

40 DAYS OF PRAYER
LENT DEVOTIONAL

Week #3: February 26 - March 2

Monday, February 26 | Day 11

Today's Devotional comes from Charles Alfonso

Scripture: *John 17:6* "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word."

In this verse, Jesus is praying for his disciples who are with him at the time. In speaking to the Father, he describes the disciples as those "you gave me." What does it mean that the disciples were given to Jesus by the Father, and what are the implications for us?

First, those given to Jesus are, in and of themselves, no different than any other person. They were given to Jesus "out of the world." The word "world" in John's Gospel is used to describe this planet, and the people living in it – sinful, fallen people, who are living in darkness and are at odds with God. In other words, before they come to the Son, the ones given to Him are worldly. Those given to Jesus are taken out of the world.

Second, those given to Jesus belonged first to the Father. Jesus prays, "they were yours; you gave them to me." The ones given to Jesus first belong to the Father, as they were chosen in eternity past. They have been set apart through salvation by the Father before the world began. Those who come to believe in Jesus now belong to Him.

Third, Jesus reveals the Father to the ones given to Him. Jesus prayed, "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world." To reveal something means to make it clear or obvious. Jesus made the Father's person, work and power known to His disciples. Jesus' mission was to glorify God. He had accomplished His mission by revealing the Father to those given to Him. John 1:18 says, "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known."

Lastly, those given to Jesus by the Father keep God's word. "They have obeyed your word." To keep God's word is to believe and obey God's word. Jesus was praying for His disciples, and He believed that they had kept God's word. However, this is confusing because these same disciples have been a mess up until that time! They struggled to believe and were disobedient at times. We know that they would continue to struggle until Jesus' death! How could Jesus have this reassuring opinion of them? It is because Jesus did not claim that their faith and obedience were *perfect*, but that their faith and obedience were *authentic*. Earlier they had confessed to Jesus, "Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God." (John 16:30)

In similar ways, we are called to be in the world and not of it. And we are called to obey and live out the word. It is possible for our faith to be true yet small, and our obedience real yet at

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times inconsistent. It would be better to have faith that is always true and big, and obedience that is unfaltering and always consistent. But when we struggle in our faith, it does not mean that it is fake. The heroes of the scriptures were far from perfect, but they possessed authentic faith.

I invite you to pray this prayer: "Father, thank you for revealing yourself through Jesus. Thank you for giving me clarity on how to live in this world. I am to be in it, but not of it. Thank you for encouraging me to strive for holiness. Father, keep me in Your presence. Strengthen me with Your Word not to go back into the world. My understanding is incomplete, and I still have a long way to go, but I commit to follow You and Your Word alone so I can be closer to You. I pray for You to continue to make my faith and my obedience stronger each day, in Jesus' name, Amen."

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Tuesday, February 27 | Day 12

Today's Devotional comes from Eden Foester

Scripture: *John 17:7* "Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you."

Acknowledging that everything comes from God, how can we cultivate a spirit of gratitude and stewardship in our daily lives?

In this verse, Jesus states that everything given to Him is from the Father. Jesus came and showed the world that everything comes from God, even all that He had. It's important for us as followers of Jesus to know that we are completely dependent and sustained by God. Without Him, we are nothing. It takes humility and faith to believe this. To know in humility that we can do nothing on our own, but to believe in faith that we are children of a powerful, almighty, rich, and kind God. A God who calls Himself our Father.

What does it mean to be a "child of God?" I've heard this phrase since I was young, but didn't understand the depth of it until more recently. I'm a 19-year-old missionary and have been living in The Philippines for the past couple months. Being so far from home and so far from my earthly father has made me realize why God calls himself my Father. A child is designed to live in complete trust that their father will provide, love, and take care of them. This is how God wants us to live with Him, completely trusting in His character as our good Father. I always felt this way about my earthly father, but recently God has shown me how deeply He cares for me as my Heavenly Father. He has provided SO much for me, protected me in crazy situations, given me wisdom and discernment when I need it, and has poured His love over me again and again. As I've been growing up, moving out, and doing new things, I've only felt like more of a child of God. He's teaching me that being completely dependent on Him and trusting in His character each day is the best place I can be.

This mindset shifts us from always wanting more things, bigger things, and better things, to living a life filled with gratitude. When we know that ALL of the good things given to us are from God, there is no other response than to give thanks and praise! What if instead of always asking God for more, we instead chose to thank Him for what He's given us? The book of Psalms demonstrates this so beautifully, that no matter the circumstances, no matter how we feel, there is always praise to be lifted to God. There is always something to be thankful for. We are called to be people FILLED with gratitude. We are called to trust that He knows what's best for us as our Father, so every day we can thank Him for what He's given us.

This mindset also helps us to steward our day-to-day lives. Acknowledging that everything comes from God should make us want to honor Him with all that we have. God has entrusted each of us with something. Whether that's your job, children, relationships, money, responsibilities, etc. these are all things that God has chosen to give us. When we receive these things from Him, it's important to steward them with fear of the Lord, maintaining the fruits of the Spirit in all that we do. Is there an area of your life that God has entrusted you with that you aren't stewarding well? There is no shame in this, but our Father wants to help and guide us in this today so that everything He's given us can be used for the kingdom!

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God, thank you that everything good comes from you. Thank you for being a good Father, and for giving me all that I need and more. Thank you that in you, I lack nothing. Help me to live a life of gratitude, and to steward my life in the ways that you desire. Reveal yourself to me as my true Heavenly Father. Show me how I can make room for you in each area of my life and truly live as your child today. Amen.

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Wednesday, February 28 | Day 13

Today's Devotional comes from Jeff Ernst

Scripture: *John 17:7: "Now they (the Disciples) know that everything you have given me comes from you." (NIV). The Message Version reads "...they know now, beyond a shadow of doubt..."*

Once we come to see God, the Father, at work and in unity with Jesus Christ, the Son, then we can know and grasp a true concept of who God is and what He is like!

In [John 14:6-9](#) Jesus reveals to His followers that He is the way (to God), the truth, and the life! He tells them, "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well." Philip replies, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"

As a young boy growing up without a father at home, I was told that I was a "mirror image" of him, even though I never got to know my dad (my parents never married). Growing up in a Christian family I longed for a relationship with my Heavenly Father, but I always wondered what He was like. God seemed so BIG; so mysterious. Then, I started reading in the Bible about Jesus' life, His coming to our world to experience everything that we go through. In our Scripture passage, Christ "reflects" the true nature and character of God in His everyday interactions with His followers, and the people's lives He touched.

Because Jesus displayed His Father's true splendor, we never have to ponder what God is really like! He was His Father's Son: a "mirror image!"

How can we "reflect" a Christ-like image to those around us, especially revealing His true character and lifestyle? What are some specific characteristics of Jesus we want God's Spirit to display in our lives?

Think about how Jesus reflected His Father, and embrace/mirror one or two characteristics to focus on each day. For example: His love and compassion for people, His words of comfort and healing, His devotion to prayer, His grace and mercy, His resistance to temptation, or His passion for the Kingdom of God.

Spend time over the next month meditating on our devotional theme: Who our Heavenly Father is, as revealed in Jesus, His Son! May you find comfort in knowing, beyond a shadow of doubt, that God is just like Jesus. Everything Christ revealed to His Disciples is also meant for us!

Dear Jesus, thank you for leaving me a "photo album" with true images of what my Heavenly ("Abba") Father is really like. Lead me to pursue more godliness, as I pursue more Christlikeness!" Father God, I rest in the assurance that You are a true "mirror image" of Christ! Fill me with hope in Your eternal presence. Amen.

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Thursday, February 29 | Day 14

Today's Devotional comes from Jana Elisio

Scripture: *John 17:8: "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."*

The disciples accepted the words given by Jesus about his relationship with the Father. How can we practically and faithfully receive and accept God's words in our lives?

Spending time with the Savior moves mountains and gives daily benefits. When I think of a mountain from the bottom it sure looks like a lot to climb. As I start to climb and scale the mountain, I wonder "what am I doing?," then I remember who is in charge, Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ([Hebrews 12:2](#)). He gives me strength and confidence to keep going and looking up with JOY and peace. I think back to when I didn't have Jesus as my Savior and how lost I was, and it was bad. When I received Jesus as my Savior the Bible became so alive to me, I couldn't put it down. Receiving the word of God brings confidence for the day and daily benefits with the Savior of the World (Jesus).

Reading John 17:8 causes me to reflect on my faith and to once again believe the Bible from deep within my heart...immediately I am reminded of the cross and the Gospel (see [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#)) and I'm struck by the blood sacrifice that our Savior poured out, and tears roll down my face. The only thing I can do is say, "Thank You, Lord, for saving a wretch like me and I love you. I trust you and I worship you only." He replies, "Daughter, I love you too, your faith has made you whole. Go in peace" ([Mark 5:34](#)). That deep love reflects on my face as a smile and a peace that transcends all understanding meets me ([Philippians 4:7](#)), and then I go and tell others the "Good News" of what Jesus did for me. Peace with God through Our Lord Jesus Christ and His redemptive work on the cross and a deeper "Thank You, Lord" comes because I know what he did for me!

Prayer: Lord, as I scale the mountain of this day, help me to remember that you are in charge and remind me of the daily benefits of spending time with you. What it brings not only for me, but also for those around me, Lord. My prayer today is for daily confidence in your Word and peace in our hearts, Lord, and for everything you have prepared for us today. As we climb to the top of the mountain with JOY let us have a deeper understanding of your sacrifice for us...as we prepare our hearts please help us to always thank you and praise you forevermore Lord. ([Nehemiah 8:10](#)) In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Friday, March 1 | Day 15

Today's Devotional comes from Luvy Stewart

Scripture: *John 17:9: "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours."*

Jesus prayed specifically for His disciples. What does this imply about the closeness of their relationship?

Jesus humbly acknowledged that His disciples have been entrusted by the Father to Him. He prayed for them. He lifted them up to the Father, not because of what they had done, who they were, or only because they needed it. He prayed for them because they were His. Consider that now, at this very moment. Jesus prayed for them because they were His. Everyone is created by God, yet Jesus cared for His Disciples in a deeply profound and caring way.

We are also called Jesus' disciples. To be a disciple is not limited to only those that walked with Him. We have been chosen by God and in turn accepted by Jesus as His own. I am so grateful for this privilege. Jesus is my intercessor and my guide. I will never be alone or unloved because He is always by my side. Today, as Jesus' disciple, remember that Jesus intercedes for those that are His.

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Saturday, March 2 | Day 16

Today's Devotional comes from Tom Chacko

Scripture: John 17:9: *"My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you."*

After washing the disciple's feet and closing the evening meal, Jesus continued to minister to the disciples in the upper room. Jesus' public preaching work being ended, He was not again to instruct the multitude, nor to heal the sick, but in the remaining few hours before His arrest, Jesus gathers himself for special intercession. In this last but intimate prayer Jesus prays for His disciples ("for those you have given me") and then for everyone who will come to believe in Jesus through the ministry of the disciples ([John 17:20](#)).

As I was meditating on these verses in [John 17](#), I wondered why Jesus specifically prayed for the disciples. Weren't the disciples trained on the job almost daily through the word? Haven't they been taught the model of servanthood - through the washing of their feet? Weren't they witness to the many miracles and didn't all those miracles strengthen their faith?

At this point the disciples have been with Jesus all through his ministry. These are the people in Jesus' inner circle whom he hand-picked for the ministry and with whom he spent the most time during his ministry. In this prayer, Jesus prays for oneness/unity ([verse 11](#)), protection of the disciples from sin ([verse 15](#)), and their sanctification ([verse 17](#)). Though each of these aspects of this prayer is important in a Christian's life, the prayer for oneness caught my attention. Jesus is asking his Holy Father for protection of the disciples with the power of His name (verse 11) – meaning, that the disciples be "kept" in their faith by the power and authority of God the Father "so that THEY MAY BE ONE (in Christ) as WE ARE ONE".

A.W. Tozer in his book "The Pursuit of God" wrote, *"Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other?"* What he is saying is that if each of us have our hearts tuned to God, then our hearts are also automatically tuned to each other. Our love for God brings us in tune so that we also love each other. In 2 Corinthians 5:21 Paul wrote "in Him we might become the righteousness of God," which is the eternal identity that we receive when we are one in Jesus. One of humanity's deepest pursuits is finding our identity but when we chase validation in temporary sources, we only find temporary satisfaction. The disciples were no different and knowing this fact, Jesus' prayer for the disciples is that they will find their identity in Christ.

I believe in the power of prayer and over the past forty years, I have prayed countless prayers. I am encouraged by the many answered prayers. However, as I reflect on verse 9, I realize that my prayers are not focused, and at best, they are vague. I know the people in my inner circle better than those of my extended circle and Jesus' prayer has brought a greater understanding of how I can pray effectively, for my inner circle.

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Have you been praying for your inner circle (family, friends, coworkers)? I want to encourage you to start praying for your inner circle with focus and clarity. Though Jesus did not pray for each of the disciples by name, may I suggest that during this Lent season, we uplift each person in our inner circle by name. Pray that they will be steadfast in their faith, that God will protect them from the evil of sin and that they be sanctified for God's glory.

Father, following Jesus's example, today we lift up the names of those in our inner circle. Amen.

Take a few moments now to lift up your inner circle in prayer.