

# Day 1

Josie Self - WCC

## Read

### Romans 4:5-8

*“But people are counted righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners. David also spoke of this when he described the happiness of those who are declared righteous without working for it: ‘Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin.’”*

## Think

Paul makes it clear that we’re not right before God because of our good works, but because of our faith in God who sent His son to forgive our sins and in Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. There is no amount of good works that we could do that would earn our forgiveness, but God made a way for us to be righteous and blameless in His sight. Because of this, we find joy in the Lord. Like Paul says, what joy is it for those whose sins have been forgiven!

## Reflect

In my relationship with God, is my focus on *my* sin or on *God’s* goodness? The Bible paints a clear picture that we should turn away from our sin and confess to God dailey, but it can’t stop at our brokenness. We need to then turn our gaze toward God, thanking Him for His goodness, for He has cleared our record of sin. This is how we experience joy in Christ, that we rejoice in His goodness. Are you just feeling guilty for sins, or are you receiving the joy of the Lord’s forgiveness? The Lord doesn’t speak shame over us, He speaks life and truth and the truth is that you are made pure and blameless in God’s sight. Rest in that truth today!

## Pray

God thank you for sacrificing your son for my sins when I was far from you. Thank you that when you look at me, you don’t see my sin and my mistakes, you see your child who you love. I choose to rejoice today because of your forgiveness. I choose to see myself the way that you see me today. Thank you that all you require of me is my faith. I know that I can never repay my debt, but I also know that you haven’t asked me to. Today, I rest in the truth that I belong to you and that you love me just as I am today. Amen.

# Day 2

Dan Self- WCC

## Read

**Matthew 25:40**

*“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”*

## Think

How interesting is it that Jesus compares himself to the “least”? He doesn’t tell his disciples to serve the least because he is *great* and *commands* it, but Jesus actually sees himself represented by the least in society. If you continue reading, you’ll see that Jesus equates unrighteousness with either an inability to *see* the least of these, or an unwillingness to *interact* with the least of these.

## Reflect

If pleasing God is about noticing, associating with, and caring for the “least” in our society, do you think you are pleasing God? The Holy Spirit dwells with those who humble themselves and serve those who need it, and I would imagine that for some of us, we can’t discern the Holy Spirit right now. What if the key to closing the gap between you and God doesn’t look like reading more or listening to more sermons/podcasts but actually *reaching out* and doing something for someone who needs it. It starts with tiny steps, and it grows into a great ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## Pray

Jesus, you are not asking me to do something that is impossible, and you are not asking me to go somewhere where you haven’t already God. In fact, I am humbled by your act of service to me- who was the least because of my sin, but through your humble sacrifice you restored me. Give me opportunities and courage to reach out to someone this week.

# Day 3

Chrissy Davis- HCC

**Read: James 4:1- 10** “Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

**3** We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. **4** And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. **5** In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. **6** And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself. **7** People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, **8** but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. **9** Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. **10** And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!”

**Think:** Do you think before you speak? Do you find yourself saying things and then regretting them? What do you say about people when they leave the room? The words we speak are very important and James points out that truth to us very clearly.

**Reflect:** How can you take every word you say seriously? What kinds of things does Jesus say about you? He says you are beloved, chosen in advance to be part of his family, royalty, worthy, his prize. He says this about everyone else. He loves all his people. We should speak of others the way Jesus sees them.

**Pray:** Jesus thank you for loving me, for choosing me and for chasing after me. Help me to think before I speak so that I may use my very powerful words to build others up not tear them down. Amen

# Day 4

Evan Klinkhammer- WCC

**Read:** 1 Samuel 1:9-17

9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Lord's house. 10 In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. 11 And she made a vow, saying, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

12 As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. 13 Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk 14 and said to her, "How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine."

15 "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. 16 Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

17 Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

**Think:** Hannah comes to God from a place of extreme vulnerability and honesty. She completely opens up her heart to God. All of her troubles, pain, and worries are put in front of Him through her authentic emotions. All too often in life, we have things that trouble us. Stress, uncertainty, depression, anxiety, pain and Sin are all very relevant things that many people are dealing with due to the circumstances of life and its messiness. Sometimes, it seems like the right answer is putting on a happy face and pushing through. All too often in these seasons I feel like if I let the things that are troubling me get to me, I am not trusting God with my life. So, instead of bringing these things to God, I try to hide them away to deal with them by myself. Hannah's story shows us the opposite. She came to God "in her deep anguish" and was so visibly distraught that she looked like she was drunk. This is how God wants us to come to Him with our troubles, authentically, not holding anything back. God can take it. Instead of hiding our troubles away so God doesn't see them, God shows us, through Hannah, how He wants us to come to Him, with a wide open heart.

**Reflect:** What is something in your life that is troubling you? How have you been dealing with this thing? Do you feel like you have been able to bring it to God? What would it look like for you to be like Hannah and be fully open with God?

Find a quiet place, and bring your troubles to Him. Be open and honest, even if it means being angry, sad, or confused, God can take it. Ask God to respond, even if it is just through providing peace or encouragement.

**Pray:** God, Life is so messy. Things don't feel like they are the way they should be. Give me the strength to be honest with You, and help me face my troubles. I give everything to You, and ask You to respond. Provide my heart with peace, and give me encouragement. I know that You are good, and through You everything will be made Good. Hear my prayers and be quick to show me Your grace.

Amen

# Day 5

## Read

“And so we know and rely on the **love God** has for us. **God is love**. Whoever lives in **love** lives in **God**, and **God** in them.” - 1 John 4:16

## Think

If you have ever been misunderstood, it can be very discouraging and frustrating. But God is misunderstood all the time. Growing up, I thought God was a cosmic Killjoy in the sky, trying to ruin my fun with a list of strict rules. Or a Police Officer, hiding at a busy traffic intersection, waiting to bust me with a speeding ticket. Or a Santa Claus of sorts, always watching, making his list and checking it twice, rewarding the good kids for doing right, and punishing the evil doers with hellfire. Because of this, I wanted to stay as far away from God as possible. After all, who wants to be friends with a strict killjoy whose just waiting to catch you doing wrong? And that’s where the problem comes in: we all have a view of God. And sometimes what we think about God isn’t true. If we think the wrong things about God, it ends up hurting our relationship with Him.

## Reflect

**What comes to mind when you think about God?** How you view God will frame your relationship with Him. And how you view God is the most important thing about you. **Here we read, “God is love” (1 John 4:16).** God is so full of love for the entire world, and for you! How does that change your view of God today? How does it change how you interact with God and others?

## Pray

God, thank you for your great love for me. Help me to believe in and live in your love for me, so I can share your love with others today. Amen.