

The Third Ashrama: *Vanaprashtra*

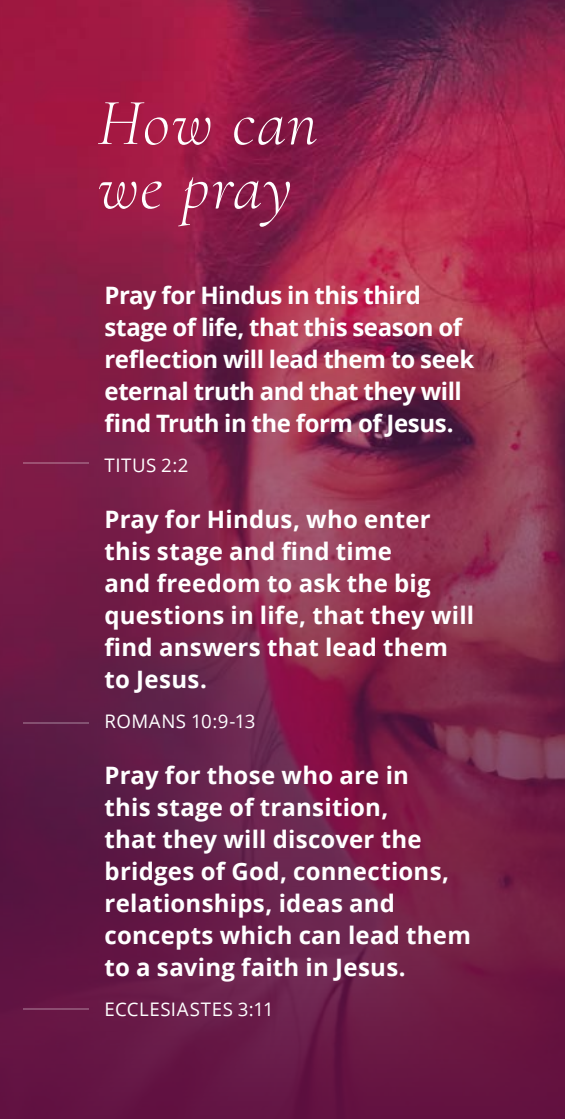
As Hindus age, they enter into the third and fourth stages of life, when deeper questions of purpose, eternity and the soul often rise up.

Today we focus our prayers on those who are in the third stage, or ashrama, of life. Vanaprashtra, sometimes translated as “way of the forest,” is the stage that begins when responsibilities for the joint family are handed over to adult children. It is sometimes described as the “hermit stage” because it is a time for withdrawing from the duties of life and spending more time in spiritual contemplation, praying, thinking and considering the big questions of life.

This stage is considered a transitional phase, between being a active householder, and the spiritual pursuits that characterize the

upcoming fourth ashrama. It is a chance to evaluate what you have done in your life, and who you want to be going into the next one.

Many Hindus bear the heavy belief throughout their life that they are essentially eternal beings, doomed to die and be born again in an almost endless cycle of suffering. Salvation is seen as liberation from this cycle of rebirth and suffering. The third ashrama is a time when Hindus may be open to learn about salvation through Jesus.



*How can
we pray*

Pray for Hindus in this third stage of life, that this season of reflection will lead them to seek eternal truth and that they will find Truth in the form of Jesus.

TITUS 2:2

Pray for Hindus, who enter this stage and find time and freedom to ask the big questions in life, that they will find answers that lead them to Jesus.

ROMANS 10:9-13

Pray for those who are in this stage of transition, that they will discover the bridges of God, connections, relationships, ideas and concepts which can lead them to a saving faith in Jesus.

ECCLESIASTES 3:11