

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Pray First

August 13, 2018

Today, we enter the second week of 21 Days of Prayer. These days of prayer are a time when we as a church come together to seek God first. It is a time that we are intentional in encouraging and challenging each other to go to God with all things, big and small.

21 Days of Prayer is also intentionally placed at this time of the year. This time is busy for many of us. The summer season is coming to an end, and we are entering a new season. Some of you are preparing to send your children back to school. Others are preparing to head back to school yourself, and still others are entering a busy season of work.

For our church, we enter a new season as well. We see our church attendance rise at this time of the year. As new and returning guests walk through our doors, there is opportunity to connect people with Jesus and to help them grow in their relationship with him.

Whatever the challenges or opportunities this new season brings, there is often a temptation to tackle it on our own, but God invites us to trust him in our new season.

Philippians 4:6

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done

So, as you enter this new season, what are you anxious about? What results are you hoping for? Talk to God about it and faithfully trust in his power alone.

We are currently in a series entitled, *This Is Me*. During this series, we will learn how our personality, past, passions, and placement all have potential with God. In fact, we will begin to discover that our potential is limitless with God.

2 Corinthians 4:7

We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

This week, Casey Greenawalt shared with us that our unique personalities have potential with God. Over the next four days, we will look at the keys to unlocking our potential and the lies that keep us from it. As we start this week's *LivingItOut* Bible Study, let's begin with prayer. Let's ask God to help us see the value in how he made us and to ultimately use our personality to live out our potential.

Questions:

What challenges or opportunities are in this upcoming season of your life?

Do you often find yourself trying to tackle challenges on your own?

Next Steps:

Dedicate yourself to praying first throughout this week. Pray before you make that important phone call or send that text. Pray before you enter your meetings! Pray first before you interact with your kids or a family member. In everything you do, pray first.

Participate in 21 Days of Prayer. You can find out more at cedarcreek.tv/21days. (Download the personal prayer guide. Share a request for prayer. Download the parent resource.)

Prayer:

God, you are everything I need. I want to come to you first, at the beginning of each day. Help me to connect with you throughout this 21 Days of Prayer. I love you. Amen.

21 Days of Prayer - Day 8

Today's Prayer Focus: Those who don't know Jesus – Pray for your unbelieving friends, family members, co-workers and neighbors.

Together, let's pray for those around us (insert specific names) that God would draw their hearts to him, that our friends, family members, co-workers and neighbors would begin to understand how much God loves them and develop a relationship with him.

This post was written by Ben Bockert, Director and regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

Incredible Me!

August 14, 2018

On Sunday, Casey talked about three lies we are prone to believe. The first is that we are not unique. That's like saying every intricate, crystalline snowflake masterpiece is just another snowflake, or every jagged majestic mountain range looks alike. Spoiler alert: That false statement will be crushed tomorrow. You will find out that not only are you unique, you are amazing, perfect, one-of-a-kind, *by design*. So prepare now to see yourself in a whole new light.

Secondly, Casey taught us that we commonly put ourselves down by feeling we are "not enough." Who needs enemies if you are shooting yourself in the foot like that? (Hey, you might *feel* as if the sun rises each morning in the West, but it doesn't make it true.) Feelings can be deceptive. Truth comes from God and his Word. Just look at some of the greats in the Bible. Moses *felt* he was inadequate: "Who am I to appear before Pharaoh" (Exodus 3:11), yet God used Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. And Jesus made a big deal out of the seemingly small offering of a poor widow (Mark 12:41-44).

And, if we *think* we are not enough, we may act as if we are not enough and serve no purpose. Some of us argue, "But I'm only a _____," (teacher, plumber, lawyer, student ... fill in the blank). Jesus Christ himself did not fall for this. Some said he was just the son of a carpenter (Matthew 13:55). And Nathaniel said, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" (John 1:46, NIV). Did this dissuade Jesus? Not in the least. He knew beyond all doubt that he was the only way to God because he was the Son of God. Have you ever checked out Jesus' family tree? It contained murderers, adulterers, and prostitutes to name a few. And you feel *you* are not enough and can serve no purpose in God's Kingdom? Read on this week and prepare to be astounded at your potential for greatness when God is at the helm of your life. He is waiting for you to become the amazing, incredible **you** he created. Don't waste this opportunity.

Romans 8:37 (NIV)

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Questions:

Why does Romans 8 tell us we can expect to be more than conquerors and overcome difficulties? Where does such power and ability and authority to rise above adversity come from?

Does Ephesians 2:10 teach us that we are self-made? What does it tell us?

What were we made for? Why does God have work for us to do, which was planned for us to do long ago? What is his agenda?

Next Steps:

Write down as many things as you can that you are good at and enjoy doing.

Ask God what he wants you to do with these activities and skills. Ask him where you fit into his plan for his Kingdom. Ask him to show you the next steps you should take to be of use to him and his church.

Complete GrowthTrack to discover how God has wired you to make a difference.

For more information about GrowthTrack visit www.cedarcreek.tv/growthtrack.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank you for making me so unique and amazing. Help me to wrap my head around the fact that you have planned incredible things for me to do for your Kingdom with the skills and talents you have given me. Open my eyes to see your path for me and give me the spirit to obey and follow you. Amen.

21 Days of Prayer - Day 9

Today's Prayer Focus: CedarCreek Groups – Group Leaders, Group members, real life change, and freedom

We believe that Groups are where people find freedom through authentic relationships that help them get through whatever it is they are going through. Together, let's pray for our current leaders and for new leaders that they would grow in their ability to care for their Group members. We also pray for our

Group members, that they would find authentic relationships that produce real freedom and life-change.

This post was written by David Vernier, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

Unleashing the Best Version of Me

August 15, 2018

The idea of “finding oneself” is often emphasized at the beginning of college. I remember when I started college, I didn’t truly understand why I had to find myself. Didn’t I already know myself? I had lived a whole 18 years. I’d acted in a certain way, knew who my friends were, and knew what I believed. How could I know myself any more? Was knowing myself going to change anything?

Like me, people often overestimate how well they know themselves. But, truly understanding oneself is ultimately a gift from God. We were all formed in God’s image, and when we come to understand ourselves, we will inevitably come to understand that. Through this understanding we may begin to see some of our personality traits in a new light. For example, being described as “too quiet” by those around us can be interpreted as being “quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry” (James 1:19). This can be appreciated as a gift from God and a virtue of Christianity.

So, how do we go about knowing ourselves? Casey mentioned the temperament test, StrengthsFinder, and GrowthTrack, which are all great ways to begin to understand ourselves. Those around us, particularly our family, close friends, and those who know us intimately by working with us are also great resources. You will be amazed by how well people around you know your wonderful traits and quirks! But, of course, the best way to discover ourselves is through prayer (along with careful listening).

Psalm 139: 13-16

*¹³ You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother’s womb.*

*¹⁴ Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!
Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.*

*¹⁵ You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion,
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.*

¹⁶ You saw me before I was born.

*Every day of my life was recorded in your book.
Every moment was laid out
before a single day had passed.*

These verses are beautiful and comforting. We may rest assured that our Lord knows each of us very well and can lead us to understand our true value, opening our eyes to how we may use our unique personality traits to serve our intended purpose.

Questions:

What special traits do you have that you may use to serve your purpose through God?

Next Steps:

Ask your family and friends to describe you or point out salient features about you. Pick two of your traits and work to strengthen those traits so that God may put them to use!

Complete GrowthTrack to discover more about your gifts and personality.

For more information about GrowthTrack visit www.cedarcreek.tv/growthtrack.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I thank you for gifting me with my unique nature. Please help me to understand my best personality traits. Open my eyes to ways in which I may use these traits for your purpose. Amen.

21 Days of Prayer - Day 10

Today's Prayer Focus: GrowthTrack and DreamTeam

Together let's pray for GrowthTrack. We pray that GrowthTrack will be used to help people to take steps in the area of Discovering Purpose. We also pray for our DreamTeams, that individuals would take steps in the area of making a difference through serving on the DreamTeam. We pray that these teams would be used to show God's love to each of our guests at CedarCreek.

This post was written by Sandy Tadros, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

You Are Enough

August 16, 2018

When I was a kid in school, I remember very vividly being told once by other kids that I could not play with them because I was not good enough. I do not recall what they saw as not good enough that prevented me from joining, but I remember how much that comment stung in that moment and how much it caused me to question my self-worth. As we walk through life, we meet people who will knock us down. Sometimes, they are good people who had a bad day, and they will later see the error of their ways and apologize. Sometimes, they are just hurt people who choose to hurt others, people who, deep inside themselves, are unhappy, have low self-esteem, and thus take great pleasure in tearing others down to make themselves feel superior and better. Those kinds of people can cause great harm to another person's self-worth. And sometimes we are tearing ourselves down by buying into the lie that we are not good enough.

Today, we will look at how **Knowing Your Value** is the key to unlocking your potential. Your gifts, your personality, and your strengths are what make you the unique "you" that you are. But you might not feel like this sometimes. You might feel like you have no worth. This is when you fail to see your value in God's eyes, when you think you are not worthy to receive his love, when you buy into the lie that you are not enough. It is especially easy to fall into the trap of this lie if you have someone in your life who is constantly criticizing you, belittling you, tearing you down, and telling you that they have to "improve you" or "fix you" to be worthy of eternal salvation in heaven.

Genesis 1:27

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

So, we are created in God's image, and who we are as a person reflects the character of God. You do not need to compare yourself to others because we each represent one facet of all the splendor that is God. No matter how you feel, there is more right than wrong with you. At your absolute best, you still will not be good enough for the wrong person, but at your worst, you will still be worthy to the right person. And you will always be worthy in the eyes of God. When we can accept that simple truth, we can make changes in our lives. When we know

who we are valued by, both here on earth and in heaven, we can trust our value that we received from God. And by knowing that you have value in God's eyes and in the eyes of those that love you, you can begin to know your purpose.

Questions:

Have you ever felt like you had no value? Have others tried to tear you down to the point where you felt you had no value? Are there people in your life who see value in you, even if you sometimes cannot? Why do you think they see value in you?

Next Steps:

Make a list of all the things you feel are good qualities about you. This can be as simple as the ability to make someone smile or laugh.

Complete GrowthTrack to see how your unique qualities could be used to serve others and thus bring purpose to your life.

For more information about GrowthTrack visit www.cedarcreek.tv/growthtrack.

Prayer:

Dear Father in heaven, thank you for making me the unique me that I am. Thank you for letting me reflect part of your splendor by representing to others one facet of your glory. Thank you for putting people in my life who can see my value, even if sometimes I cannot. Please help me to see what you and they see in me. Amen.

21 Days of Prayer - Day 11

Today's Prayer Focus: CedarCreek Kids

Today let's pray for CedarCreek Kids. We pray that children feel safe and have fun as they begin the initial step on their spiritual journey to know God. We pray that the families we serve feel known, cared for, and connected.

This post was written by Cordula Mora, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

In Pursuit of Purpose

August 17, 2018

In yesterday's devotional, we talked about how you are enough. So let me make one thing clear – whether you know your purpose or not, *you are enough*. Whether you are living a life that feels meaningful, or still escaping a life that isn't, it doesn't matter in the eyes of God. He loves you as you are. He's not waiting for you to become good enough. He loves you where you're at, right now.

I believe God wants to walk *with* you, helping you to build a life that feels meaningful, a life filled with purpose.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

So what does that look like?

In a broad sense, all Christians are called to the same life purposes - to love and serve God, growing in their relationship with him, to love and serve others according to God's will, and to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. I'm sure there are other things all Christians are supposed to do, but these are the basics CedarCreek believes Scripture teaches.

Of course, since we're all different people with our own personalities, interests, strengths, weaknesses, etc., these purposes play out differently for each of us. The better we know ourselves (as previously discussed), the better God can use who we are to fulfill these purposes.

For example, according to 1 Corinthians 12:7, "A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other." We are all called to use our spiritual gifts to help one another, putting others before ourselves (Matthew 20:25-28; Philippians 2:3-4). However, when we know what our spiritual gifts are, we know *how* we can best serve others.

Still, finding your purpose doesn't always seem that simple. Maybe you know your personality, your spiritual gifts, your strengths, your weaknesses, but still,

you're waiting for an "Aha!" moment where you will suddenly realize how you are supposed to help the world!

If that's where you are, I can relate. But let me offer a thought. Maybe purpose, in the personal, individual sense, isn't meant to be some grand, overarching thing we will work toward for the rest of our lives. Maybe it's not always one passion that we will pursue till God calls us home.

Maybe our personal purpose is found in the small decisions, in choosing to follow God's lead every moment of every day, trusting him to lead us to where we're needed, when we're needed there.

Questions:

After all we've discussed this week, who do you believe you are?

What are your spirituals gifts, strengths, and weaknesses?

How can you use what you know about yourself to fulfill God's purpose in your life?

Next Steps:

Spend a day focusing on God's purpose for you. Ask yourself, "How does God want me to serve him in this moment?" and work through your day from there.

Complete GrowthTrack and begin to discover the purpose God has for you.

For more information about GrowthTrack visit www.cedarcreek.tv/growthtrack.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for making us each unique, specially designed by you and able to serve you in ways no one else can. Please, help us to know ourselves through your eyes, full of love, compassion, and honesty. Help us to live lives filled with meaning and purpose as only we can, according to how you made us. May your will be done in our lives. Amen.

21 Days of Prayer - Day 12

Today's Prayer Focus: CedarCreek Students

Together, let's pray for our Students. Pray that Middle School Students begin to make their faith their own. Pray High School Students have the courage to hold to and share their faith in their schools. Pray for unchurched students throughout our region that they are introduced to Jesus and come to know him.

21 Days of Prayer - Day 13

Today's Prayer Focus: This weekend's church services: Pray for each guest to be ready and open to receive what God offers this weekend.

Together let's pray for our weekend services. We pray that each and every guest is open to receiving from God this weekend. We pray for Ben as he shares God's truth about how our past has potential for God.

21 Days of Prayer - Day 14

Today's Prayer Focus: Next Steps - Praying for people to take their next steps on their spiritual journey.

Together let's pray for individuals to understand the vision God has for their life and to grow in the areas of Knowing God, Finding Freedom, Discovering Purpose and Making a Difference.

This post was written by Payton Lechner, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.