**I Love to Tell the Story**

Explore every story of Jesus in this year-long devotional guide. Go at your own pace using the online archive.

**Day 46: Jesus on Profanity**

Read: Matthew 7:6

Guided reflection:

*THE MESSAGE* states this verse: *“Do not be flip with the sacred. Banter and silliness give no honor to God. Don’t reduce holy mysteries to slogans. In trying to be relevant, you are only being cute and inviting sacrilege.*”

Some things are too special to be flippant. I immediately ask myself, is there any place where I am trying to be “cute or cool” and end up being disrespectful? Do we use God’s name in vain? What is sacred and holy in your life? My mother would ask me – would Jesus be proud of what you are saying if he physically walked in on your conversations?

Guided Prayer: *“Holy and wondrous God, forgive us for being flip and cool with things that deserve more respect. Guide our words and our thoughts so that all we do and say would bring honor to your name. Amen.”*

**Day 47: Jesus on answering prayer**

Read: Matthew 7: 7-11; Luke 11: 9-13

Guided reflection:

Jesus says we are to ASK for what we want. I have heard many people say they feel like it is selfish to ask God for the desires of their heart because prayers should only be for others. NO! Jesus says right here that if we have a desire, we should offer it to God and if we are seeking for some truth or opportunity, we should ask! I think Jesus is wanting us to understand that God loves us and takes delight in us. If we offer our desires to God, we are thrilling God by asking God to partner with us in making our dreams come true! So, Ask!

Guided Prayer: *“Giving God, these words say that we are to ask… this is the desire of my heart*

*(name it) – I ask that you hear my desire. I need to find some answers – this is what I am looking for (name it)… I ask that you participate with me in finding it. And, Lord, I would like for these doors to open for me (name what opportunity you want to open for you)… if these requests are answered, I will use these results to bring honor to your name. Amen!”*

**Day 48: Jesus and the Golden Rule**

Read: Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:31

Guided reflection:

Now, this is one you have learned from your childhood*… “do to others as you*

*want them to do to you!”* However, I think we live more like “do to others before they get the chance to do to you!” Right now, with whom are you frustrated or angry? How do you treat those who cause you harm? Are you treating others the way you wish folks would treat you? Aren’t you glad that Christ does not give us what we deserve – he gives us love!

Guided Prayer: *“O merciful God, forgive me, I do not live out this verse as I should. I pay so much attention to getting even, I forget that you do not go after me every time I disappoint you – you offer me love and grace. Help me to be more like you when it comes to the way I treat others. Amen”*

**Day 49: The Narrow Gate**

Read: Matt 7: 13-14, Luke 13: 23-24

Guided reflection:

Could this be Jesus’ retort to our Junior High complaint: “everyone else is doing it!”? Jesus is saying that when we are following Jesus, we may not end up traveling with the in crowd. We have to pay attention to our choices and our direction. Just because everyone else is doing it, does not mean that is the path Jesus has chosen for us. That would mean that we need to be in constant conversation with our “journey guide” – Jesus! Where do you think you are following the crowd and where do you think Jesus is leading you?

Guided prayer: *“O guiding light, help us to take our focus on what everyone else is doing and pay attention to where you are leading us. Show me my unique path in walking with you. And grant me the courage to walk away from the crowd. Amen”*

**Day 50: How to test another’s goodness**

Read: Matt 7:15-20; Luke 6:43-45

Guided reflection:

Jesus is asking us to pay attention to the results of what people say, not just their words. If you hear a new insight or truth, is it playing out in that teller’s life? Is it working for them? Does it “sit right” with your heart? Just because someone proclaims it or something is in writing, does not make it truth! Again, we have to be intentional, and think through (with the guidance of the spirit) as to what is true and what is not. We are not to be spiritually gullible! What comes out of your mouth? Your words and actions show what you truly believe. Would others be able to predict your belief system by watching you? We know folks by watching their fruits. Jesus’ kind of fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Gal 5:22)

Guided Prayer: *“I confess to you, O God that sometimes my words and my actions do not match. I not only need your wisdom on having my walk match my talk, but I need wisdom to know when someone else is teaching something that is not of you! Help me have open eyes to know what is good from what is false. Teach me your ways. Amen”*