

We noted that it's all too common to live with one foot in the past and one foot in the future completely missing out on life. We explored practical helps to keep us living in the present moment where God intends for us to live.

"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24 (NRSV)

We have courageously prayed to

- ◆ **BE READY** and asked for grace in **accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it.**

We recounted how often God uses our hardships to grow us so we can later help other people through similar circumstances. We explored what it means to share God's non-condemning nature and how we might reflect God's attitude of grace and love.

"He helps us in our troubles, so that we are able to help others." 2 Corinthians 1:4a (GNT)

We have courageously prayed to

- ◆ **BE CONFIDENT** trusting that he will make all things right if I surrender to His will;

"... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23 (NRSV)

Pray

This final week, we courageously pray together to

- ◆ **BE HOPEFUL** that I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. AMEN — let it be so

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

"...the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7 (NRSV)

daily Bible verses

1. Psalm 34:1-8
2. Romans 15:4
3. Isaiah 12:2-5
4. Matthew 11:28-30
5. Matthew 25:21
6. John 14:1-4
7. Psalm 71:14-18

With permission and in partnership, St. Thomas Lutheran Church has adapted this study guide from Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church's (Clarkston, MI) series: 40 days of Courageous Prayer. It was inspired by Trevor Hudson's book, [The Serenity Prayer: A simple Prayer to Enrich Your Life](#), Rick Warren's 40DAYS campaigns, and Rich Milheim's [FAITHS](#)



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*real people.
real life.
real faith.*

SERENITY

PRAYER OF HOPE

be Calm
be Bold
be Present
be Ready
be Confident
be Hopeful

WEEK 6: be Hopeful

be Hopeful | that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next

share | part 1

Last week

BE CONFIDENT | Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His will

- ◆ What were you able to surrender to God's will last week? How high or low is your current level of trust that He is in the process of using all things for good and making *all things right*? (Romans 8:28)

read | part 1

This week

BE HOPEFUL | that I may be reasonably happy in this life

- ◆ and supremely happy with Him forever in the next

Read together Proverbs 15:15b (AMP)

"... a glad heart has a continual feast [regardless of the circumstances]."

The pursuit of happiness is a roller coaster ride. We tend to *feel* happy when things are going our way (pleasure), and not so happy when they aren't (pain). This leads us to believe that through pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain we will in fact be (or at least feel) happy. Though this might seem like a workable plan it is in fact terribly flawed. In *this* world you will have trouble. Jesus stated it as fact. But His example points the way towards living a joy-filled life in the midst of ups and downs.

Paul lived to understand this well. **"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."** (Philippians 4:12 NIV) Paul learned that a glad heart refuses to be held hostage by circumstances. He grew to embrace contentment.

talk | part 1

- ◆ What experiences have you had in trying to achieve the level of happiness advertising, media, friends, or even self-talk have insisted you *deserve*? How has this impacted your quest for happiness? □
- ◆ Describe a time in your life when you have been happiest—a time when you had a deep sense of serenity and were fully alive to yourself, others, and to God—a "mountain top" time in your life. Would it have been possible for this time to have lasted forever? Why or why not?
- ◆ In comparison to mountain top experiences, what does it mean to be *reasonably* happy? Have you ever considered that being *reasonably* happy in this life might not only be realistic but appropriate as a person of faith?

share | part 2

BE HOPEFUL | that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next

- ◆ How often do you think about dying and the afterlife?
- ◆ How can our hope and trust that our eternity is secure help us to live more fully today?

read | part 2

"... what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later." Romans 8:18 (NLT)

As Christians, we hold fast to the belief that after dying we will be received by God into eternity with Him. Though the Bible is shy on details about heaven (this glory has not yet been revealed to us—see above Romans text), what do you imagine it to be like? Where have your impressions come from?

talk | part 2

The whole Serenity Prayer leads up to this final line — *that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next*. Our petitions up to this point have been asking God for the ingredients that enable this to be so.

We have courageously prayed to

- ◆ **BE CALM** and asked God to **grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change.**

We defined serenity as a peace that comes only from God and explored the things that are beyond our power to change.

"The peace I give is a gift the world cannot give." John 14:7 (NLT)

We have courageously prayed to

- ◆ **BE BOLD** and asked God for **courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.**

We got honest about the things in life we do have the power to change (mostly things within ourselves) and explored ways of seeking God's wisdom on things we are unsure of.

"... for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." 2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV)

We have courageously prayed to

- ◆ **BE PRESENT** and asked for help in **living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time;**