

Daily Reflection on Scripture
Week of July 28
The World is Our Neighborhood
Week 1: The Pittsburgh Project



Sunday July 28

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8 (NIV) Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

Morning Prayer: God, all too often, I find myself looking for the differences between myself and others, seeing their lives as separate from my own. Give me curious eyes to see the world as my neighborhood and the people around me as my neighbors- each with a story made up of struggles, joys, worries, and prayers, just like my own unfolding story. Give me a seeking heart, searching for ways to serve these neighbors I encounter with understanding, compassion, humility, and love. May it be so.

Morning Text: Think of someone in your world to whom you can extend a neighborly act of service, compassion, and love. Reach out to them today.

Noon Text: Take a pause and remember a recent time a neighbor welcomed, served, or comforted you. Offer a prayer of thanks for this special act.

Evening Text: As the day ends, pray for the courage and humility needed to see the world as your neighborhood. Rest in the peace that comes from love surrounding you.

Monday July 29

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:10-11 (NIV) Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

Morning Prayer: God, I am thankful for the gifts I have been given in this life. My prayer today is that I might find many positive ways to use my gifts. May I always be mindful that my actions, my speech, and my service should always reflect You and Your endless grace for us all. May it be so.

Morning Text: What unique gifts do you possess that might be used to serve others and bring hope and light to the world? Focus on using those gifts with joy today.

Noon Text: Pause in your day and name one thing for which you are grateful. Let that word of gratitude be your guide throughout the remainder of the day.

Evening Text: Reflecting back on your day, identify moments when you were able to use your gifts to benefit others. Offer a gratitude prayer for those opportunities.

Tuesday July 30

Scripture: Psalm 139:14 (NIV) I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Morning Prayer: God, all too often as I wake my thoughts immediately turn to my to-do list for a busy day. So today I will be deliberate in pausing to spend time with You. Truthfully I don't always view myself as fearfully and wonderfully made, but today let me think through that. When I stop to think about all of Your wonderful works – the blue sky, the fresh air, the lush green earth all round, the water running from my taps – I remind myself that I am part of Your wonderful works. The people I will be encountering today are part of Your wonderful works, each fearfully and wonderfully made in Your image. So let me begin this day with praise for You in my heart and on my lips. Let me go about my day recognizing You in everyone I meet today and love them as You love me. May it be so.

Morning Text: Can you see yourself as fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image? How does that change the way you approach each day? Receive God's love today.

Noon Text: Pause in the busyness of the day to reflect on the beauty and wonder of God's creation all around. Whisper words of gratitude for the wonder of creation.

Evening Gratitude Text: Reflect on where you have seen God today – in people and in nature. Reflect on how you were the hands and feet of Jesus today. Rest now in God's love.

Wednesday July 31

Scripture: Romans 12:3-5 (NIV) For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Morning Prayer: God today make me mindful of how You created me as unique. No better than anybody else in my path, but no less either. Help me to see others as You see us, as Your children. Each created perfectly. Each equally loved. Each gifted by You. When we see each other as You see us, we can see past the differences, much like we see a difference in our right hand and left hand. Each necessary. Each integral. Each made for a specific purpose. May it be so.

Morning Text: You are gifted by the Creator in many ways. How are you using your gifts to support others? All are worthy. All are needed.

Noon Text: Think back to your morning. Remember something you did that made you feel good. Using your gifts impacts not only you, but those in your path with God's love.

Evening Text: Before you rest, think through your day. Remember the happy, positive moments. God's incredible love for you is shown daily in ways both small and large.

Thursday August 1

Scripture: Romans 12:6-8 (NIV) We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Morning Prayer: God, sometimes I wish I had different gifts. I look at the talents of others and wish I could do that. I look at how easily someone solves a problem and wonder why I can't do that. But today I realize that serving others and doing different things is not a contest. My gifts are just as valuable as the next person's. I also realize that thinking I had different gifts instead of being thankful for the ones I have only hinders me from being who I am and sharing what I have to offer. Today, help

me to stop comparing and start believing that the people I encounter today need me to be me. This way there's no winners or losers, for we all win with love. May it be so.

Morning Text: Whatever your talents, whatever your innate gifts, the people you encounter today need you to be you. You are a gift of love and grace. Remember who you are.

Noon Text: How have you used your gifts or talents to help someone? Instead of comparing your talents with others use the talents you have. The world needs them.

Evening Text: As the day winds down be thankful that now you have the next hours to rest and restore. As God rested from work, so must you. Receive the gift of rest.

Friday August 2

Scripture: Mark 12:30-31 (NIV) Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these.

Morning Prayer: God, remind me today that in order to really achieve the first part of this scripture I need to begin with the second. Love my neighbor as myself. Even that begins with loving myself. Honestly, it is sometimes easier to love others than to love myself. I am not so critical of others as I often am of myself. So it starts with reminding myself that I am created in Your image, then being more forgiving and accepting of myself, the good and the not so good. Then help me to see everyone I encounter as Your child, created in Your image. Help me to love them with all of my words and my actions. In doing this – loving myself and loving my neighbor I am loving You. With all of my heart, my soul and my mind I love You. May it be so.

Morning Text: How are you feeling about yourself today? Positively? If not, be reminded that you are a beloved child of God. Be more forgiving of yourself, as God forgives.

Noon Text: Take a moment to reflect on your morning. How have you loved your neighbors – with kind and compassionate words or actions? Love God by loving your neighbors.

Evening Text: As the day draws to a close, reflect on how you have felt loved by God and how you loved others today. With these thoughts allow yourself to rest peacefully.

Saturday August 3

Scripture: Galatians 5:13-14 (CEB) You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only don't let this freedom be an opportunity to indulge your selfish impulses, but serve each other through love. All the Law has been fulfilled in a single statement: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Morning Prayer: I've often heard, God, the phrase "Love your neighbor as yourself." Seems simple and easy enough, but if I'm honest, I don't love myself at all times and in those times I'm not very loving towards others. I'm even less inclined to serve, let alone with love. I'm learning that when I am in a place of despair and longing, that is precisely the time I need to direct my attention outward. Thank you, God, for showing me that when I'm serving and focusing on the needs of others, I, too, am lifted out of despair from my own preoccupations and worries. The phrase "bring the body and the heart and soul will follow" rings true. Without focusing on myself, I have somehow lifted myself as well. That, in turn, changes my outlook on others, changes my outlook on myself, and all of our lives are the better for it. May it always be so.

Morning Text: How are you feeling today? Be mindful today of opportunities to serve someone. Holding a door? Lending a hand? Giving the right of way? Spread the love.

Noon Text: Take a moment to pause. Deep breath in, hold, slowly release. Feel the tension leave your body and opening your spirit for self and others. Repeat.

Evening Text: Before you rest, reflect on the ways you were able to serve. How did you feel? How would you feel if you were the receiver? May that inspire a peaceful slumber.