

40 DAYS OF SPIRITUAL REFLECTION
FEBRUARY 17 - MARCH 28



**SEEKING GOD FOR THE COMMUNITY,
CITY & COUNTRY 2010**
LENTEN PRAYER GUIDE ONE

**REV. DENNIS W. MITCHELL,
SENIOR PASTOR**

DAY 1: February 17, 2010

Prayer Focus: Youth

Today's Theme: Seeking God for His Promises

John 15:7; Matthew 18:19-20; Revelation 3:20

AN EASTER SPEECH RECOLLECTION

"Praise is what I do, [Lord], when I want to be close to you," so *"I lift my hands in praise."* Praise is what we all do, and a natural part of praise is prayer. Prayer is not one-sided communication with a distant God, but rather, an up-close, personal relationship with Him. I call it a "holy privilege." Another privilege is studying God's Word. Today's focus is to seek God for His promises, and the way we learn those promises is through reading His Word. Our scripture below says that Jesus makes a special promise to those who abide in Him –i.e., those who make His Word a part of their daily living—and this promise is that prayers will be answered. I can recall the days of yesteryear when I had to learn Easter speeches. I remember my mother rehearsing me, with her beginning a line and having me finish it. We practiced this way until I felt comfortable enough to recite the speech from memory. I applied the same technique to learning the Word. I read it, practiced it aloud, memorized it, then was able to apply it to my daily living. Learning those Easter speeches planted in me the seed for remembering scriptures, and having the Word readily available in my mind has helped me in my tough times of indecision.

Life Application: Expand your "holy privilege" rights by praying to God, asking Him to enlarge your mindset to include learning more scriptures, and recite scriptures as often as you can. This is vital to shaping your prayer life, keeping His promises before you, and keeping you from sinning against Him. It's never too late to start praying and always too early to stop!

Prayer: Father God, please watch over our youth. Teach them to pray continually and to seek your Word daily, and please grow their faith so that they will learn to depend on your promises.

Thought for the Day: Bumper Sticker On A Car In Very Small Print: **"Are you THIS close to Jesus?"**

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." –John 15:7

DAY 2: February 18, 2010

Prayer Focus: Families

Today's Theme: Seeking God for Relationship Strengthening

John 15:9; 1 Chronicles 11:19a

A VALENTINE PRAYER LIFE

Valentine's Day has come and gone, but the love relationships that we have with people should still be evident. Prayer, a relationship between us and God, is reflective of our love relationship with Him. Today's focus is to seek God for relationship strengthening. When we love someone, we want to spend time with that person. Likewise, if we love God, we should want to spend time with Him. However, at times, especially with our families, we get so busy with the things of the world that we become neglectful of those we love. This, too, can become a common scenario in our relationship with God. We begin to push Him into the background as other "more important matters" draw our attention. I am reminded of those television commercials that continually tell us that high speed Internet and DSL will provide better, faster connections than will dial-up. This makes me think of our prayer life with God. When He is not a priority, we have to reintroduce ourselves to him each time we attempt to connect, and the connection can be a slow, frustrating "dial-up" experience. However, if our love for Him remains a priority – if we keep a "Valentine's Day love" for Him – we will get a "high speed" connection with Him every time!

Life Application: Don't face a day until you have faced God. Be so close to Him that your conversations with Him become habit-forming, and your relationship with Him becomes so close that every time you want to talk with Him, you'll have a high speed connection. If you walk with Him, your love will be apparent, not just on Valentine's Day, but everyday.

Prayer: Father God, we lift families up to you. We ask you to help them develop a meaningful and lasting family prayer life, and make their relationship with you so strong that they will always have a high speed connection with you.

Thought for the Day: Live your life in such a way that you can talk to God any time and that you will have an ear to listen whenever He speaks to you.

"If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." – Matthew 18:19

DAY 3: February 19, 2010

Prayer Focus: Women

Today's Theme: Seeking God's Heart Through Prayer

2 Corinthians 7:1; Psalm 51

ARE YOU READY TO HAND IT OVER TO GOD?

Today's focus is to seek God's heart through prayer. I had a co-worker, Bernice, who loved to share stories about her five-year-old granddaughter, Antoinette. Everyday, she would share endless stories. I remember her telling us one story where "Little Antoinette" wandered into Bernice's bedroom, found a makeup kit and, with a tube of lipstick, proceeded to "decorate" the room. By the time Bernice found Antoinette playing there, the child had used the lipstick to mark all over walls, bed, carpet—everything! On seeing this, Bernice, knew immediately what had happened; however, when she questioned Antoinette, the child denied having done anything, and, at first, refused to give up the lipstick. It was only after she came to realize that she was indeed "caught" that Antoinette finally handed over the lipstick to Bernice. I wonder how many times we go into prayer before the Lord, denying things and thinking we are pulling one over on Him. Just like my co-worker could clearly see the evidence of "precious" Antoinette's colorful markings, God sees our hearts and knows what we've been up to. He sees our pride, anger, and deceit; he sees hurts not forgiven, sins not confessed, habits we can't seem to break, behavior that doesn't honor Him. Oddly enough, Bernice thought Antoinette's behavior was heart-wrenchingly cute and darling. But unlike Bernice, God does not see our behavior positively; rather, such behavior alienates us from Him. It is only with deep repentance and sincere prayer that we can regain God's heart.

Life Application: Remember, God already knows every detail about us. He has made known to you those things He wants you to toss aside. Pray to be reconciled to God, and trust the plan that He has for you.

Prayer: Father God, please bestow upon women everywhere a special blessing. Help them to realize the vital role you have given them, and teach them to pray diligently and rely upon you for all of their needs.

Thought for the Day: We can't fool God! People see what you do, but God sees why you do it.

"... Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." – 2 Corinthians 7:1

DAY 4: February 20, 2010

Prayer Focus: Single People

Today's Theme: Seeking God for Thanksgiving in all Circumstances

Philippians 4:11; James 1:17; Roman 8:28

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Today's focus is to seek God for thanksgiving in all circumstances. Paul tells us to be thankful always in every situation, but this is difficult for most of us. Some of us think of gratitude merely as a reaction to a favor or to things we consider good, but not to anything unpleasant. Properly expressing gratitude means thanking God in ALL circumstances. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 tells us about *"giving thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* I am reminded of a situation with Mark, a single friend of mine, who was looking for a job. Seeing a "Help Wanted" sign in a store window of a mall clothing store, he applied for the position because this particular mall was so close to his house. Six weeks passed, and he hadn't received a call from the store. Impatient and rather angry, he decided to revisit the store and inquire about his application. He was surprised to learn that the store had gone bankrupt and was out of business! Mark remembered what Paul had said and began to thank God for closing that door of employment because he had been contemplating quitting the job he already had in order to take the position at the mall. We as humans don't have the ability to see what lies ahead, and often, we become upset and even angry when things don't go exactly as we want. However, we must always be mindful that God knows all, and He knows what is best for us. Whatever the situation, it is in His plan.

Life Application: Keep an attitude of gratitude. Appreciate and give thanks for all you have rather than focus on what you do not have. Be grateful for what God does as well as for who He is – an all-wise, all-knowing, caring, loving Father. Thank Him for those things we often take for granted, and thank Him for choosing us as His children.

Prayer: Father God, we ask your blessings upon single people. Let them know that, because they have you, they are never alone. Help them to be grateful for whatever your purpose is for their lives.

Thought for the Day: CHURCH SIGN MARQUEE: "What If Your Blessings TOMORROW Depended On Your Thanksgiving Today?"

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." – Philippians 4:11

DAY 5: February 21, 2010

Prayer Focus: Pastors

Today's Theme: Seeking God for Quiet Time

Daniel 6:10; Mark 1:35; Mark 6:46-47; Luke 5:16; Luke 6:12

SHHH... I'M PRAYING

Today's focus is to seek God for quiet time. Are you one of many who view prayer as a ritualistic religious activity that is only performed at certain times on the clock or calendar? If so, you should remember that God is always present, and you can speak to Him at anytime. As I once heard a preacher say, "You can always be in a spirit of prayer because you have a never-ending relationship with God." At times, though, you may feel the need to find a quiet place to meditate and talk with Him; Jesus did. Let's look at how Jesus prayed. Mark 1:35 tells us that *"very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."* Jesus spent much time praying alone, and this is an example for us. When we're alone, our attention is totally focused on the matter at hand, so we have no distractions to break our concentration. We can establish a closeness that only comes when we are alone with Him—and during that quiet time, we actually do not have to utter a word because when we are communicating with God, He hears more than words; He listens to the heart.

Life Application: Anytime is a perfect time to pray, and your prayers don't have to be long or loud. Pray when you get out of bed, in the shower, as you and your children get ready to leave for the day. If a problem comes up at work, whisper a prayer for guidance. If a co-worker mentions a family problem, pray for (and with) that co-worker. Pray on your way home, then when you get there and don't forget to spend some quiet time with God.

Prayer: Father God, please bless Pastors, your special, anointed servants. Help them to find their own quiet time to seek your guidance, and give them the strength to lead their congregations without compromising your Word.

Thought for the Day: Living without consistent study and prayer is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but it doesn't get you anywhere.

"When Daniel learned that the decree [a law against prayer] had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the window faced toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." – Daniel 6:10

DAY 6: February 22, 2010

Prayer Focus: *The Athletic Industry*

Today's Theme: *To seek God for Temptation from the World*

1 Peter 5:8; Psalm 119:11; James 1:14-15

WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT

Today's focus is to seek God for temptation from the world. Question: What is the best way to avoid sin? Answer: Staying prepared to face temptation." Temptations are perpetually before us, and, even though we want to resist, it is difficult. The minute that we let our guard down in the face of temptation, the devil launches an attack. The scripture below reminds us that God wants us to stay alert and to always be on guard. Too often, though, we aren't. Recently, many celebrities and other famous people have succumbed to temptations which led to behavior that landed them on the front pages of tabloids and the subject of late night comedies. Time and time again, we have pondered, "Why do they allow things like this to happen? Don't they know they're in the pubic eye?" Well, temptation does not discriminate. Famous or unknown, rich or poor, righteous or unrighteous—all of us are tempted. In fact, we find from the scriptures that even Jesus was tempted. We need to be more like Him. He was victorious over Satan's temptations by using the Word, and we can be also. None of us are too good to avoid being tempted by the devil, so we must always be on the alert. We have to take the devil seriously because he is seriously trying to take us when we aren't prepared.

Life Application: I once knew a preacher who said, "The time to BE ready is not the time to GET ready." Take heed! Don't wait until the devil has you in his grasp to begin to fight him; be prepared by knowing the Word and using the Word against him. Know those areas of your life where you are weakest, and pray for God to strengthen you in those areas.

Prayer: Father God, we are placing the athletic industry before you. We know that athletes so often serve as models in our society, so we ask you to give them an extra portion of strength to overcome the temptations they face. Please give them a heart to live their lives as a testament to you.

Thought for the Day: What good is a FORGOTTEN life jacket when the boat is sinking? Get prepared!!

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." – 1 Peter 5:8

DAY 7: February 23, 2010

Prayer Focus: Marriages

Today's Theme: To Seek God's Love in Good and Bad Times

1 John 4:7; Romans 12: 9-18

FOR BETTER AND FOR WORSE

Today's focus is to seek God's love in the good and bad times. As a member of Greenforest, I really appreciate seeing the number of married couples in our congregation. Before joining, I don't ever recall seeing so many families united in one place of worship. When in church, it seems that love permeates the air, and based on announcements we hear each Sunday, many of our couples have been married for twenty or more years! Since the couples are human, though, I am sure that they, over the years, have seen some unhappy, unpleasant times and experienced a myriad of personal, family, financial, or other types of problems which none of us know or need to know about. Yet, they are still together. I am convinced that it is their commitment to making their relationship work in spite of problems that has kept them together. They, no doubt, have taken Paul's advice on how to love each other. He reminds us

- *Cling to what is good*
- *Be devoted to one another*
- *Honor one another above ourselves*
- *Never lack zeal*
- *Be joyful in hope and patient in affliction*
- *Be faithful in prayer*
- *Bless those who persecute us*
- *Rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn*
- *Live in harmony with one another*
- *Don't be proud or conceited*
- *Don't repay anyone evil for evil*
- *Be careful to do what is right to everybody and live at peace with everyone*

Life Application: Always remember that people will sometimes disappoint you, but understand that we are all subject to making mistakes. Accept people for who they are, and treat them the way you want to be treated.

Prayer: Father God, we ask a special blessing upon marriages. Let husbands and wives remember their covenant with you and their promise to each other to love "for better or for worse."

Thought for the Day: If "Jesus" showed up on your caller ID box, how differently would you answer the phone?

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." – 1 John 4:7

DAY 8: February 24, 2010

Prayer Focus: Sick People

Today's Theme: Seeking God's Compassion

Matthew 14: 13-14; Mark 5:25; John 9:1; Luke 10

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Today's focus is to seek God's compassion. One of Jesus' most remarkable qualities was his sense of compassion. Throughout His life, we see how He identified with people in need. He did not simply feel compassion; he acted upon it by ministering to the needs of those who sought Him. Remember the woman "with the issue of blood"? Or the leper who implored Jesus, saying "You can make me clean"? They both, in faith, sought Him, and He healed them. In the scripture below, Jesus was grieving the loss of his cousin, John the Baptist, and a large crowd was following Him. Rather than go off to grieve alone, Jesus felt compassion and healed those in the crowd who were sick. We, too, must put aside personal concerns and be sensitive to those in need. Some years ago, I was part of a nursing home ministry, and each week we ministered to the sick and shut-in by sharing God's Word and singing praises. At first, I did not take the ministry seriously. There were Saturdays I wished I could just stay in the bed and forgo my commitment, but I would go anyway. Eventually, I realized how important my work was when several homebound residents told me how much they missed me when I didn't come. My simple act of visiting meant so much to them.

Life Application: As Jesus' disciples, follow His example. Take an interest in those who are hurting or ill. Look at our sick and shut-in list each week, and give someone on the list a call, send a card, or even make a visit. Your simple acts of compassion might be just what they need to lift their spirits.

Prayer: Father God, help us to become sensitive to the needs of the sick and infirm among us. Let us care enough to reach out to them, even when we feel too tired to show our compassion, and, if it is your will, touch their bodies and give them peace.

Thought for the Day: Compassion is felt when we recognize another person's story as our own story.

"When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew... to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick." – Matthew 14:13-14

DAY 9: February 25, 2010

Prayer Focus: International Visitors

Today's Theme: Seeking for God's Universal Heart

Philippians 4:7; Psalm 100; Micah 4:3b; Leviticus 26:6

MAY I HAVE A PIECE OF YOUR PEACE?

Today's focus is to seek for God's universal heart. In today's times, when international wars, global unrest, and terroristic threats from abroad have become commonplace, it seems that our world is in chaos. In times such as these, it is very easy for some of us to become disillusioned and discouraged, becoming suspicious of those among us who may not speak our same language, dress as we do, believe what we do, or practice our customs and traditions. In that state of mind, we may become fearful and lose hope in the promises God has given us. However, we need not. We must always remember that God is faithful. While the Bible speaks of "wars and rumors of wars," it also promises us that one day *"they will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."* Despite present conditions, we must remember that God made us all, so we are all His children. As such, He expects us to accept each other as brothers and sisters and to walk together in peace. If we see others as part of our universal family, we will do our part to bring peace and tranquility to our nation and the world.

Life Application: We have the promise of peace. Pray to God for unity within, between, and among nations. Ask Him to work in your life to show others, regardless of who they are or where they are from, that you love them because we are all a part of the family of Christ.

Prayer: Father God, we pray right now for international visitors. Help us, your people, to show them that even though we may appear different to the naked eye, we are the same in you. Help us to internalize the words of the children's song that says, "Red and yellow, black and white, they [we] are precious in His sight." Teach us to get along with each other, and help us to do what we can to bring peace to this chaotic world.

Thought for the Day: Learn to have certain peace in uncertain times.

"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." – Philippians 4:7

DAY 10: February 26, 2010

Prayer Focus: Ministries

Today's Theme: Seeking God to Revive the Church

Romans 12:5-6a; Psalm 85:6; Galatians 6:9

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SET ASIDE FOR GOD?

Today's focus is to seek God to revive the church. Today, we live in a busy world. We come and go at a frenzied pace, and we have gotten used to getting things at the push of a button or at the click of a computer mouse. We are often so caught up in the world that our chief focus becomes "us," with very little time for anything or anyone else, including God. Too many of us give God a couple of hours on Sunday, then return to the usual "busyness" of our lives, leaving the work of the church to a few faithful members. However, if we are to strengthen our relationship with God, we must strengthen our commitment to the church. If you want to draw closer to God, you have to give of your time and talents to become more involved in His work. How can you be more involved? First, you should determine what, in specific, God wants you to do. Prayer, reading the Word, attending classes, trying your hand at one or more ministries of the church—all of these are ways for you to discover where He wants you to work. As you work more for Him, you yourself will be revived, then will be more eager to do your part to revive the whole church.

Life Application: Discover your role in the revived church by (1) finding a specific time and place to talk with God and seek God's guidance, (2) reading His Word daily, (3) completing a spiritual gifts class, (4) choosing a ministry where your skills and abilities can best be utilized, and (5) GETTING TO WORK! As others see you working to strengthen the church, they can be inspired to do the same. If we ALL get to work, the church will thrive and will surely be revived.

Prayer: Father God, we lift ministries up to you. Give those who work in any and all of your ministries the strength to persevere in your work so that they will "not grow weary while doing good." Let their work serve as an impetus to revive us all.

Thought for the Day: We all spend time on the things we want to spend time on. Is God on your list??

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them." – Romans 12:5-6a

Seeking God for the Community, City and Country 2010

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. – II Chronicles 7:14

Beginning Ash Wednesday thru Palm Sunday, Greenforest will join with over 100,000 believers from hundreds of churches around the globe seeking God in focused biblical prayer. God has blessed us with four writers that have used the theme “Seek God for the City 2010” from the WayMakers Christian organization as a guide to help them to write devotionals customized for Greenforest. The writers have been seeking God for direction that will cause His people to pray in a way that will make a difference in their lives that will impact the lives of others. The writers and their assignments are listed below:

- Feb 17 – 26** Seeking His Life to Revive the Church.....Bro. Alan Sherman
Feb 27 – Mar 8 Seeking His Light to Awaken the Lost.....Min. Althea Waters
Mar 9 – 18 Seeking His Glory to Evangelize All People.....Sis. Olivia Maupin
Mar 19 – 28 Seeking His Peace Among All People.....Min. Diann Ash

This prayer guide is designed to help believers pray “Big” prayers beyond their daily needs and to seek God to fulfill His greatest purposes: to find them, bring them in, grow them up and send them out. *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.*
–Matthew 6:33



Greenforest Community Baptist Church
3250 Rainbow Drive, Decatur, GA 30034
404.486.1120 • www.greenforest.org
Rev. Dennis W. Mitchell, Senior Pastor