

## MON 5-8

"A gentle response defuses anger, but a sharp tongue kindles a temper-fire." [Prov 15:1, MSG] We have all experienced the feeling of being involved in a temper-fire! Our choice of words can either diffuse or stoke the fire. Make a special effort this week to consider the gentleness of your words.

**PRAY:** God of grace, please give me the mindfulness to thoughtfully consider each word that I speak before it leaves my mouth. I need your Spirit to guide me every moment. Amen.

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## TUES 5-9

"Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall." [Psalm 55:22, NLT] When we face adversity, we are assured that God cares about us and is there to be our help. There is an action step on our part--we must give our burdens to God rather than trying to bear them alone.

**PRAY:** Almighty God, sometimes I allow the weight of trying times to become overwhelming before I remember to come to you. Forgive me. I thank you for your strength and care. Amen.

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## WED 5-10

"Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love." [Ephesians 4:2, NLT] Part of having patience is being able to endure. Take a moment to think about your ability to endure others when they disappoint you. It may help to pause and remember the way God has remained patient with you despite your shortcomings.

**PRAY:** God, I am so grateful that your love endures forever! Help me to remember your unconditional, persistent love when I am dealing with a difficult person. Amen.

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## THURS 5-11

"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." [John 16:33, NLT] As difficult as life can sometimes become, the peace Jesus offers is a sure thing. Moment by moment, we can connect with him.

**PRAY:** Loving Christ, thank you for your perfect peace. Flood my heart and quiet my mind so I can fully experience it and share it with the people around me. Amen.

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## FRI 5-12

"Open your mouth and taste, open your eyes and see—how good GOD is. Blessed are you who run to him." [Psalm 34:8, MSG] The word used for see in this verse is *ra'ah*, which can mean "to look intently." We aren't meant to casually glance at God, but rather to spend special time face to face. We are blessed when we truly see God's goodness!

**PRAY:** Lord, help me to see your goodness at work in my life. Help me to prioritize my time spent alone with you so that my perspective remains clear. Be my guide today. Amen.

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## SAT 5-13

"Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you." [Psalm 143:8, NLT] Every day, we have choices about what we will absorb into our spirit and what we will put out into the world. Follow David's lead in the way you begin each day!

**PRAY:** Gracious God, I acknowledge that I need you to remind me of who you are. Permeate my heart with your love and help me to trust and submit to your perfect ways. Amen.

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**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. Sometimes we have to really battle the tendency to be overly critical of others. When we are on the receiving end of heavy criticism, it can overwhelm and demoralize us. With God's help, we can avoid becoming *those people!*

## Reflect

- What is one of the best pieces of advice you have ever received? How has that advice impacted your life?
- Proverbs 15:31-33 says, "The ear that listens to life-giving correction dwells among the wise. Those who refuse discipline despise themselves, but those who listen to correction gain understanding. The fear of the LORD is wise instruction, and humility comes before respect." [CEB]
  - How do you tend to respond to constructive criticism? Does it matter who the person is who is giving it to you?
  - Can you think of a time that wisdom was offered, but you didn't listen? Why didn't you?
- There is a big difference between unjust or harsh criticism and constructive criticism. Read 1 Peter 2:21-23.
  - Describe Jesus' response to unjust criticism.
  - Why do you think we tend to put other people's opinions of us ahead of God's opinions of us?
  - How well do you deal with harsh criticism?
  - Are you currently struggling with being critical of a particular person or situation in your life?
- Can you recall a time when you witnessed someone dealing gracefully with undeserved criticism? What stood out to you about the situation? How has it influenced the way you respond?

**Pray** **God of grace, I thank you so much for the people you have placed in my life who share feedback that helps me to grow. Help me to listen with humility and wisdom as I learn and discern what is helpful. Give me the grace to share with those who are too critical and help me to seek your approval alone. Amen.**

**What did I learn?**

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**How might it apply in my life?**

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**What is a next step I can take?**

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