

God, Thank You for loving me unconditionally despite my mistakes and failures. I would be lost without Your grace, mercy, and forgiveness. Help me treat each day as a gift, walking in Your ways and fulfilling my given purposes! Amen.

## October 14 – In God’s Eyes

### READ

John 7:1-8:20

Luke 9:51-62

Matthew 8:18-22

John 8: 3-11, *“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now, what do you say?’ They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing Him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with His finger. When they kept on questioning Him, He straightened up and said to them, ‘Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.’ Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ ‘No one, sir,’ she said. ‘Then neither do I condemn you,’ Jesus declared. ‘Go now and leave your life of sin.’”*

### THINK

Can you imagine the feeling of isolation, shame, fear, and rejection the woman caught in adultery felt as she stood before Jesus and her accusers, waiting to die a horrible death by stoning? Her life was expendable; she didn’t matter and was merely a decoy to trap Jesus into contradicting the Law of Moses — but Jesus wasn’t having it!

As the woman made eye contact with Jesus, sinless and perfect, she probably expected to see disappointment, judgment, or frustration in His eyes. But instead, Jesus looked back with love. He advocated on her behalf and presented a defense that caused everyone holding a stone to reflect on the condition of their own heart. While He stooped to draw in the sand, every accuser, one by one, dropped their rocks and walked away. Then Jesus got down to the real and the raw. It was time for her to leave her life of failure and move forward in forgiveness.

When we mess up, Jesus looks at us the same way! He shows His love and compassion by advocating for us to the Father. Once we receive Him into our hearts, we’re no longer condemned but saved. We are spared from death and given a purpose as we turn away from our sin and follow Him!

### PRAY

Father, Help me to have true humility and self-awareness in understanding my great need for You. Guide me to show great love and care to all people, especially those society considers lesser valuable. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## October 13 – Less of Me

### READ

Mark 9:14-50

Matthew 17:14-18:35

Luke 9:37-50

Luke 9:48, *“Whoever welcomes this little child in My name welcomes Me; and whoever welcomes Me welcomes the one who sent Me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.”*

### THINK

*“It’s hard to be humble when you’re as great as I am ... I’m not the greatest; I’m the double greatest.”* — Muhammad Ali

Do you ever think more highly of yourself than you should? Does your head ever puff with pride when you consider your accomplishments? Like Ali in his glory days of boxing, do you ever think of yourself as so great that it’s hard to be humble? If so, then in today’s reading, Jesus does it again! He turns our natural bent towards wanting to be the greatest upside down and inside out! And, He might just have a few words for you!

Jesus’ disciples were arguing over which one of them was the greatest. When Jesus heard, He taught them that genuine greatness is only achieved through humility. He declared that the one who is considered the least of humanity is, in fact, the greatest. To illustrate His lesson, He showed tender-loving care to those who were the most vulnerable — little, innocent children.

Here’s what we need to understand: Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it’s thinking of yourself less. It’s putting aside your natural self-centeredness and putting the needs of someone else first.

Humility is a mark of maturity, and Jesus is the perfect example of this. He thought more of us and less of Himself as He died a gruesome and painful death on the cross for our sins.

Who around you is in need? Who can you serve, even though no one expects it from you – a co-worker, a family member, a total stranger? How can you “be great” by humbling yourself and extending Christ’s love to others?

### PRAY

## **October 12 – Three of a Kind**

### **READ**

Mark 8:22-9:13

Matthew 16:13-28, 17:1-13

Luke 9:18-36

Matthew 17:5, *“A voice from the cloud said, ‘This is My Son whom I dearly love. I am very pleased with Him. Listen to Him!’”*

### **THINK**

Words are important. What we say matters, especially regarding the communication between a parent and child! In today's verse, God gives us the perfect pattern to follow. He says the following three phrases about His Son – words we need to speak to the children in our lives:

1. I love you.
2. I'm proud of you.
3. Listen because my child has much to offer.

What a powerful example for us to follow! Whether you are a parent, a mentor, a friend, or a family member, this fantastic three-fold formula is critically important to build our children's self-esteem. Kids need to hear that you love them, even if you think they already know it. They need to know that you're proud of them for who they are and what they accomplish. And finally, one of the biggest boosts to their souls is to tell others how much they have to offer the world.

Remember these three phrases because they make a world of difference! Just think, if Jesus needed this from His Father, how much more do our children need the same from us?

### **PRAY**

God, I never cease to be amazed by the wisdom of Your Word. What a great example You set within those three simple yet easily forgotten phrases that kids need to hear! Give me the desire and the discipline to say them as often as possible to the children in my life. Thank You! In Jesus' name, Amen.

## **PRAY**

Dear Lord, Convict my heart to make necessary changes with an open mind, knowing You only have my best interest at heart. Humble me as I approach You in prayer with my petitions and prayer. Amen.

## October 11 – “But Even...”

### READ

Mark 7:24-37

Matthew 15:21-16:12, 8:1-21

Mark 7:25-29, *“Right away a woman who had heard about him came and fell at his feet. Her little girl was possessed by an evil spirit, and she begged Him to cast out the demon from her daughter. Since she was a Gentile, born in Syrian Phoenicia, Jesus told her, ‘First I should feed the children—my own family, the Jews. It isn’t right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs.’ She replied, ‘That’s true, Lord, **but even** the dogs under the table are allowed to eat the scraps from the children’s plates.’ ‘Good answer!’ He said. ‘Now go home, for the demon has left your daughter.’”*

### THINK

Do you ever take offense to God’s Word? Maybe you’ve read something that just rubbed you the wrong way, which can happen when we don’t understand the context in which specific passages were written. But at the end of it all, we must realize that God always has our best interest at heart. His Word strikes nerves because it convicts our hearts and brings light to what’s wrong in our lives. But imagine approaching Jesus Himself and receiving a seemingly adversarial response that at first appears as if He’s rejecting your plea for help. Would your faith be strong enough not to take immediate offense?

In today’s reading, a Gentile woman learned Jesus was in the vicinity and immediately found Him, fell at His feet, and begged Him to cast a demon out of her daughter. The disciples tried to get Jesus to simply move on, not to bother with her. But Jesus didn’t budge. However, His response seems harsh at first. In fact, Jews often referred to Gentiles as “dogs” in those times. Jesus challenged her by saying He’d not come to “feed” others, but the Israelites, on the Bread of Life. The woman’s faith wouldn’t be shaken. She cleverly said, “But even dogs eat crumbs dropped from the table.” With two little words: “But even” she presents us with the opportunity to learn three things from her response:

- She didn’t take offense to Jesus’ words.
- She maintained humility before Jesus, understanding that He was the Savior and worthy of her worship
- Jesus tested her faith, and she persistently pursued Him

Are you willing to be open-minded and make necessary changes when God convicts your heart? Will you be humble and unwavering in faith when God tests you in times of trial? Learn from this woman and be blessed by the healing and life-change only available through Christ.

## **October 10 – Fed on the Ultimate Bread**

### **READ**

John 6:22-71

Mark 7:1-23

Matthew 15:1-20

John 6:35, *“Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.’”*

### **THINK**

The church is a table where people come to get fed, and the main course is the Bread of Life — Jesus. But although everyone is welcome at the table, not everyone eats because Jesus doesn't force-feed anyone. It's up to us to decide whether or not to dine on the cosmic carbohydrate, the authentic soul food only found in Christ.

Once we know where to get fed on the Bread, we need to share it. We need to push away from the table to do what God wants us to do. We can easily get so stuffed that we forget about the hungry hunks of humanity dying of spiritual starvation. Therefore, we must be intentional about stepping out and inviting others to the table. So, don't allow yourself to gorge and get too comfortable. Remember, we are simply beggars showing other beggars where to get food; we must lead them towards the life-giving, life-transforming Bread! Today, as you partake in the ultimate meal, be sure to push away from the table and seek out those who hunger for true meaning and hope!

### **PRAY**

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank You for quenching my spiritual appetite. Help me remain focused on stepping out of my comfort zone and inviting others to join me at the table. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## October 9 – More Than Enough

### READ

Luke 9:7-17

Mark 6:14-56

Matthew 14:1-36

John 6:1-21

Matthew 14:20, *"They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over."*

### THINK

After spending the day with 5,000 people and watching Jesus perform miraculous healings, the disciples were ready to close up shop and send everyone home for dinner. The problem was, they were in the middle of nowhere! There was no Taco Bell or McDonald's for miles. Not wanting the people to leave hungry, Jesus looked at His disciples and said, "You feed them!" What?! Surely, their jaws dropped as they thought, "How? We only have a couple of fish and five loaves of bread!" Ironically, they were stuck on logistics and forgot that they were standing before the logic-defying power of the Bread of Life! In Jesus' hands, not only was there enough food to satisfy every person — they even had leftovers!

Like the disciples, we often think that what we have to offer is insufficient for meeting the challenge before us. We freeze up and forget that not only did Jesus come to give us eternal life, but life to the full! Whatever we lack, Jesus provides. If we take whatever little talents, abilities, or resources we have and place them in God's hands, He pours out His blessing and turns the ordinary into the extraordinary.

So, how do we hand over our "two fish and five loaves of bread" to God? We pray, then trust and obey Him. When we do, we'll never go hungry, we'll always have more than enough, and the results will always be greater than we ever thought possible!

### PRAY

God, Thank You for reminding me that You are more than enough. Please show me what I have to offer — even if I think it's insignificant. I want to be effective for Your kingdom and make Your name known! In Jesus' name, Amen.

## October 8 – Sight to the Blind

### READ

Matthew 9:27-10:42, 13:53-58

Mark 6:1-13

Luke 9:1-6

Matthew 9:29-30a, *“Then He touched their eyes and said, ‘According to your faith let it be done to you,’ and their sight was restored...”*

### THINK

One day, two blind men called out to Jesus for healing. In response, He asked them one simple question: “Do you believe that I can do this?” The men answered, “Yes, Lord.”

These men had never *seen* Jesus, but they’d *heard* about His miraculous healing power and believed. Despite their blindness, the eyes of their heart saw with great visual acuity. And due to their faith, Jesus changed their lives forever with just one touch.

Unfortunately, physical sight does not preclude us from spiritual blindness. Many people are groping through the darkness of sin and self-reliance, blind to what they most need – Jesus’ healing touch! But the moment we place our faith in Jesus, believing that through Him all things are possible, He touches our hearts and opens our eyes to a new life of possibility, freedom, and purpose anchored in God’s absolute truth.

With one touch, Jesus restored the sight of the blind, and He wants to do the same for us. How is your spiritual vision? Are the eyes of your heart open and receptive to change? Allow the Lord’s healing touch to bring about clarity and focus into your life!

### PRAY

Dear Lord, I want to have a 20/20 spiritual vision. Open the eyes of my heart to see what You want me to see and guide my hands to touch the lives of others with Your message of hope and everlasting change. In Jesus’ name, Amen.