Hi,

Here we are, a week into this. We are finding new ways to stay connected and be supportive of each other. It is tragic that at the time we most need one another, we must sit isolated in our homes. Thank God, literally, that we have technologies that help us to connect as families, as neighbors, and as brothers and sisters in Christ. Here are a few things:

* My goal is to have next week’s Monday and Tuesday Bible studies on-line, as live streamed video. I am also planning to record the audio and post the classes on the podcast. **I’m planning on having the Monday class at 3pm in the afternoon and the Tuesday class at 11:45**. I think the lighting will be a challenge if we have the Monday class in the evening, so 3pm seemed to be a good choice.
* I write the Weekly Bible Studies a couple of weeks in advance so they can be printed for insertion in the bulletins. Since printing isn’t happening, I’m going to send them out a few days prior to Sunday. Thus, as I’ve already sent out Mar 22 and 29, the April 5 study for Palm Sunday will go out a few days prior. [The archive of all the studies I’ve ever written can be found here.](http://scottengle.org/weekly-bible-studies/)
* Once I’ve figured out how to do the weekday classes on line, I’ll move on to the 11am class, with slides. One step at a time!
* I’m continuing to attach the series on David. Michal was his first wife and today’s study tells their story. (Yes . . . I hope to actually attach it today!)

***Matthew 6:9-13***

**9 “Pray then in this way:**

**Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name.**

**10  Your kingdom come.**

**Your will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**11  Give us this day our daily bread.**

**12  And forgive us our debts,**

**as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**13  And do not bring us to the time of trial,**

**but rescue us from the evil one.**

The Lord’s Prayer is from Sermon on the Mount. Jesus has retreated from the crowds and has gathered his disciples around him. In the very center of this long block of teaching, Jesus turns to the subject of prayer. But before teaching his disciples to pray, Jesus warns them about the basics. They are not to be hypocrites. They are not to pray so that everyone can see what good “pray-ers” they are. When they fast, they ought not to look like they are fasting! They are not to pile up a bunch of empty phrases in their prayers. In all this, Jesus is pushing his disciples toward prayer that is grounded in sincerity and honesty, humility and forgiveness – these are the basic ingredients of prayer that is grounded in true faith. Why?

In the Bible, trust is a good synonym for faith. When we say that we have faith in Jesus Christ, we mean that we trust Jesus – completely and utterly. Now, all of us are experienced at building trusting relationships with others, or at least trying to. We know that building trust is not easy. It takes time. We risk trusting a person in small matters so that we might come to trust them in large matters. We know that trust is fragile. Trust takes a long time to build but it can disintegrate in a moment of betrayal. We know that trust must be cherished and protected. And . . . we know that hypocrisy and empty talk are not the way to build trust!

Prayer is conversation with God; conversation that is to be grounded upon trust. So, just as we strive to be sincere and forthright with those we trust, there can be no hypocrisy or deceit in our prayers to God. The psalmists are sometimes incredibly angry with God and they don’t hesitate to voice their anger. Of course they don’t hesitate; they trust God!

Indeed, with God, this is all much easier than it is with any other person we might seek to know and trust. My wife, Patti, knows me well; we trust each other as much as two people can. But she can’t read my mind (though I wonder at times!). But God our Father knows what we need before we ask him (v. 8). God’s Spirit lifts to God our deepest prayers, so deep that we can’t even find the words (Romans 8:26-27).

It is in the context of this deep, abiding trust in God that Jesus’ teaches his disciples the Lord’s Prayer. He points them toward God’s kingdom and teaches them to rely completely upon God, even for the bread they eat. The disciples are to trust in God’s forgiveness, even as they forgive others. Condemned by the Nazis, a modern-day disciple, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, would pray, “I put my trust in your grace and commit my life wholly in your hands.”

Whether we are praising God or thanking him. Whether we are confessing or asking. Whether we come to God with a peaceful heart or an angry one. In all this, we trust that God loves us and hears us and answers us. The basic ingredients of prayer are the ingredients that build trust between two persons: honesty, sincerity, caring, thanking, appreciating, loving, serving . . . add to this list yourself. And in the end, pray with a trusting heart. Amen

*A site to check out*

Everyone who knows me knows that I love a good map. So, [here is a site with 100 pretty darn fascinating maps](https://www.farandwide.com/s/amazing-world-maps-74d6186e6d0e414b?utm_campaign=amazingworldmaps-dc070af459a3473c&utm_source=twi&utm_medium=cpc&utm_content=872864). This should keep you busy for awhile.

*Movie recommendation*

You will probably get a few Hitchcock recommendations over the course of this crisis. So let’s start with a sure thing: *Rear Window*, made in 1954 and starring James Stewart and Grace Kelly. It is an especially fitting film to watch as we are all trapped in our homes. It is free on Starz and Spectrum right now. For a few dollars you can rent it on Amazon Video and Apple TV.

*Book recommendation*

This certainly isn’t the best of times, but nor is it the worst of times. To remind yourself of that you might reacquaint yourself with Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities*. We might all enjoy booing Madame Defarge rather than the virus.

‘til tomorrow, grace and peace,

Scott