

Why Less is Usually More

First United Methodist Church, Sallisaw – Weekly Prayer & Study Guide 1/27/13

Prayer - Use this prayer to begin your time with God each day.

Dear Lord, help us to avoid the traps of excessive consumption this world offers us. Help us to unburden ourselves of those things that bring us nothing but the weight of their ownership. Instead, point us toward the heights of generosity. Show us how and when to serve you by serving others. Carry us beyond our shortsighted ways and into your light, your truth and your kingdom. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Monday – Matthew 6:19-21, 24. “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Are you putting any part of your treasure toward causes or activities that you really don’t really matter to you? To what extent does your checkbook accurately reflect your heart? In The Message, Matthew 6:19-21 reads, “Don’t hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or – worse! – stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it’s safe from moth and rust and burglars. It’s obvious, isn’t it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being. How can using your assets to help others instead of piling them up for yourself lower your stress? Pray for God to help you put your faith in God rather than in your possessions.

Tuesday – Read Matthew 6:25-34. This teaching is connected to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:19-24. How do these two passages fit together? Look over your sermon notes from Sunday's message. How does God provide for the needs of the birds of the air? How does that help us understand how God provides for us? What does it mean to seek *first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*? Finally, spend time in prayer, entrusting your life to God and asking for his help in seeking first his kingdom while letting go of worry and stress.

Wednesday – Read Luke 12:13-21, 32-34. Why was the man in the story a fool? What do you think Jesus would have wanted him to do with his “bumper crops?” Read verse 15 again. What does it mean to you? Note that verses 32-34 parallel Matthew 6:19-21. How do these verses speak to you? Read Luke 16:19-31 and look to see how this parable relates to the idea of storing up treasure on earth versus storing up treasure in heaven. How might the rich man have stored up treasure in heaven? Jesus warned us to “be on your guard against all kinds of greed.” What different kinds of greed have you experienced? How can you assess whether you are getting your sense of meaning and value from material things? How easy or hard do you find it to accept Jesus’ teaching that *life does not consist in an abundance of possessions*? Pray for Jesus to help you building his teaching into your financial life?

Thursday – Read Proverbs 22:1-4, 9. The Book of Proverbs offers us wisdom for living blessed lives. At the heart of these wisdom sayings is a relationship with God. As we talk about finding antidotes for the out-of-control life it is important for us to remember that all blessing come from God. Money has a godlike power that tempts us to worship money and stuff rather than God. Proverbs reminds us that it is God who blesses us rather than material possessions. God blesses us when we humbly worship and serve the Lord. If you would like to learn more about Financial Wisdom, consider joining our Financial Peace University class. There will be a Free Preview on Sunday, February 10 at 5:00 p.m., and the class will begin on Sunday, February 17. Spend some time praying about how you can grow to handle money wisely as a result of putting God first in your life.

Friday - Read Proverbs 21:20. Precious treasure remains in the house of the wise, but the fool devours it. John Wesley said, "Earn all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can." For Wesley, earning all you can was more about being disciplined in the way we spend our money. We live in an age of easy credit. We have been trained to think that we can buy now and pay later. In fact, our culture trains us to be consumers who consume all kinds of products. One of the keys to living the blessed life is to learn to live beneath our means rather than above our means. The millionaire next door usually drives an old car because he or she has learned how to save and how to control spending. When was the last time you saved money to make a purchase? Pray for God to help you take the time to make a budget and live by it.

Saturday – Read James 1:17-18. James was Jesus' half-brother. James reminds us that birth is a gift from God. In fact, every gift comes from God. Herb Miller says, "We either become emotionally attached to our money, or we become emotionally attached to the God who gives us the money." Think about your own life. Do you put more trust and faith in God or in your money? How would you like God to help you with this part of your life? Spend some time praying about the ways God can help you grow to trust God more.

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Dr. Trevor Smith

19[“]Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²⁵Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” -Matthew 6:19-21, 25

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon:

Prayer List

New & Short Term Requests*

- The Family of Debbie Robinson, April Oxley's mother.
- The Family of Edice Ann Elwick
- Orville A. Chandler Jr. and his family Rosemary Riggs. He is passing this life according to his doctors. Tammie Shamblin's cousins.
- Riley Smoal, thickening of the year. Kevin Chambers' friend.
- Ryan Magie's thumb.
- Sharon Johnson, knee replacement surgery. Ty & Kaylyn Martinez's grandmother.
- The relatives of Paul Helton and his wife who lost their lives in a fire. Friends of Ben & Marynelle Kiger.
- Donna Thrall, 96 year old hospitalized. Friend of Bob Walden.
- Shirley Robins, 3 more chemo treatments and then retesting in March. Chemo is making her sick. James Robins' grandmother.
- Marilyn Alter, car accident, broken leg, arms, pelvis, other problems. In Tulsa ICU and not responding well.
- Michael Trimble, very bad head cold.
- Nick Hartsell, leaving for basic training on Feb. 3. Will be gone 6 months.
- Allean Long.
- Sandy Sudac, car accident, forgetfulness, Ruthann Gacey's friend.
- Yvonne Fernandez, biopsy for breast cancer. Pray for negative results. Kathy Allsup's friend.
- Timothy Thorrell, needs liver transplant.
- Eddy Mesa, sick friend of Machell Trimble.
- Hazel Hight, recovering from a fall on Christmas Eve.
- Margaret Johnson, out of control high blood pressure, friend of Carl & June Rostlon

Hospitalized / Continuing Treatment

- Kim Edwards, lung cancer.
- Shelby Hiser, rehab, Ruth Knight's grandson.

On-Going Needs

Our Service People

Greg Luttrell, North Carolina Jessica McMillian

*Names on this list will remain for three weeks.

Call Anne Bottorff at (918) 775-2072 to start the Prayer Chain.

Antidotes for The Out-of-Control Life

