



NAC-USA  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE

# Midweek Experience Curriculum

Your will be done | Waiting and Trusting | Walking in the Spirit

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**2015**

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May

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# 2015 May FACILITATOR GUIDE

## Session 1: Your will be done...

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### Additional Content

#### National Day of Prayer

2010

Give us this day our daily bread

2011

Hallowed be Your name

2012

Your kingdom come

2013

And do not lead us into temptation

2014

Yours is the kingdom

2015

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Hello and welcome!

I'd like to start by giving you a taste of what's coming up in our small group videos for May. It probably won't surprise you that, since this week is the National Day of Prayer, today's session will be about prayer.

Next week we'll learn about waiting and trusting in the Lord, and the week after that we'll talk about walking in the Spirit. The latter two topics will be put into context the of the feast of Pentecost, which is on May 24th.

For the last few years we've observed the National Day of Prayer by examining a different element of the Lord's Prayer. This year we're going to focus on Matthew 6:10 where Jesus prays, "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*"

When we pray these words, we profess that we believe in God and in the concept of heaven; not its location, but rather, any place where God's will is fulfilled. In realizing that God's will can be fulfilled anywhere, we get a glimpse of what it would be like to have a "heaven on earth."

Living in God's kingdom and doing His will must be something we strive to do every day. Heaven isn't just an abstract idea that we look forward to in the future, but it's an environment that we can endeavor to bring to earth. If we live like Christ and we claim the Lord's Prayer

as a mandate for daily living, the kingdom already begins here. Those around us should be able to look at how God's people treat one another and see what heaven is like. This representation of heaven should be so attractive that they want to share in it. Let us consider living in this way so that others are able to see the kingdom in us.

So how do we use Jesus' prayer as our guide?

*"Your kingdom come. Your will be done..."* is such a small, simple phrase to say but doing His will can be really difficult. How does one actually live their life this way? Maybe we can break it down into three steps:

Step one is to **know the will of God**. What does God want me to do? Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us that *"as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."* As we pray to our Father in heaven, let's ask that we become more familiar with His ways and thoughts. When we do, we're able to see things more from God's perspective.

Our Chief Apostle described God's will recently as the universal will to save. He loves us and wants to save us and offers us a pathway in life that leads us back to Him. Apostle Paul said it so clearly in 1 Thessalonians 4:3: *For this is the will of God, your sanctification.*

The next step is to **embrace the will of God**. He loves us and has given us the freedom to love Him in return, to trust Him and to serve Him. Of our own free will, we may choose to walk on His pathway to eternal life. In essence, we do not give up our will, rather we decide to make God's will our own. This decision can be joyous and passionate.

But every decision in life has a cost. Part of the cost is what we give up. When we choose God's pathway, we give up all the other pathways that are available to us. Part of the cost is **accepting the struggle** of the pathway itself. This can include self-denial, sacrifice, and moments of suffering or disappointment. But out of love for God, and to attain the prize of eternal life, we are willing to pay the price.

Jesus' life is the perfect example of these three steps. He understood His Father's love for fallen mankind and His desire to save us. He willingly chose to be the outlet for God's love and the means for our salvation. In the Garden of Gethsemane we see Jesus the man struggle with the price of His decision to do God's will. He prayed, *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."* As the writer of Hebrews puts it, *"we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses,*

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*but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)*

Like Christ, we may ask God to make our path easier, but our chief prayer is for the grace and strength to bear it. No matter what, we want to embrace the mission God has given us. Jesus lived His life in loving obedience to His Father’s will and He wants us to do the same. Loving God doesn’t always mean that we like His plan for us; it does mean that we choose to accept it.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Discuss what the phrase, *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* means to you today. Compare that with your understanding 10 years ago.

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2. Realistically, what do you imagine God’s will is for “heaven on earth?” What do you imagine are the characteristics of the heavenly kingdom that is to come? How does the kingdom on earth prepare us for the heavenly kingdom?

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3. Think back on your day today. If someone was watching you, would they see the kingdom? Look at it this way: who have you served today and who have you disappointed today?

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4. Read Isaiah 55:8-9. Discuss how you can come closer to grasping God’s ways and thoughts.

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**Bible References**

**1 Timothy 2:3-4**

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

**Hebrews 4:15**

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

**Going Deeper**

**The meaning of it...**

It is our Lord’s Prayer, it is of His composing, of His appointing; it is very compendious, yet very comprehensive, in compassion to our infirmities in praying. The matter is choice and necessary, the method instructive, and the expression very concise. It has much in a little, and it is requisite that we acquaint ourselves with the sense and meaning of it, for it is used acceptably no further than it is used with understanding and without vain repetition.

– Matthew Henry, commentary



## Session 2: Waiting and Trusting

### Bible References

#### Psalm 73: 2-17

But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride serves as their necklace; violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish. They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. Therefore his people return here, and waters of a full cup are drained by them. And they say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who are always at ease; they increase in riches. Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For all day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.

Welcome back. For National Day of Prayer we examined the section of the Lord's Prayer that says "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...*" and discussed how hard it is to give up our own will. This week we'll talk about waiting and trusting and depending on God until His will comes to fruition.

God always fulfills His promises. The promise to send a redeemer was fulfilled with Jesus' birth. On various occasions, Jesus foretold His resurrection on the third day. He promised that the Holy Spirit would be sent, which was accomplished on Pentecost. Finally, He has promised to return for His Bride; those who actively wait and prepare for His coming.

The fulfillment of divine promises is never in question, but it's not always easy for us to trust in God and wait patiently until they actually happen. However, this is exactly what our Heavenly Father expects of us; to trust, wait in patience, and grow through endurance. On both Easter and Pentecost, the promise was fulfilled for those who were together, waiting for the fulfillment of the promise.

Our everyday lives are filled with experiences that can make us wonder if God really loves us and if it makes sense to trust in Him.

These experiences include:

- Illness and death
- Problems at school, such as failing a test
- Stress at work, to the point that we are unable to do our job
- Disappointment with our partner in life; breakups and failures of marriages and families
- Feeling rejected and unloved, maybe even in the congregation.

Worse yet, sometimes it seems that people who do not care about godly things have a better, easier life than we have. The Psalmist expressed similar feelings in the seventh chapter of Psalm. Please pause the video now and read Psalm 73:2-14.



## Biblical Promises

**Revelation 21:4** He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

**Jeremiah 29:11** "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

**2 Corinthians 6:18** I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.

**John 16:22** Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

**Luke 1:37** For no word from God will ever fail.

**Ezekiel 11:19-20** I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

**John 6:37** All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

**John 6:40** And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

**Haggai 2:9** 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."

**Psalms 50:15** Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

3. Consider the Bible verses to the left (or share one of your own). How has the promise of that word been fulfilled in your life?

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4. Share a time when your trust in God came under serious attack by your life circumstances. What helped you return to trusting in God?

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5. What happens when our patience and trust fail?

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6. What can/should we do when we see the patience and trust of a fellow Christian fail?

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7. Why do you think our Heavenly Father allows us to experience difficulties in life?

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## NAC Catechism

### 12.1.1

#### General remarks concerning divine service

In the divine service the congregation gathers to hear God's word and receive blessing through the sacrament. Human beings worship God in reverence and humbleness.

Thus divine service is an encounter between God and man. In the worshipful serving of the believers and in the perceptible presence of the triune God, the congregation experiences that God serves them in love.

### 12.1.5

#### Divine service as an encounter with God (excerpt)

The four elements of divine service present in the early church are still today among the definitive characteristics present when the congregation experiences the mystery of an encounter between God and man at the altar, which is always new.

8. Please discuss these two ideas:

a. A synonym of patience is to be forgiving (patience with my fellow man)

b. Another synonym of patience is humility (patience with God's plan)

c. Consider the importance of patience in our *Christian relationships* – i.e. the relationship with our neighbor and the relationship with God.

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9. How do you feel when you experience what is referred to in Psalm 73:2-14? Consider these verses in light of verse 17.

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10. Discuss times when you have experienced the activity of the Spirit in...

a. The divine services

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b. When we gather to discuss matters of faith:

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11. What can we do to 'make room' for the Holy Spirit within us and in our lives?

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## Session 3: Walking in the Spirit

### Bible References

#### Revelation 22: 17

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"

#### BIBLE READINGS

#### Joel 2: 28–29

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

#### Ephesians 3: 14–21

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Start the discussion with these questions reflecting on the Chief Apostle's Pentecost service.

### Pentecost Discussion Questions:

1. What was the most impactful part of the service for you?

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2. What were some main points that the Chief Apostle made in the Pentecost service?

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3. What should the implications of the Pentecost service be for your personal life and congregational life?

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Welcome to the final small group session for this month. As you know, we've discussed doing God's will, as well as waiting and trusting in God. Focusing our attention on the Holy Spirit this week, we'll delve into all the things that the Holy Spirit can enable us to do, including giving us the boldness to do the work of the Lord.

The arrival of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost provided the church with the ability to proclaim the good news that Jesus Christ had died for the sins of mankind. Through His resurrection, salvation was made available to all. The prophet Joel prophesied that God would pour out His Spirit on all mankind. (Joel 2:28) Therefore, all who have decided to enter into fellowship with God can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which empowers them to fulfill their calling within the church of Christ.

Jesus made a number of promises concerning the Holy Spirit:

- In John 14:26 we read that He will *teach all things and bring Christ's teaching to remembrance.*
- In John 15:26 the Holy Spirit is described as *the Spirit of truth who will testify of Christ.* Here Christ also refers to the disciples' calling to testify of Him.
- In Acts 1:8 the Spirit is described as the source of power by which the disciples will fulfill their calling to be witnesses of Christ *in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

The power Jesus mentioned in Acts 1:8 refers to the courage needed to fulfill the Great Commission. No doubt - the disciples were equipped to be witnesses from their personal time with Jesus. However, with Jesus in heaven, He knew that the disciples would need special help in order to fulfill the mission of the Church. So from these passages we can tell that Jesus intended that they would continue to learn from the Holy Spirit after His ascension and also keep in mind everything they'd learned from the Lord firsthand.

After waiting in Jerusalem, as they were instructed to do, the Holy Spirit arrived on Pentecost and the disciples stepped forward and proclaimed the Gospel *"in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

The mission of the church has been passed down to the believers of today thanks to the apostles who showed us how to walk in the Spirit. By doing so, the church continues to move forward. It's amazing to think that the Holy Spirit still works today in the same way He did thousands of years ago. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit teaches



