

## MON 6-19

"He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name." [Psalm 23:3, NLT] David describes the way God leads us as being along paths that honor God. God strengthens us to do what is right and good, so we have to take the steps to follow!

**PRAY:** Loving Lord, thank you for being my shepherd. Lead me into a truly good life, based not on my own wishes and instincts but on your eternal principles. Amen.

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## TUES 6-20

"Everyone is tempted by their own cravings; they are lured away and enticed by them." [James 1:14, CEB] God doesn't tempt us--when we are not listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, our inner desires cause us to rationalize poor choices. The good news is that God is always there, ready to help us when we have gotten off track.

**PRAY:** Lord Jesus, on my own I can easily lead myself down a destructive path. Thank you that you always lead me to righteousness. Help me to choose the fruitful life you have for me. Amen.

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## WED 6-21

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the self with its passions and its desires." [Galatians 5:24 CEB] Our natural tendency is to do things that benefit us. That leaning toward selfishness is the opposite of the way Christ taught us to live. It takes clear intention on our part to cultivate the good things of God in our hearts and minds.

**PRAY:** God, it is by your grace and with your strength that I can grow traits like patience, gentleness, and self-control in my life. Remind me today to seek to demonstrate these things. Amen.

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## THURS 6-22

"God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him." [John 3:17, NLT] Jesus wasn't a judge but was sent to bring healing and wholeness to a broken world. He came to help and to make things right again on earth, just like in heaven.

**PRAY:** Merciful God, thank you for leading in a loving way, absent of condemnation. Help me to mirror that to the people you have surrounded me with. Amen.

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## FRI 6-23

"Then he said to the crowd, 'If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.'" [Luke 9:23, NLT] Following Jesus isn't always easy. Giving up our way may mean we walk a difficult path as we do the right thing.

**PRAY:** Loving Christ, when we stand on the principles you taught us, it can feel like suffering in our culture. Give me a heart that is oriented toward you even when I am under pressure. Amen.

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## SAT 6-24

"After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice." [John 10:4, NLT] Jesus describes the importance of knowing the voice of God. God's loving protection, guidance, and care are offered to each of us, and when we listen and follow, we don't need to fear.

**PRAY:** Loving God, you are the shepherd and I am your sheep. You lead me away from trouble and onto higher ground. Thank you for calling me by name and guiding me every day. Amen.

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## Intro

The Lord's Prayer is a way to deepen your connection with God. When we pray this prayer and understand what we are praying, it has the power to change our lives. To experience the abundant life God has for us, we must actively resist whatever pulls us off track and focus on staying the course.

## Reflect

- Have you ever played a competitive sport? How did you prepare yourself physically? Mentally?
- Hebrews 12:1-2 challenges us. "So then, with endurance, let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Let's throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up, and fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter. He endured the cross, ignoring the shame, for the sake of the joy that was laid out in front of him, and sat down at the right side of God's throne." [CEB]
  - Looking away from other things and focusing on Christ takes intentionality. Describe a time when you had to put a lot of effort into keeping your eyes on Jesus.
  - Which parts of your spiritual life are the most challenging for you?
  - How does Christ's example of endurance give you perspective on your struggles?
- Temptation is very personal--what tempts one person is different than what tempts another. Have you identified the things that you struggle to resist? The New International Version uses the phrase "everything that hinders." Do you have a plan formulated to help you battle the things that hinder you?
- We are told to run with endurance. What are things that seem to weaken your faith when times get difficult? What are things that encourage you to keep working toward the goal of becoming more like Christ?
- In your day-to-day routine, what is a new practice or discipline you could incorporate that would help keep your mind's eye fixed on Jesus?

## Pray

Loving God, help me to develop a mature faith that endures any obstacle that might come my way. Strengthen me to fight the urge to stray off course and help me find deep satisfaction in making choices that reflect Christ's loving nature. Thank you for your unfailing love that never changes, even when I struggle. 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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