1. BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

2. SAY THE APOSTLES’ CREED
I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

3. PRAY THE LORD’S PRAYER
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

4. PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER
Morning: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Evening: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.
THEME OF THE WEEK: **The Spirit’s Words in Holy Scripture**

In the Nicene Creed we confess that we believe in the Holy Spirit who spoke by the prophets. In His speaking to the apostles and prophets, we have received a sure and certain word. We do not need miracles and other signs to give us confidence in Christ’s redeeming work; we have the more certain Word of God. Through this Word, the Holy Spirit speaks, convicting us of our sinfulfulness and bestowing the forgiveness won for us by Christ’s atoning death.

**SUN**

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 16:31: “If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets”

The rich man simply wanted Lazarus to be raised from the dead and scare his brothers into obedience. We ask this question many times too. “Just give me a sign that I’m doing the right thing,” we ask. “Just a little miracle, please? Then I’ll believe without a doubt.” But we have something more sure than resurrected beggars and minor (or major) miracles. We have the Word of God, Moses, the prophets, and apostles, who declare to us the Word and will of God. By this Word preached, God converts our sinful hearts to trust in Him. **Almighty Father, by Your Holy Word, keep us steadfast in the faith, we implore You. Amen.**

**MON**

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 119:1–8: “Oh that my ways may be steadfast”

The old man in each of us hates and despises God’s Law. He despises the Word of God, His testimonies and statutes. And yet, despite our sinful rejection of God’s Law, we can rightly pray this Psalm in Jesus Christ. He testifies of God perfectly, fixing His eyes always on the commandments of God. He not only gives us this perfection, but He creates in us a new man who now delights in the Law of God. We desire God’s Law and testimonies, because that is who we are in Christ. We have received a new life in Him. **Father, fix our eyes on Your testimonies, statutes, and Law, that we may delight in them. Amen.**

**TUE**

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 John 4:16–21: “We Love Because He First Loved Us”

The world talks about love, and despises it. The world espouses self-love—do what makes you feel good, do what feels right to you. But the love of Christ for the world is entirely different: He died for the world, the righteous One becoming sin to atone for those who sacrificed Him. While Christians fail to show this love perfectly, those who have been baptized into His name—those who have been loved by Him—delight to share this love. They delight to share with the world the love of God for sinners, the love of Christ for the loveless. **Loving Father, forgive our lack of love, and teach us by Your Word to serve our neighbors in love. Amen.**

**WED**

**SCRIPTURE:** Jeremiah 9:23, 24: “Let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me.”

We admire and appreciate knowledge, whether formal or informal. Whether the person with more degrees than photos on the office wall or the one who can fashion a beautiful piece of carpentry from years of practice and building, we admire those who have knowledge. But Jeremiah says, “Let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord . . .” While we can never understand God perfectly, the man made righteous by God delights to seek the knowledge of God’s saving acts for mankind. **Wise Father, teach us not to boast in our own wisdom, and lead us in the knowledge of You. Amen.**

**THU**

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 12:13–21: Laying up in Spiritual Barns

We spend our lives laying up material possessions in metaphorical barns. How easy we fall into the trap of life that begins with a career of working our way up the company ladder to earn more pay, in order to spend more on vacations, possessions, and pleasures. And yet, no matter how much we have saved up, one day our Lord says to each of us, “This night your soul is required of you.” So, God makes us rich toward Him as He gives us His riches into which we delve deeply, for there He showers us with forgiveness, righteousness, and new life. **Father, keep us ever in the Word that we might fill up our spiritual barns with knowledge of You. Amen.**

**FRI**

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Timothy 6:6-19: “Godliness with Contentment Is Great Gain”

We often spend our lives filling our metaphorical barns with material goods because we lack contentment. St. Paul reminds us today that “godliness with contentment is great gain.” Godliness we learn only from delving deeply into the Word of God: and as we delve into God’s Word, so we learn contentment. The two go hand-in-hand. The antidote to the worldly accumulation of possessions does not occur as we study more and more books about decluttering, but as we fill our lives with the presence of God in His Word, which gives eternal peace. **Almighty Father, You have provided all we need, help us to remain content in Your eternal peace. Amen.**

**SAT**

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 34: I Will Continually Praise the Lord

What human words can be used to “bless the Lord”? What praise can we place upon our lips for the Lord continually? Out of the human heart comes only evil and wickedness. But in the Scriptures, the Lord gives us words worthy of His praise: He gives us praise for our lips. Regular, consistent meditation on God’s Word and gathering with the church gives us the words to speak this continual praise. These words do not grow up within our hearts, but come from the mouth of God. No greater praise is there. **Father, keep me ever in the study of Your Word that Your praise might ever be on my lips. Amen.**

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