

BACK TO SCHOOL

DIGGING DEEPER

BUILD CHARACTER

AUGUST 20

As school is set to start, let's go back to the basics. In this series, we discover what it looks like to explore God and be rooted in the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Our goal is to help each other in knowing that God guides us to make wise choices and He has given us the Bible to grow in obedience, forgiveness, love, and faith.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

We are in the middle of Pray First, where we are focusing our attention as a church on prayer. Instead of our normal Digging Deeper structure, take the time with your spiritual running partners, family, or group to pray with and for one another. You can either go to our Pray First Journal and videos on the app to guide your time or feel free to use the guide below that will walk you through an abbreviated version of the Tabernacle prayer.

In the Old Testament, the Tabernacle was the dwelling place of God, built to His specifications, where He would meet His people. As they entered the Tabernacle, they passed through seven stations, following God's instructions, to experience His presence. Today, even though we no longer need the physical Tabernacle to meet with God, these same steps can help us connect with Him. This prayer model will take us through some of the stations of the Tabernacle and use the purpose of each station to guide our prayers.

1. The Outer Court- Prayer of thanksgiving and praise

Description: The outer courts were the place where all people, even those who weren't Jewish could enter the Temple to be near God. The people were to enter the Tabernacle with thanksgiving and praise, and give God the attention He was owed.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. PSALM 100:4 NIV

Practice: Make this your own. Spend some thanking God for all the blessings in your life or ways you have seen Him show up recently.

2. The Laver- Prayer of repentance

Description: Only the Priests (those who went before God for people) could go further into the Tabernacle. Once they passed, the Brazen Altar reminded them they needed something to cover their sins so they could be in the presence of a Holy God. In the Tabernacle was a bowl of water made for the priests to wash themselves before going to meet with God. People were reminded of their sinfulness at the altar and then their need to be cleansed and forgiven by God at the laver. Checking our hearts and motives and surrendering our lives to God is an important part of daily prayer.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ROMANS 12:1 ESV



Practice: Make this your own. Because of what Jesus did on the cross, we can confess our sins to Him and receive complete forgiveness and a fresh start. In prayer, acknowledge where you've sinned or rebelled against God and humbly and sincerely turn away from your sins and allow God's forgiveness to help you turn back to Him. Then, invite Him into every part of your life.

3. The Ark of the Covenant- Prayer of Intercession

Description: The final place in the Tabernacle was the Holy of Holies, where God's presence dwelled. It was here on what was called the mercy seat that God would come and be with the priest. There were two angels on each end of the ark (on each side of the mercy seat.) There, the priest interceded by praying on behalf of the people of God. When Jesus was raised from the dead, Mary went to the tomb and found Jesus' body gone, and on either side of where His body was laid was an angel. Jesus came down and showed us perfect mercy, rather than giving us the punishment/judgment we deserved, which opened up full access for us to God. So now, in the same way, we intercede on behalf of those around us.

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4 NIV

Practice: Make this your own. We can make a difference when we spend time praying for others. Pray for those with whom you interact and connect.

NEXT STEPS

1. Keep praying! Head on over to the Gateway church app to find our Pray First journal and videos!

FOR THE PARENTS

Families:

Hey, families! Here's a look at what we're covering with your kids so you can help them continue to grow at home during the week.

THIS WEEK

This week, kids hear about our third Key Concept: Build Character!

THE BIBLE: Deuteronomy 5:1-22

THE MESSAGE: Being a person with strong character means you exhibit positive traits, such as love, joy, patience, kindness and self-control. When we build character, it means we are growing those traits. This process is a partnership between us and God! It requires a daily commitment on our behalf to learn what God wants from us and to actively seek to live that way. AND it requires God to do a transforming work inside of us that we could never do on our own.

BIG IDEA: God gives us rules to help us be more like Jesus.



ASK THIS

Because sometimes you and your kid need a conversation-starter that isn't, "So . . . how was church?"

What do you think it means to build character?

Why do you think God gave His people rules to follow?

What can we as a family do to build character this week?

REMEMBER THIS

*We have a different memory verse every week in this series! This week, your kids are memorizing the Bible verse: **Deuteronomy 5:32**, in case you want to work on them together.*

Preschool: "So be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you..."

Elementary: "So be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left."

NEXT WEEK

Next week, we'll explore the fourth Key Concept: You Belong!

