

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



God Loves Us Passionately

Week 3

What Gets in the Way?

This weekly material is offered to support our Discipleship Journey as we walk in the foot prints of Jesus.

We encourage you to use this material as a part of your daily prayer practice as follows:

- ❖ Begin with the Opening Prayer.
- ❖ Pray the Reflection on God's Pursuit of You.
- ❖ Reflect on the Lyrics from *By Your Side*.
- ❖ Close with the Closing Prayer.

Let us pray for each other that we are transformed as individuals and as community, by this Discipleship Journey.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we praise you. Your love is infinite. You lovingly seek and find each one of us, no matter where we are or what we have done. Forgive us for the times we've doubted or failed to be moved by your love for us. In your Scripture you tell us, "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love." (John 15:9) Thank you for loving each of us personally and deeply, and inviting us to live in your love. Help us to know, not just with our head but with our whole being, that you love us. Lord, help us to allow your love for us to transform everything. Jesus we trust in you. We make this prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN

Reflection

God, the Creator of the universe, has fallen deeply in love with you. Since the beginning of time, God has been completely in love with you. Throughout history, and through every day of your life, God has been pursuing you and expectantly longing for you to love Him in return.

There is nothing we can do to make Him stop loving us. There is no place we can run that He can't find us. There is nothing we can do to earn His love – it is His free, undeserved gift.

When in your life have you felt close to God?

Have there been moments when you've had a hard time imagining knowing God, or had a hard time believing God accepts you and loves you?

Many of us have a hard time believing God could really love us. We focus on our failures, our brokenness. The rejection and judgment of others have left us wounded. We fear that anyone who really knew the things we have done, or thought, would turn us away. We believe we could not possibly do enough to become worthy of love. Overwhelmed by our shortcomings, we may be tempted to hide our brokenness, or hide ourselves, in shame.

You are dear to God. God created you in your mother's womb, fashioned you in His very likeness, and continues to create you every day of your life.

No matter where you are right now on your journey, no matter what you may have done or not done in your life, no matter who you are, where you have been or what you have – God is seeking you. God is loving you deeply and personally – and calling you by name.

Reflection Using Lyrics Taken from "By Your Side" by Tenth Avenue North

This week we pray using lyrics of a song. Read through the lyrics, noticing what word or phrase stands out to you.

Why are you striving these days?
Why are you trying to earn grace?
Why are you crying?
Let me lift up your face
Just don't turn away

Why are you looking for love?
Why are you still searching?
As if I'm not enough?
To where will you go, child,
Tell me where will you run?
To where will you run?

'Cause I'll be by your side wherever you fall
In the dead of night whenever you call
Please don't fight these hands that are holding you
My hands are holding you

Here at my side wherever you fall
In the dead of night whenever you call
Please don't fight these hands that are holding you
My hands are holding you
And I, I love you
And I want you to know
That I, I'll love you

'Cause I'll be by your side wherever you fall
In the dead of night whenever you call
Please don't fight these hands that are holding you
My hands are holding you

Have you ever felt like you had to earn God's love? If so, reflect on what that was like. Journal a few sentences about that experience.

Close your eyes and meditate on the image of God's hands holding you. Notice the thoughts and emotions that surface without reflecting on them. When you are ready, write a prayer to God.

Closing Prayer

O God,
You are our Creator,
You are good, and Your mercy knows no bounds.
To You arises the praise of every creature.
O God, You have given us an inner law by which we must live.
To do Your will is our task.
To follow Your ways is to know peace of heart.
To You we offer our homage.
Guide us on all the paths we travel upon this earth.
Free us from all the evil tendencies which lead our hearts away from Your will.
Never allow us to stray from You.
O God, judge of all humankind, help us to be included among
Your chosen ones on the last day.
O God, Author of peace and justice, give us true joy and authentic love,
and a lasting solidarity among peoples.
Give us Your everlasting gifts.
Amen!

May the God of mercy, the God of love, the God of peace bless each of you
and all the members of your families!

Saint John Paul II