

SOUTHWOOD UNITED CHURCH

SUMMER DEVOTIONS 2022

WEEK 2 – JULY 7 – 11

Thursday, July 7

Reading: Psalm 118:24 *This is the day that God has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

Thought: The inspiration for my monthly themes comes from a variety of places. This month, I told my husband that I was searching for something to flourish in during July and he quickly responded with “appreciation.” Now, I consider myself a pretty appreciative person, so my first reaction was to pass this suggestion by. But - I have also learned that when Kelly suggests something I should pay attention. As I considered what it would mean to truly flourish in appreciation. I began to have so many ideas of what kind of devotions to write and so many Bible verses came to mind that I decided appreciation would be a good thing to consider. This particular Bible verse is a favorite of mine. I have made it part of my spiritual practice to begin each day saying the prayer below. It has become important to me to thank God before my day begins and to express my faith and trust and to appreciate that everything that happens is part of God’s plan for me. ***How do you begin your day? How do you start your spiritual practice?***

Prayer: Dear God – thank you for this day and everything in it.

Friday, July 8

Reading: Colossians 3:15 *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

Thought: This Bible verse came up when I searched the internet for Bible quotes related to appreciation. There are a lot of verses that are related to appreciation, but this one rather piqued my interest. I love the concept of peace ruling in my heart, and I truly believe that as Christians and members of the church we are called to peace. However, it was the “and be thankful” that really caught my attention. I think it is important that the writer of the letter to the Colossians doesn’t say what we are to be thankful for. We are simply told to be thankful. Living a life of peace and appreciation for all that God sends us is part of what it means to live as a follower of Jesus. To let peace rule in our hearts, and to be thankful. ***Are you thankful?***

Prayer: Jesus – you are the Prince of Peace and my saviour. Let your peace enter my heart and make truly appreciative.

Saturday, July 9

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Be joyful always. Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Thought: It's easy to give thanks and express our appreciation when things are going well. It's harder when things get difficult. When things are not going well, I do my best to remember this verse, remind myself that I do not know God's plan for my life, and that God can and does use all things for good. I have found that many things at first thought seemed "bad" have eventually turned out to be things I really do appreciate. For example, getting laid off from my job seemed like a difficult thing, but resulted in part time work that brought new focus into my life and allowed me to spend more time with my family. Our church is facing some difficult challenges, yet this brings an opportunity to refocus our mission and allow us to re-evaluate our programs and how God is calling us to best serve our world and community. ***Will you give thanks and express your appreciation to God in all circumstances?***

Prayer: Gracious God – I give praise and thanks for your presence in my life and church. Help me to give appreciate all things, pray always and continually feel the joy that flows from you,

Sunday, July 10

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:2 *We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.*

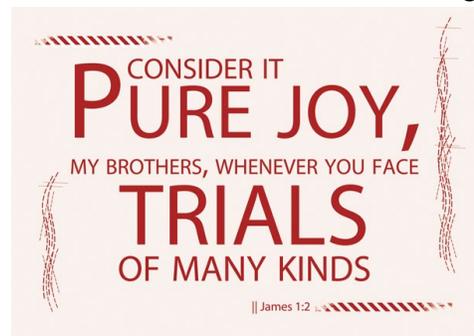
Thought: I hope you know that I appreciate each and every one of you that take the time to read these devotions. Many of you have expressed your appreciation for them, which is lovely, and I do appreciate that. But, what I really love is that by simply reading these devotions you inspire me to write more, and in that writing, I find my own faith growing and deepening. THANK YOU! ***Who in your life do you appreciate and thank God for?***

Prayer: Loving God – thank you for all the people in my spiritual community. I give you praise and appreciate their presence in my life, their love, thoughts, and inspiration.

Monday, July 11

Reading: James 1:2 *Consider it pure joy my brothers when you face trials of many kinds, because you know that testing of your faith develops perseverance.*

Thought: I usually think of situations when I reflect on the trials I have endured and may be faced with in the future. When I read this verse again, I was struck that some of the "trials" that test my faith and composure the most are dealing with people. I confess that I am an impatient person and find certain characteristics in others to be frustrating and challenging. As I contemplated this concept, I realized that often those frustrating moments have resulted in my slowing down and have enabled me to make better decisions. It was a bit of an "aha" moment and brought me new appreciation for those people who challenge me and help me to grow as a person, granting me the space and time to grow in grace and hopefully wisdom. ***Are there people in your life who challenge you? Do you appreciate them?***



Prayer: Creator God – thank you for all the people in my life who challenge me. Help me to appreciate their presence in my life.