

MON 4-17

"Then Jesus said, 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.'" [Matt 11:28, NLT] When we feel weak or overwhelmed, we are invited to spend time in the presence of the Prince of Peace. There, we find guidance and renewal from a compassionate Savior.

PRAY: Precious Jesus, there are situations I am facing that I don't know how to handle. I need your peace to surround me. Thank you for your wisdom as I follow your ways. Amen.

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TUES 4-18

"Return the joy of your salvation to me and sustain me with a willing spirit." [Psalm 51:12, CEB] God's grace is a refreshing stream that is restorative. Without it, we have little to give to others who desperately need the love of God to restore them as well.

PRAY: Gracious God, thank you for the way you sustain and refresh my spirit. Help the joy I experience because of your love to be evident in the way I extend love to others. Amen.

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WED 4-19

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." [Rom 15:13, CEB] We become hope for others as we allow God to fill our lives so full that it is overflowing. When it spills over, it covers whoever is near!

PRAY: God, your spirit is what I need. In this moment, I breathe in your life-giving peace and joy. Show me how I am meant to bless someone else today. Amen.

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THURS 4-20

"Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." [Col 3:12, NLT] What a great reminder that it takes intentionality to respond to others with the love of Christ. We must "put on" these traits daily!

PRAY: Holy God, thank you for your perfect love. Help me to grow each day in compassion for others and a willingness to serve. Amen.

NOTES: _____

FRI 4-21

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." [Matt 9:36, NLT] We have all been there--confused and helpless. Thank God that we are not ever turned away or left alone.

PRAY: Lord Jesus, your love for me is never-ending. Thank you for your constant presence with me. Help me learn to see your children with that same care and mercy. Amen.

NOTES: _____

SAT 4-22

"Be happy with those who are happy, and cry with those who are crying." [Rom 12:15, CEB] We all need people who will be by our side through the ups and downs of life, so we must also be willing to be those people for others!

PRAY: Loving God, help me to be someone who doesn't just receive care from others but also gives it. Give me the awareness to know when I am needed as a listening ear. Amen.

NOTES: _____

Intro We all have people in our lives who are difficult in different ways. At times, we all are *those* people! Thankfully, God loves us even when we aren't at our best. This week our focus is how to deal kindly with those who are emotionally needy. We can learn how to love people in a healthy way so we don't end up hurting ourselves in the process.

Reflect

- How do you typically feel and react when you encounter needy people? Does the type of need (physical or emotional) make a difference in your feelings or responses?
- Read Acts 3:1-10. In this passage, Peter and John give a man what he needed instead of what he asked for by healing his body.
 - Describe a time when you received help, but it did more harm than good because it wasn't actually what you really needed.
 - In what ways have you seen the difference between relief and restoration?
 - Why do you think our typical first response to needy people is to give them relief instead of restoration?
 - What do you think would have happened to the man if Peter and John had given him the money he had asked for?
- Read Acts 3:6 and Psalm 70:5. These verses share the key to restoration.
 - What kind of impact do you think the church would have if we focused more on restoration instead of relief when it comes to dealing with the emotionally needy?
 - Why is it important not to continually rescue people from their own consequences?
 - Bring to mind someone who you think you might need to treat differently to bring true restoration. If you aren't sure where to start, begin by praying for the wisdom and courage to help facilitate the help they truly need.
 - Where do you need God's restoration in your own life?

Pray **Loving God, help me to look inside and honestly evaluate my heart. Point out in me the things that need to be dealt with and help me to lovingly share the feelings that are driving my behaviors. Renew my mind and restore my relationship as your love heals me. Amen.**

What did I learn?

How might it apply in my life?

What is a next step I can take?
