

MON 4-24

"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you." [2 Thess 3:16, NIV] The early church was living in turbulent times, and Paul knew what they needed--a reminder that we have perfect peace in Christ that brings rest and refreshment!

PRAY: Loving God, your peace is more than I can understand. Thank you for guarding my heart and allowing peace to rule even when storms are raging around me. Amen.

NOTES: _____

TUES 4-25

"If possible, to the best of your ability, live at peace with all people." [Romans 12:18, CEB] Have you ever been tempted to avoid conflict in a misguided attempt at peace? Sometimes, achieving peace in a relationship requires a tough conversation or boundaries to be set. Pray for courage!

PRAY: Powerful God, I need the strength to say the truly loving things in a humble way. Be my guide as I try my best to bring peace in my relationships. Amen.

NOTES: _____

WED 4-26

"You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God." [James 4:2, NIV] God is our source for what we really need. When we look elsewhere, we begin to fight over things that do not satisfy.

PRAY: Almighty God, forgive me for becoming distracted from the treasures that you alone can offer me. Please heal the brokenness in me that leads to strained relationships. Amen.

NOTES: _____

THURS 4-27

"Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands." [Psalm 63:3-4 NIV] If we keep the praises of God in our daily speech, we may also be more likely to speak positive encouragement to those around us!

PRAY: Loving God, you are worth talking about! Help me to stay focused on thanking you during my day and saying words that glorify you because they show love to others. Amen.

NOTES: _____

FRI 4-28

"The LORD says, 'I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.'" [Psalm 32:8, NLT] Just *ok* isn't what God wants for you! Lots of pathways can be okay, but God's ways are wise and right. The trick is creating space to be with God and discover the path!

PRAY: God of wisdom, I want your ways to be the guiding light in my life. Open my heart to seek your guidance about the things I need to change and give me a willing spirit. Amen.

NOTES: _____

SAT 4-29

"Light produces fruit that consists of every sort of goodness, justice, and truth." [Ephesians 5:9, CEB] When we let the light of Jesus shine in us, we will find these things are evident in our life! Cultivating goodness, justice, and truth isn't always easy, but it is who God created us to be.

PRAY: Lord Jesus, thank you for rescuing me from the traps of darkness and bringing me into your light. Teach me to walk in spirit and truth and use me to offer love and grace to others. 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 manipulative. We can learn to recognize when we are being manipulated and when we become manipulative.

Reflect

- What types of people get under your skin the most? Why do you think that is the case?
- Read Mark 6:21-26 Genesis 25:29-34, and Judges 16:15-16.
 - Which of these three common manipulative tactics are most effective on you: flattery, bribery, or guilt? Why are they so effective?
 - How has your life been impacted by manipulative people? How have you dealt with manipulative people in the past?
 - How have you manipulated others? What tactics did you use and what were the results of your manipulation?
 - How do you know when you are being manipulated? How long does it usually take for you to realize it?
- Isaiah 26:3-4 says, "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the LORD always, for the LORD God is the eternal Rock." [NLT] Staying centered on God helps us to recognize when something feels off, disturbing our peace. This awareness can help us identify when we are being manipulated or when we become manipulative toward others.
 - Do you currently feel grounded by your relationship with God?
 - If not, what do you need to change in order to experience more of God's peace in your life?
 - What healthy boundaries can you enforce to remain at peace in your current relationships?
 - What do you think will be the hardest part in dealing with those people that manipulate you?
 - What triggers can you identify that lead to your manipulation of others?

Pray **Prince of Peace, I thank you for the standing invitation to experience your loving presence in my life. Help me to slow down and allow it to change my heart and mind. Increase my self-awareness so that I can recognize when I am not following your ways. I want you to be the primary influencer in my life. Amen.**



What did I learn?

How might it apply in my life?

What is a next step I can take?
