

# Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 6/30/19

**Monday** – Psalm 38:4; 32:1-5; 103:8-12. **Finding Peace from Guilt and Shame.** In 1944, Jill Jackson went through a divorce and became so depressed that she attempted suicide, which she survived. She then experienced God’s love and found peace and healing from depression and shame. Suicide is never the answer. Getting help is the answer. God loves you and will help you. Guilt and shame and sin is a burden that is too heavy to bear. When we don’t ask for God’s forgiveness and seek to be reconciled to God through repentance, we carry around with us the guilt and the weight of our sins. The Psalmist encourages us to confess our sins to the Lord because we know that the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Are you tired of carrying the weight of your sins? Spend some time confessing your sins to God and open your heart to receive God’s love and forgiveness. Pray for people who are struggling with depression.

**Tuesday** – Read Mathew 5:1-12. **Blessed Are the Peacemakers.** Jesus began his Sermon on the Mount by telling us who is blessed in the kingdom of God. Notice the number of verses which teach us how to deal with conflict. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” He didn’t say, “Blessed are the peacekeepers.” There is a real difference between a *peacemaker* and a *peacekeeper*. Peacekeepers often avoid confrontation to keep peace. Peacemakers embrace confrontation to make peace. Peacemakers are willing to endure and embrace confrontation if that’s what it takes to make peace. How do you typically respond to conflict? Are you more of a peacekeeper or a peacemaker? Why do so many of us tend to be peacekeepers instead of peacemakers? Spend some time in prayer asking God to help you to be a peacemaker.

**Wednesday** – Read Romans 12:14-21. **Live Peaceably with All.** It is difficult to bless those who persecute you. Most of us would prefer to repay another person evil for evil, but the Apostle Paul tells us, <sup>18</sup> *If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all....* <sup>21</sup> *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* This is not an easy teaching. In almost every ongoing relational struggle there is not just one person at fault. There are two people at fault. The point is that we must own our part in any conflict. Think about a person with whom you may be in conflict, and ask God to help you own your responsibility for the conflict and to find a way to apologize to that person.

**Thursday** – Read Proverbs 11:2, 15:1, 4; James 3:13-18. **Pride Versus Humility.** The greatest enemy to peacemaking is pride, and the greatest friend to peacemaking is humility. How have you seen pride impact your ability to be a peacemaker in your relationships? What does humility look like in your life? How can you develop a more humble heart? Why is it so important to apologize with integrity? What do you think is the hardest part of apologizing with integrity? Think of a time when you apologized to someone with integrity. How did your apology impact you and your relationship with that person? Ask God to remove your pride and fill you with humility in your relationships.

**Friday** – Read I Peter 3:8-12. **How to Say, “I’m Sorry.”** Peter calls us to the difficult teaching of living in community. <sup>8</sup> *Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.* <sup>9</sup> *Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called – that you might inherit a blessing.* How do we seek peace and apologize with integrity? Consider taking the five steps we discussed in our sermon on Sunday. 1.) In your apology, admit to specific actions and attitudes. 2.) Do not make excuses for the wrong you have done. 3.) Accept the consequences for your actions. 4.) Repent by changing your behavior. 5.) Sincerely ask the other person to forgive you. Ask God to help you *seek peace* by following these five steps.

**Saturday** – Read Isaiah 9:2 and Luke 1:78-79. **The Way of Peace.** In Isaiah’s day, Israel faced the looming prospect of darkness. Babylon’s armies would defeat them. Many of them would die; Babylon would carry others away as exiles. That darkness ended, but dark times are still a regular part of the human condition. We still need to hear that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. In what ways do you need God’s light to shine in your life? Zechariah saw that God was going to work through Jesus to bring peace to the world in a way that would allow God’s people to serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness all our days. Israel was an occupied state, so in one way, peace meant that Jesus would save them from the violence of Rome, but Zechariah also saw that Jesus would offer us peace in a way that goes beyond our geo-political situation. A life without Jesus Christ is a life without peace, and a life with Jesus Christ brings the peace that passes all understanding. Ask Jesus to guide your feet into the way of peace.

**Lectionary Readings:** II Kings 2:1-14; Psalm 77:1-20; Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62.

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