walk by faith, not by sight."
(2 Corinthians 5:7)*

Read: Genesis 22:1-18

→ When reading the story, imagine yourself in Isaac's place. How would you feel if you were walking up that mountain with your father? Would you be willing to offer yourself to God fully in the way that Isaac does?

→ Both Isaac and Abraham have a strong, unyielding faith. What does this story tell us about trusting God?

→ What does faith in God mean to you? How do you live out your faith in God in your daily life?

→ What does it look like to follow God's guidance in your life?

Prayer Prompt: The story of Abraham and Isaac illustrates that unmovable faith. We too must also follow God because His vision is so much greater than ours, and His plan is better than our own. What is something in your life that you are unwilling to give to God? Pray over that area of your life, pray a prayer offering it to God.

Day 6: The Goodness of God

“Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

(Matthew 5:15-16)

Read: Acts 16:25-29

→ Paul and Silas were put in prison for worshipping God. Even in this difficult time, they choose to sing anyway. Are you facing a difficult time in your life? What would it look like for you to follow God and be positive even in times of uncertainty?

→ Have you ever failed at something in your life before? Do you remember how that felt? The jailor in that story felt that way and Paul and Silas brought him the good news of God. Who in your life right now is going through a hard time and could use some encouragement?

→ Pray for this person. Pray that God gives you an opportunity to share with them the good news of the Gospel and the love that God has for you and for them.

Read: Acts 16:30-34

→ God called Paul and Silas to stay in prison, and they listened to him. Even though they did not see the way through the unknown, God had a plan. God has a plan for your life too.

→ How can you put your trust in God even through times that feel hard and confusing? When is a time in your life that has felt uncertain, but God was there for you?

God is with you, he will never leave nor forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:6). It is my hope and prayer that these verses and Bible stories were encouraging to you and your walk with the Lord. Know that he loves you fiercely, and will never stop loving you.

Even through the times that feel hard, are sad, and seem so uncertain-- God is still there. He will guide you through the unknown, and he promises to always be with us.

Go in his peace this summer, and continue to walk with him always. He loves you, and he is for you.

God bless,

The Portage Lake Staff