

# Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 6/16/19

**Monday** – Read Ephesians 2:1-3. **Living in Sin.** John Newton's mother, a Godly woman, died when he was six years old. John left school when he was eleven to begin life as a sailor. For many years he lived a life of rebellion and debauchery. As a young man, John worked in the slave trade, capturing, selling, and transporting Africans into slavery in the West Indies and the Americas. He eventually became the captain of his own slave ship. This was a cruel and vicious way of life. On March 10, 1748, a storm threatened to sink his ship, and John cried out to God for help. He began to read the Bible and Thomas a Kempis's book, *Imitation of Christ*. This was the beginning of his conversion, but for several years he continued as a slave ship captain, trying to justify his work by seeking to improve the conditions and by holding public worship services for his hardened crew each Sunday. Through this period, God convicted him of his sin and his need for a Savior. As you pray, confess your sins to God and consider God's amazing grace: *Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.*

**Tuesday** – Read Ephesians 2:4-6 and I John 4:7-12. **Prevenient Grace.** God loves us first and reaches out to us before we ever love God. God loves us simply because God is good. God even loved a slave-trader and began to convict John Newton of his sin that he might turn to God. The Apostle John says that God demonstrated prevenient grace by sending his Son into the world that we might live through him and to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. *To atone means to reconcile and make right.* The Sacrificial Theory of Atonement is the belief that we can only be made right with God through offering a sacrifice. In Jesus, God provides the sacrifice. Jesus is both the Priest and the Sacrificial Victim. John says that because God loves us we ought to love one another. Spend some time thinking about the depth of God's love for you, and then ask God to help you share God's love with the people in your life. *Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; 'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.*

**Wednesday** – Read Ephesians 2:4-9. **Saved by Grace.** Methodists call it *Justifying Grace*, which means *the grace that forgives us of our sins and makes us right with God.* Because God loves us first, we respond by loving God. When we have felt the conviction of our sins, we realize that we need a Savior. God's justifying grace leads us to confess our sins, to profess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When it was suggested that John Newton retire at age 82 due to poor health and a failing memory, he responded, "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior!" Have you given your life to Jesus and experienced his justifying grace? As you pray, ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. *'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.*

**Thursday** – Read Romans 6:1-23. **Sanctifying Grace.** *Sanctifying Grace is the grace that helps us grow in God's ways,* and Sanctification is the practice of holy living. It is the process through which a person learns to live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. John Wesley explained, "At the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins. In that instant we are 'born again', 'born from above', 'born of the Spirit.' There is a real as well as a relative change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God." Ask Jesus to help you grow in his ways. *The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures; he will my shield and portion be, as long as life endures.*

**Friday** – Read Ephesians 2:10. **Saved with a Purpose.** John Newton's tombstone reads: "John Newton, clerk, once and infidel and Libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he so long labored to destroy." God saved John Newton for the purpose of preaching his Good News and working to abolish slavery. Ask God to show you God's purpose for your life and help you fulfill your purpose *Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease, I shall possess, within the veil, a life of joy and peace.*

**Saturday** – Read I John 4:13-16a. **Living in God's Grace.** God loves us so much that he has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit to live in each person who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God. The Hebrew word *Ruach* and the Greek word *Pneuma* mean *wind, breath, or spirit.* Place your hand in front of your mouth and blow. As you feel the warmth of your breath, ponder the presence of the living God in your life through the Holy Spirit. God lives in you, and you live in God. When Jesus was born, they called him *Emmanuel* which means *God with us.* How does it make you feel to know that the God of the universe knows you, loves you, and lives in you? Spend some time talking and listening to God in prayer.

**Lectionary Readings:** Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15.

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