



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Advent Series Theme: Longing For More

Text for the Week: Isaiah 40:1-8; Matthew 20:29-34

Message for the Week: "What Do You Want?"

Week One

Sunday, November 27

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

What is on your Christmas list this year?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Isaiah 40:1-8](#) and [Matthew 20:29-34](#) out loud.

[Clicking this link will bring you to multiple translations.]

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, take note of, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

What do you want?

What do you want changed? What do you want to be different?

What valleys, mountains, rough places, rugged places are you dealing with in your life right now? To whom or what are you looking to for deliverance?

How do you make straight a highway for God into your heart and life?

What are the needs and longings of your heart?

Given my need(s), is what I want going to address, satisfy, and fulfill this need / these needs?

“Try It!”

Consistently bring your deepest want(s) before God this week. Name it/them again and again and again.

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Pray this prayer together:

Father in Heaven, during this first week of Advent, as we wrestle with many wants, we confess that what we need is you, our God. We need the light of Christ to come to us—to comfort and save us from our sin. Amen.

Missional/Spiritual Practice for ADVENT: Waiting on the Lord (Isaiah 40:30-31)

Each day during this season of Advent, you are encouraged to “Wait on the Lord.” Each day find, 5, 10, 15, or 30, minutes (or whatever time you need) to sit and be with the Lord. Each day, take time to wait on the Lord. What does it mean to wait on the Lord? Kristi Walker, a missionary, in her explanation notes for us that when we wait on the Lord, we “...wait on the Lord to act – to deliver, to save, to avenge, to answer our prayers, to provide for our needs, to renew our strength, to reveal His glory, to do what only God can do.” As you wait on the Lord each day, what is the Lord calling you to do? Who is the Lord calling you to be?

Isaiah 40:1-8 & Matthew 20:29-34 New International Version

40 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

³ A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." ⁶ A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. ⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."

20 ²⁹ As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰ Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

³¹ The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

³² Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

³³ "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight."

³⁴ Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

Isaiah 40:1-8 & Matthew 20:29-34 The Message

40 ¹⁻² "Comfort, oh comfort my people," says your God. "Speak softly and tenderly to Jerusalem, but also make it very clear That she has served her sentence, that her sin is taken care of—forgiven! She's been punished enough and more than enough, and now it's over and done with."

³⁻⁵ Thunder in the desert! "Prepare for God's arrival! Make the road straight and smooth, a highway fit for our God. Fill in the valleys, level off the hills, Smooth out the ruts, clear out the rocks. Then God's bright glory will shine and everyone will see it. Yes. Just as God has said."

⁶⁻⁸ A voice says, "Shout!" I said, "What shall I shout?" "These people are nothing but grass, their love fragile as wildflowers. The grass withers, the wildflowers fade, if God so much as puffs on them. Aren't these people just so much grass? True, the grass withers and the wildflowers fade, but our God's Word stands firm and forever."

20 ²⁹⁻³¹ As they were leaving Jericho, a huge crowd followed. Suddenly they came upon two blind men sitting alongside the road. When they heard it was Jesus passing, they cried out, "Master, have mercy on us! Mercy, Son of David!" The crowd tried to hush them up, but they got all the louder, crying, "Master, have mercy on us! Mercy, Son of David!"

³² Jesus stopped and called over, "What do you want from me?"

³³ They said, "Master, we want our eyes opened. We want to see!"

³⁴ Deeply moved, Jesus touched their eyes. They had their sight back that very instant, and joined the procession.