**Prayer Cards – Don Lind**

What it is:

Writing down your prayers so that you can look back and see the way God has been answering your prayers.

How to do it:

Write your prayers on 3X5 card. At end of a month, review the prayer cards and jot a note of response on the back side:  a thanksgiving, a praise, a confession, a resolution.  Do not be a slave to the process. If at the end of a month there are not 30 cards, God is good! Not all cards need a response; let the Spirit guide.

**Praying Scriptures**

What it is:

Is it hard for you to focus on a scripture sometimes, or is it hard to put yourself in the story of God that you find yourself reading?  This is a common struggle, and praying scriptures can be a helpful way to work through it.

How to do it:

Read Psalm 63:1-5.  Now after reading these words, restate them to God as if you are writing them yourself and saying them to your heavenly Father who you are believing loves you.

*“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you;  my soul thirsts for you my body longs for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water…because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.  I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.”*

This may seem like it isn’t so difficult because David, the person who wrote this psalm, was talking to God, so the words relate well.  Try another passage that may be a bit more difficult:

II Corinthians 4:8-9.  As you read this scripture, think about when you have felt like you have no friends, like you have been left alone and have a huge decision to make.  Now think about that God is a person sitting right with you, caring about how you are feeling.  Can you then thank him using some of these word pictures?

“Please, God, help me to know you surround me, that even though I feel pressure, I know that you will protect me.  I will not be destroyed!   I thank you, that I am made in your image, and you are the power that keeps me moving forward when I feel in despair, persecuted, struck down.  I will not be in despair.  Thank you, God!”

Continue using words of scripture to speak for you!

**Journaling Prayer**

What it is:

It is simply taking your prayers to God and writing them out. God wants to hear from us.  He wants us to bring our joys, hardships, requests, and praise to Him, continually. The Bible tells us, “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Philippians 4:6*

How many times do you sit down to pray and your mind wanders?  Do you forget to pray? Do you not feel like your prayers are being heard?  I think that we all go through times in life like this.  Prayer journaling may be a way to help.

How to do it:

We are busy and distracted.  Slowing down to write out our prayers allows us to focus, slow down and be “hands on.”

Our journal can be a physical reminder to us to take time every day for God.

We can look back and reflect on how God has been faithful to us in our petitions.  How do I get started?

Find a journal and go for it!  Here’s an acronym that can help guide your prayers

Praise God

Repent of Sin

Ask for Others & Yourself

Yield to God today

Share your prayers with a small group. This allows others to support you and understand you deeply, and in turn you know them.

**Thankfulness – It’s a perspective thing!**

What it is:

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Psalm 107:1*

Life does not always go as we would like.  How do we remain grateful in the midst of trial and suffering –both large and small?

Sometimes it is hard to be happy with our place in life.  “If I had a little more money I would be happy.” “If my job was different I would be happy.” “When I have accomplished \_\_\_\_, THEN my life will be complete.” How can we be content with our life, right now?

Gratitude leads us to joy and contentment!

How to do it:

What are some ways that we can have the “Joy of the Lord” in our hearts all the time?

* Give thanks to God in prayer
* Keep a gratitude journal
* Keep a jar in a visible place in your home and write what you are thankful for and place in the jar, EVERY DAY!
* Find ways to serve others.
* Keep your eyes focused on Jesus instead of comparing yourself to others.
* Share life in community, eat together, share how God has been faithful to you.

“The real gift of gratitude is that the more grateful you become the more you realize God is present.” –Ann Voskamp

**Fasting**

What it is:

Fasting is the purposeful setting aside of (usually) food in pursuit of God. Fasting is an act of sacrifice that allows us to declare that we want to know and hear from God more than we want food! Matthew 4 gives us the example of Jesus fasting for 40 days before he was tempted by Satan and began his ministry.

How to do it:

Pick a time period to not eat for. If you have never fasted before, a day is plenty long to start with. Try to pick a time that you can give some extra space to listening to God and prayer. It is wonderful to fast with a small group of people, but the Bible tells us not to go around telling everyone about our fast so that we look extra good. As you fast, write down the things you are experiencing and hearing from God.

Some other ways you could fast:

* + Give up something that you rely on for comfort- Coffee, Chocolate, cheese, etc. for a week and focus your prayer life when you think about it.
  + Fast from Technology or Social media for a period of time and use that time for spiritual growth
  + Turn off the radio or music in your car on your commute one way and use to think about God.

**Discomfort in worship**

What it is:  
Challenging ourselves to worship uncomfortably is a willful act of humility & submission (James 4:6-10). It reminds us of Jesus' suffering and our call to follow him into that (I Peter 2:21-23) and allows us to practice choosing God's glory over our own comfort (Ex 20:3-6; Mt 4:10).

It involves sacrifice (Hebrews 13:15; I Peter 2:5; Romans 12:1), not giving thought to our reputation or what we look like to others (II Samuel 6:12-2). The uncomfortable feeling arises when something we hold very dear (what people think of us, social standing, anonymity, etc) is perceived to be threatened. The question is:  Will we choose to honor God or bow down to ourselves?

How to do it:

* On our knees/faces (psalm 95:6; rev 19:4)
* Dancing/shouting/singing/music (II Samuel 6:14; psalm 149 &150)
* Sit in silence (when was the last time you sat with nothing going on around you?)
* Listen to hymns (the words of our brothers and sisters who came before us are very powerful)
* Use hands while praying/singing (let the words dictate your movements.)
* Attend other churches (worship with different believers in different ways. Each church has their own strengths and weaknesses and we would be wise to learn from them so that we can see our own. No matter what church we enter we should come humbly with a desire to glean truth and worship our common Maker.)

**Listen to Worship Music**

What it is:

*Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard. - Psalm 66:8*

 God gave us creative minds to glorify him and one of those ways that we can worship Him is through music.  We connect to God through music in a different way, drawing near to Him with emotion and reflection.

How to do it:

There are several ways that you can connect with God through music, all week long!

* Listen to uplifting music in the car.
* Develop a Spotify playlist - Check out “Journey Worship” for some familiar songs.
* Want something more random?  Pick a “station” on Pandora. Here’s a few ideas: Rend Collective Experiment, Lauren Daigle, Hymns on Piano, Bethel Music, David Crowder, Matt Maher, Gospel, Praise & Worship, Hymns 4 Worship
* Share songs & hymns that connect to you, with others.
* Use the words of music to engage your kids in spiritual discussions.
* Listen and discuss a song with your small group

Music speaks to us in ways the words alone cannot.  Listen closely to words and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you through song.  Use it to comfort, celebrate, reflect, and inspire!

“Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.” –Victor Hugo

**Nature Prayer Walk**

What it is:

God is waiting to speak to us through his creation when we take the time to put ourselves out in the middle of it. As Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”

How to do it:

Begin with observation.

The way the fallen leaves and logs break down to provide food for plants around; often with help from insects that we may think undesirable.

Shelter that is provided for God’s creatures.

Tiny flowers and elegant leaves that one has to look closely to see.

The beauty of the sunlight reflecting off the dew, or filtering through the trees.

These observations help us recognize the work of an infinitely intelligent God who is not only creative, but strategic; a redemptive God who can take what seems negative; fallen limbs, trees, and leaves, and turn it into something that provides life, shelter, and nourishment; a God who loves us immensely and provides beauty generously. Some of that beauty is subtle so we are rewarded when we slow down enough to appreciate its intricacy.

What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you?

What is God redeeming in your life?

What quiet beauty has God put in your life that you may be missing?

“Lord, you have made so many things! How wise you were when you made all of them! The earth is full of your creatures.” Ps 104:24

**SOZO for Abundant Living**

What it is:

Do you ever have thoughts like these? "I know I'm saved, so why is life such a struggle? Why can't I control my emotions, thoughts or words? Why is it so hard to let go of offense? I confess my sin but I still feel shame. Why don't I feel close to God? This doesn't feel like abundant life."

There are many Greek words in the New Testament that mean save, heal or deliver but Sozo includes all three. Sozo means spiritual, physical and emotional wellness; wholeness in body, soul and spirit.

*“and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save (Sozo) His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21b.*

How to do it:

Sozo's aim is to increase your ability to hear God's voice and introduce you to the truth of who He is and who you really are; to heal hurts and remove hindrances that prevent you from walking in victory.

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10*

JMC has a Sozo Ministry Team that would love to walk with you. For more information or to schedule a Sozo call the church office at 620-663-4244.

**Two-Way Journaling**

What it is:

Cultivating a Love Relationship with Jesus

*"My sheep hear my voice..." John 10:27*

One way to hear God's voice is through a two-way conversation on paper. The goal of this process is to deepen your relationship; not to get your "why's" answered, or to know the future, but hear Him speak words of edification, exhortation and comfort to you. *I Corinthians 14:3*

How to do it:

4 Keys to Hearing God's Voice.

1. Stillness. Get alone and quiet your soul. Play soft music, imagine yourself in nature, sing a love song to Jesus; whatever works for you. *Psalm 46:10a*
2. Vision. Fix your eyes on Jesus. Picturing Him in a familiar Bible scene may help you "see" Him. *Hebrews 12:2*
3. Tune to the flow of Holy Spirit. *John 7:37-39.*  See what He wants to tell you and show you.
4. Journal. Write your question. Sample: "What do you want to tell me today?" Then write what you hear or see. Test it later.

It's important to test what you heard with scripture and the help of mature Christians. Ask, "Do you sense this is from God?"

*4 Keys to Hearing God's Voice,* Dr. Mark Virkler*.* J@SH has DVDs.

**Holy Spirit, Your Personal Trainer**

What it is:

Often times people who follow Jesus have a very fuzzy understanding of the Holy Spirit. It is vital to the life of any Christian to understand, know and be able to hear the Holy Spirit.

How to do it:

Use the following questions and Scriptures to learn about the Holy Spirit.

Do you have Him?

John 3:5-7, I John 2:20 AMP

Do you know Him?

John 14:16&17 AMP. He is your Helper, Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor, Counselor, Strengthener, Standby, to be with you forever.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11. He gives gifts and abilities and empowers as He chooses.

Do you allow Him to teach you?

John14:26 AMP. He is your Teacher

I Corinthians 2:10-16. He gives revelation, wisdom and understanding.

Do you hear His Voice?

John 16:13. Listen. He will guide you into all truth.

Are you continually being filled?

Ephesians 5:18b. In the original Greek, "be filled" means "keep on being filled constantly and continually."

How does that happen?

Living a godly life is a vital part of this process.

Exhale I John 1:9, Inhale John 15: 5, 10 & 11. Your joy will overflow.

Do you desire fellowship with Him?

John16:24. Ask Him and wait for Him to come. Welcome Him, praise Him, thank Him, listen to Him and enjoy His fellowship.

Are you willing to serve?

Acts 1:8. He will empower you and you will be a witness.

**Solitutde**

What it is:

Jesus showed us a pattern of taking space to be alone with God the Father (Mark 1:12-13, Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, Luke 6:12-13, Matthew 14:13, John 6:15). Solitude and retreat allow us space to untangle our lives and minds, be still, and hear from God.

How to do it:

Find at least an hour (more time is great!) to be quiet. Turn off or get away from all electronics and notifications (Alarms work with a phone on airplane mode!). Bring your Bible, something to write in and be still. As thoughts come to your mind that seem distracting, write them down and continue to sit in stillness. We don’t want to empty ourselves of everything, but rather to fill ourselves with Jesus. So as you find a place of stillness, begin to pray or read a passage of Scripture all the while asking God what he is speaking to you in your solitude.

Be patient and remember that stillness and listening to God takes practice.

**Experiencing the Bible in New Ways**

What it is:

*For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.  Romans 15:4*

We all know that we should read the Bible but sometimes it is hard to find ways to bring it to life.  Interacting with our Bible’s in different ways can help us find meaning and keep it fresh and applicable to our life.

How to do it:

Here are some ways that we can experience the Bible differently:

            Character/Topical Study with Small Group

[Bible Journaling](http://www.lifeway.com/Article/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps)

            Writing Scripture- Check out this monthly plan: [Sweet Blessings](http://www.swtblessings.com/)

            The Bible App devotionals

            Listen to an Audio version of the Bible

[The Bible Project](https://thebibleproject.com/) –great videos and other resources to compliment your Bible reading!

Mark up your Bible – write notes, underline, mark moments when something spoke to you

Above all, the Bible comes alive when we share it with each other.  We all have different stories and backgrounds and have connected to the Bible in different ways.  Share your perspective with a friend or a group of friends and you will experience the Bible in new and powerful ways!

**S.T.O.P. Method for Bible Study**

What it is:

A method for helping you understand what you are reading in the Bible.

How to do it:

What does it **SAY**?

Think about what the words actually say and look up the meanings of any words you don’t know.

What were the **TIMES**?

Consider what the times were like when the passage was written. What was the time period in history? What events were happening? What was important to the people at that time? It’s a great idea to look up this info in a reliable source.

What did it mean **ORIGINALLY**?

Consider what the Bible passage meant when it was written. Think about who wrote it, who it was written for, and what it would have meant to people then.

What does it mean for me **PERSONALLY**?

Think about what the Bible passage means for you personally. Knowing what you learned in the other steps, what can you learn and act on in your own life?

**Observations and Questions**

What it is:

Making observations and asking questions about the Bible as you read it to help you gain understanding and insight.

How to do it:

As you read through a passage of Scripture, write down things that you notice. It could be other parts of the Bible that relate to what you are reading, things about God, repetition of words, or anything else. Reread the passage and write down anything you have questions about. It could be about a person, a word, geography or anything else. If you are reading the same passage as someone else, share your observations with them and work together to answer your questions.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

What it is:

Praying the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples when they asked him how to pray.

How to do it:

Read through the Lord’s Prayer from Matthew 6:5-14:

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“This, then, is how you should pray:

“‘Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,[a]

but deliver us from the evil one.[b]’

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Jesus assumes his disciples will pray. He then reminds us that much of our prayer life is to be like an iceberg, under the surface and secret, and not self-promotional. He then teaches us his prayer….

-Go to a quiet place and pray the Lord’s Prayer daily for the next week or month- Say it slowly and let it form you.

-Pray the Lord’s Prayer with your family at meals or at the end of missional community for the rest of the year. Say it slowly and let it form you.

- Read the prayer in different translations and memorize it in that new translation.