

FOLLOWING JESUS DAY BY DAY

# PURE

**P**eople

**U**ndergoing

**R**egeneration

**E**veryday

Jul-Sep 2020

PURE Devotional Ministry

90-Day Devotional

**PURE**

Devotional Ministry

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*Our prayer for this devotional booklet is that you would meditate on the thoughts presented here, drawing closer to the Lord in your daily walk, and begin "reflecting the glory of the Lord...being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit". (2 Corinthians 3:18 NET\*)*

### *PURE Devotional Ministry*

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*\*Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are from the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Holy Bible.*



## *1 July*

*"And we ... beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image ..." 2 Cor 3:18*

As we begin a new devotional, let us stand in awe and wonder before our God. He has allowed many and incredible changes to occur in our space, our country and our world since this year began. He is sovereign.

Were those all good changes? No, not all of them were welcomed with merry hearts. But, as James reminds us (Jas 1:2-4), we can keep joy in our hearts when we know that we are being transformed (2 Cor 3:18) through what God is doing. Though some changes may be, and are, painful, our God is still a mighty God who is close beside us. When our hearts are broken, His heart breaks too. The things that cause us pain are often painful for Him too.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, I am grateful that You have been with me.*

## 2 July

*"And we ... beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image ..." 2 Cor 3:18*

Covid 19 has certainly had an unsettling effect on our world. Like most every change, there are some good outcomes and some more challenging outcomes. Some of these are still unfolding, and the full effect may not be known for a very long time.

2020 will almost certainly be held in our memories as one of those defining periods. In some ways it is like other life-altering moments. These include "pre-kids" and "post-kids," "pre-" and "post-retirement," and other "pre-" and "post-" situations.

When we think of it in this way, though, some of the "pandemic" fear can drain away. This season is simply another time of transition.

*Pray: Dearest Father God, please give me eyes to see this transition as You do, and the peace in knowing Your sovereignty and grace.*



## 3 July

*"And we ... beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image ..." 2 Cor 3:18*

God, our mighty yet gentle and loving God, can use this season to transform us. Let us remember that, even from the crib, our lives have been a journey of change. Through it all, God has had a plan (Ps 139:16)

This Covid season represents a change. In truth, it is not a simple change. It is reasonable to take stock of your life in "pre-" and "post-" terms. But let us do that with hope for what God is doing, rather than focusing on any fear of the future or any loss from the past. It does not mean that we should not mourn the loss. Of course, we should. But we are not to remain in a state of mourning. God has still got great plans ahead (Jer 29:11).

*Pray: Dearest Father God, thank You for the tenderness with which You love us. I am grateful that You have been beside me during this time.*

## 4 July

*"And we ... beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image ..." 2 Cor 3:18*

Yesterday we mentioned that there may be Covid losses which we need to mourn. Though we should not remain in a state of mourning, we still need to be able to come before the Father and pour out what we are feeling. God the Father accepts this. He accepts that we are grieving, and He grieves with us. He already knows what we have experienced, but He will listen as we lament in His presence. He does not want, or ask, us to hide what we are feeling. He wants us to come without masks, as we are, with confident trust.

If you ask Him, He will also call others to come and hear your lament.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for the space to mourn.*



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Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. ~1 Pet 1:8-9



## 5 July

*"And we ... beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image ..." 2 Cor 3:18*

When our hearts feel crushed, we may be afraid to reveal our true sense of loss, pain, and hurt. We may hide it deep inside. If so, it will likely just remain dormant for a time. However, holding it inside may require a hardening of our hearts, in order to stop them from leaking.

Instead, the Lord wants us to lay this burden at His cross (1 Pet 5:7). He wants us to know healing through Him. Let us bring this pain, and then leave it with Him. He can lift this burden and restore light, joy and hope to our hearts and lives.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for being willing to take my burden and pain.*

## 6 July

*"And we ... beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image ..." 2 Cor 3:18*

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are being transformed into the same image, that is, the image of the Lord. What does this mean?

I believe it means that those things which are not Christ-like, not reflective of God (John 14:9) will be removed from our lives, hearts, and spirits. Then we will more completely reflect the character and spirit of God.

As you can appreciate, this will not happen quickly. So what is our part?

Our part, as I understand it, is to listen closely for the Holy Spirit's guidance, leading, quiet whispers, and gentle nudges (Acts 8:29).

I do not believe that the Holy Spirit will shout above the noise of your life in order to be heard. Instead, you will need to quieten your heart, mind, and spirit, and seek Him. Ask Him to open your understanding and to give you wisdom so that you may follow faithfully. Then follow faithfully.

*Pray: Dearest Holy Spirit, please clear the scales from my eyes, that I might see.*



## 7 July

*"And we ... beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image ..." 2 Cor 3:18*

As we are being transformed into a truer image of the Lord, we will more ably point to the Lord with our lives.

When our lives, hearts, and spirits are being transformed, we can become people who are more pleasant to have around. Love, joy, and peace will become more clearly defined fruits in our lives, and people will be attracted to the kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control too. But beware. These are Holy Spirit fruits given for the Lord's glory (John 14:15-17, 26). Give God the glory, and take none for yourself.

*Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, I rejoice in the work that You are doing to transform me. Please help me to more completely image God before others.*

## 8 July

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray [M]e."* John 13:21

Jesus knew what was in the hearts of the disciples, but He did not hold it against them through withholding His love for them. "...*having loved [H]is own who were in the world, [H]e loved them to the end.*" (John 13:1). Paul reassured the Roman Church members that nothing "*will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom 8:39).

Though Jesus knew what the likely outcome would be, He continued to love faithfully. We do not know what the likely outcome will be. God may intercede and save us from this trial. God could use this situation to transform our lives. We simply do not know. Therefore, we are called to love each other faithfully (John 13:34).

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please forgive me for allowing suspicions to diminish my faithfulness in love.*



## 9 July

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray [M]e."* John 13:21

Have you ever had a situation where you felt betrayed? Have others gossiped behind your back?

These are painful experiences. It hurts when people let you down. It is particularly painful when the one who betrays you is a close colleague or friend. Judas Iscariot was one of Jesus' chosen twelve.

When we go through a situation like that, we can remember that Jesus knows how it feels. He knows the pain of a wound from a friend. Rather than respond to their actions, let us respond as Jesus did. Though they may plan to betray us, we can choose to love faithfully, with wisdom and discernment. Though they might be spreading stories about you, you can love them, as Jesus asked (Luke 6:27-28). In this way, you are being transformed into His image (2 Cor 3:18), and reflecting Him.

*Pray: Dearest Lord Jesus, please forgive me for wanting to "get back" at those who have hurt me. Please help me to be wise, and to love faithfully.*

## 10 July

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray [M]e."* John 13:21

God knows our hearts (Acts 15:8). Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him (John 13:21). He knows the things which tempt us, those things which will draw us away from Him. But is there a chance that we could betray Jesus? I believe that betrayal would be putting another in Jesus' place. When we treat another person or thing, including ourselves, as more important, we betray Jesus, and all that He accomplished for us.

Betrayal could be the idol worship of placing our values or the world's values above what Jesus holds dear. This could include self-indulgences, because "you're worth it," when you know that you need to be the responsible steward God has called you to be in your family finances.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please help me to be a good steward of Your blessings.*



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... this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

~Neh 8:10



## 11 July

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray [M]e."* John 13:21

As we mentioned yesterday, we betray God when we place someone or something above God in our priorities.

God has a special loving concern for the poor (Jas 2:5). When we neglect their concerns, or treat the poor in an offhanded way, rather than as fellow heirs of God's Kingdom, we betray God. We are not respecting the special affinity God has with the poor and downtrodden (Matt 25:35-45). When they are neglected or abused, God is neglected or abused with them. When they are championed and cherished, God is honoured too (Jas 1:27). Rather than see others with the value which the world places on them, let us see others as image-bearers of our Heavenly Father. Then may we respect them, and offer them the privileges we enjoy.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please help me to see others as You do.*



## 12 July

*“And when the Lord saw her, [H]e had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’” Luke 7:13*

Yesterday we explored how God is with the poor and downtrodden, empathising with them in their neglect or abuse.

Jesus assures us that He will also be with us in our hurts (Matt 28:20). He has a special heart for those who are going through difficult times. When He met a widow whose only son had died (Luke 7:12), He had compassion on her (13). He knew that this placed her in a particularly vulnerable position, as she had lost her last male protector and provider.

Jesus is also with us in our pain. He knows the impact that different things can have on our hearts, minds, spirits, and circumstances.

Though He is near us, turn to Him. Seek His face, seek His comfort, and know His support when you are facing your own painful situations. Ask Him (John 14:13), and He will bring you relief and release.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, You know what pains my heart in this moment in time. Please let me experience Your closeness, and please comfort my heart.*



## 13 July

*“And when the Lord saw her, [H]e had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’” Luke 7:13*

When the widow lost her son, she potentially also lost her only source of income, the right to remain in her home and, potentially, the ability to enter into any trade arrangements, in selling property, etc. These were the realities of life at this time.

Jesus is the One who intercedes for us now (Rom 8:34) for our time and situation. Turn, and seek His favour. Turn from the pain of what you are going through and cast your eyes instead on our Almighty God. He can be the difference that you need. Ask Him for your daily bread (Matt 6:11) and trust in His faithful provision, being obedient to His instructions and will.

*Pray: Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You for understanding my situation.*

## 14 July

*“And when the Lord saw her, [H]e had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’” Luke 7:13*

God is not far from you. He is close by (Heb 13:5) and knows what you need. Sometimes He waits for us to be aware of our need, and to acknowledge our need, before He makes His presence felt or meets that need.

While He remains close by, sometimes our attention is invested too strongly in things which are distracting us from God (John 13:21). Rather than become bogged down in all that is failing, look to the One who can reverse that failure.

If this is your situation, go now and take some quiet prayer time with God. Confess any turning away from Him (1 John 1:9) and seek to restore good fellowship with Him. Seek His face and commit to doing His will. His will is the right pattern for your life. All else will feel disjointed or just empty, though we may be “full” in the world’s eyes (Jas 4:4). Seek God.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for meeting me and my needs.*



## 15 July

*“Do not weep.” Luke 7:13*

Jesus said to the widow who had lost her only son, *“Do not weep”* (Luke 7:13). He knew that He could change her future, and could remove the reason why she wept.

Jesus can also restore beauty, joy and favour to our lives, hearts, minds, and spirits when we offer them to Him (Matt 22:37; Prov 3:5-6; Isa 61:1-3). We offer them when we commit to following Him faithfully (Rom 12:1).

Come, follow God, or follow Him afresh with a renewed heart and a refreshed commitment to be faithful. God can breathe new life into our hearts and lives (Ezek 37:14).

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for the renewal work that You are doing in my heart, mind, spirit and life. Thank You for Your grace.*

## 16 July

*"Do not weep."* Luke 7:13

When God brings renewal, whether as a restoration or for the first time, does that mean that all difficulties will suddenly be resolved?

No. God is God and He knows what we need as our *"daily bread"* (Matt 6:11). Lavishing financial abundance or other good things on us is likely not be a wholesome choice for us, any more than feeding us with excess quantities of cake would be good for our health.

Yes, we may seek the freedom of worry from financial hardship. But, having financial independence may be too big a risk for falling into independence from God (John 13:21).

Trust that what God will send will be a *"Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over"* (Luke 6:38). Trust in His faithful hand.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for knowing just what I need so that I know abundance but remain dependent on You.*



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Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for  
great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

~ Isa 12:6



## 17 July

*"And [H]e said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.'" Luke 7:14*

Jesus called the only son of the widow back to life. We don't know why Jesus called this son back to life. Luke records that Jesus had compassion on his mother. She was a widow, and we can understand that life would have been extremely difficult for her in that time without him.

Does this mean that God will restore every painful loss?

No. Sometimes we have had to endure the painful death of one beloved to us. We have probably cried out to God on His timing in this. Even when the person is in their senior years, the particular timing of their death may be challenging. God knows your pain. Trust in His wisdom.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for holding me in my pain.*

## 18 July

*"And [H]e said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.'" Luke 7:14*

If you have lost a young person in your life, you probably longed to hear the Lord say, *"Young man, I say to you, arise"* (Luke 7:14). Yet it was not to be. Only God knows why this young person was taken at that time. God would have held you through that season, gathered your tears, and shed tears with you (Ps 56:8).

More than that, God is also walking with you in the season of recovery, as your heart is repaired and renewed past these painful scars. God will restore, He will renew (Isa 61:1-3; Ezek 37:14).

Sometimes, though, we can refuse to take our scars to God. We can blame Him for this death. Then we withhold ourselves from His presence. This separation is painful for God who longs to comfort you. We can't know yet why this young life ended, but our all-knowing God does. If we can accept and trust in His wisdom, we can seek Him and begin to experience the comfort He desires to give us. Do not harden your heart (Heb 3:15).

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please forgive me for those times when I pushed You away. Now I run to You and seek Your comfort and Your shelter.*



## 19 July

*"And [H]e said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.'" Luke 7:14*

Too often, our young people's lives are lost at their own hands. This may be the result of, for example, reckless driving, dulled senses from alcohol or drugs, or other activities where living and wisdom clash.

Yes, we have all, in one way or another, made unwise decisions. Some of these have had lifelong impacts, like misspelt tattoos, while others merely represent a *"great photo for your 21<sup>st</sup>!"* Some decisions, though, have been much more costly.

Where our unwise decision has had a negative impact on another's life, we need to ask forgiveness, if we can (1 John 1:9). Ask God for wisdom in timing and words (Jas 1:5; 3:17).

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please help me to make up for my mistakes.*

## 20 July

*"And [H]e said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.'" Luke 7:14*

Where the loss of our young person or friend has been the result of another's miscalculations, seek God. God is the only One who can truly begin to understand what you are going through (Acts 2:23). He will walk with you through this darkness and can restore you. Even if this is an old injury, come to the Father and ask for His healing touch.

As the Father ministers to you, you can release your hurt to Him. This means that there is not still a "payment" to be made to you by the one who acted unwisely. God will judge and work on their hearts (Jas 1:19-20). Ours is not to judge (Jas 4:12; 5:9).

God has marked this debt as "paid in full." *"He [H]imself bore our sins in [H]is body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By [H]is wounds you have been healed"* (1 Pet 2:24). Thank the Lord.

*Pray: Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You for Your healing grace.*



## 21 July

*"And [H]e said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.'" Luke 7:14*

The life of our young person or friend may have been lost at their own hand, whether accidentally or intentionally. We may never know for sure. In either case, the person we may need to forgive may be ourselves, for the guilt we are placing on ourselves. Alternatively, we may be holding anger in our hearts toward the young person who has died, for the recklessness of their behaviour.

If that is you, come to God now and hear Him say, *"Do not weep"* (Luke 7:13). He wants to lift this burden from you. If there is any fault on your part, any sin, confess it and receive forgiveness, cleansing and restoration (1 John 1:9).

*Pray: Dearest Lord, thank You for listening. Thank You for the cleansing You are doing in my heart. Please bring healing and please help me to move past this loss. My hope is in You.*

## 22 July

*"And [H]e said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.'" Luke 7:14*

The young person lost, or the loss itself, may have had a negative impact on your young person's life. For instance, the reckless driver may have lost their life, but your young person may have debilitating injuries. You want to offer comfort to your fellow parent, but anger and resentment are a crushing weight in your heart.

A similar tension is felt where you want to rejoice with the parent of the young person who got the job, even as your young person missed out. God knows the battles which take place in our hearts and minds. He knows that we struggle to understand why bad things happen to good people, and why one person is blessed while another loses out, again.

Take these fractured feelings to God. Ask Him to give you a heart which can celebrate gains without counting losses, and which can comfort in losses without boasting or pride.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please fill my heart with Your grace and peace.*



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May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. ~Rom 15:13



## 23 July

*"And [H]e said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.'" Luke 7:14*

Over the last several days, we have explored the hurt and pain of loss. Today, let us lay down any sense of loss, committing it to the Lord's hands, and asking for His ministry in bringing forth blessings in this season. Let us ask too for healing to our hearts, and new eyes open to His work.

Having laid down these concerns, anxieties, spirits of anger, envy or resentment, and our fears, let us look to the Lord. Hear Him say afresh, *"I say to you, arise"* (Luke 7:14).

*Pray: Thank You, Lord, for the healing work You are doing in my heart. Please help me to fully push through this pain to the other side.*

## 24 July

*“How precious is [Y]our steadfast love, O God!” Ps 36:7a*

Oh, how we can rejoice in the steadfast love of our faithful God (Ps 36:7)! We can rest in His loving arms at night, and awaken to the joy of His presence in the morning (Lam 3:22-23). If you have not already today, sing praises to our Heavenly Father, if only in your heart.

What a good, good God we serve. He is faithful in all His ways, and He leads us ever onward, with companions for the journey.

If today your companions appear to be far away, look for ways to be a companion to one who is closer.

Maybe there is a neighbour who would appreciate a visit. Perhaps there is a work colleague with whom you could share a word of encouragement. Look to see the way that God is providing for you to be a blessing to another.

*Pray: Thank You, Dearest Lord, for the opportunities You place before us. Please open my eyes for ways to love others generously.*



## 25 July

*“How precious is [Y]our steadfast love, O God!” Ps 36:7a*

When we take the time to catch up with others, do we ever take the opportunity to share the love and hope that we hold in our hearts?

Maybe you are not comfortable using words, but maybe you could lend them a book, share a website or pass on a bookmark which may help them in their journey.

God can use the seeds that we plant. Or maybe our interaction will be a watering of the seed planted by another.

Listen closely to what God may be asking you to share. It is unlikely that the Holy Spirit will carry you to your place of ministry (Acts 8:39). But you may still be prompted by the Holy Spirit who can open doors before you (Acts 13:2; 16:9). Trust in Him.

*Pray: Please open my eyes to how I may share Your love, Lord.*

## 26 July

*"The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of [Y]our wings."*

*Ps 36:7b*

What a privilege we have in being able to take refuge in the shadow of God's wings (Ps 36:7b)?!

It does not matter what is happening in our lives, we can seek shelter in the shadow of the wings of our Almighty God. In this place, we can feel secure. We can feel God's protection and the steadfastness of His love (Ps 36:7a).

What immediately comes to mind is the image of us as the Father's beloved children. As a good, good Father, He opens His arms to welcome us warmly. Sometimes this will be because we have succumbed to fears. To another, these fears may appear to be groundless. Yet God will not push us away and tell us off. See the patience with which God received and cared for Elijah when he was fearful of Jezebel (1 Kgs 19:2-3).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for Your faithful ministering of me.*



## 27 July

*"The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of [Y]our wings."*

*Ps 36:7b*

Elijah's fearful response to Jezebel occurred almost immediately after Elijah had witnessed the magnificence and majesty of God (1 Kgs 18:17-39). Though Elijah might have scoffed at the impudence of this brazen queen (1 Kgs 19:2), he ran in fear (3).

Though dejected and asking to die, He accepted God's help (1 Kgs 19:5-8), and leaned in for understanding (10-14).

When we are troubled and afraid, we too can lean into the Lord so that we may gain understanding. We can take refuge in the shadow of His wings (Ps 36:7b) and know His steadfast love (7a).

If today you feel stretched beyond your abilities, trust in God's shelter.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You that I can take refuge with You.*



## 28 Jul

*"For with [Y]ou is the fountain of life; in [Y]our light do we see light."*

*Ps 36:9*

God is the outpouring source of all life. All things came to being through Him (John 1:3-4a). All life flows from Him.

While we abide in Him, we can know fruitfulness, hope, life, and peace (John 15:5-9, 16). It is only as we abide in Him that His fruitfulness will flow through us (John 15:4-5). His peace too will reign in our hearts as we stay connected to Him (John 14:27).

There will be tribulation in this world, but we can trust in the Lord as our fountain of life, and delight to do His will. Then we will be *"like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither"* (Ps 1:3).

Pray: *Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You for being the source of the life and light in my life. Please help me to reveal Your goodness in my life.*



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For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love,  
my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been  
refreshed through you. ~ Philemon 7



## 29 July

*"For with [Y]ou is the fountain of life; in [Y]our light do we see light."*

*Ps 36:9*

God is the light of the world (John 1:4b; 8:12). It is through His light and life that we can see true light and life (Ps 36:9). More than that, He asks us to share and to shine His light in us before the world (Matt 5:14-16). In that way, God will be glorified (16) and others will know the light of truth (Isa 9:2; John 3:21).

The darkness in this world cannot overcome the light (John 1:5). Let us continue to walk in the light and to stay connected to the fountain of life.

Pray: *Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You for igniting Your light in my life. Please help me to shine brightly for You.*

## 30 July

*"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in [H]im, and [H]e will act. Ps 37:5*

Do you sometimes get impatient in waiting on God? Do you sometimes envy the way that He is working in the lives of others, and you wonder when it will be your turn?

At times like this, it is good to look at nature. We can see that different creatures and plants grow at different rates. Part of this is related to the different purposes for each. Part relates to the integral differences between them. Bushes are not required to give milk like cows. Dogs are not expected to withstand storms and tempests as trees must.

In similar contrasts, we are not expected to produce or withstand in the same way that others are asked to be faithful. Let us be patient and resist comparing ourselves to others, just as we would not compare cows to bushes or dogs to trees!

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please forgive me for my impatience. I seek to serve You faithfully, and want to be sure that my life honours You.*



## 31 July

*"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in [H]im, and [H]e will act. Ps 37:5*

God has a perfect plan for you. He knows what exactly is required before you are honed to be able to persevere, engage in, push through with, and be productive in the tasks to which He has called you.

What is asked of you is committing your way to the Lord (Ps 37:5a). We are called to *"trust in [H]im, and [H]e will act"* (Ps 37:5b)." We are not the ones who will decide the tests to be undertaken. We are not called to judge our progress in those tests. We are called to trust and be faithful. He will act (Ps 37:5b).

We know that God has prepared good works for us to walk in (Eph 2:10). Sometimes, though, we can rush ahead, making our mission the work we are to do, instead of focusing on the relationship we are to build.

*Pray: Dearest Lord Jesus, I commit myself to You.*

## 1 August

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called ...." Eph 4:1*

Paul, a prisoner for the Lord, was calling others to walk in faithfulness (Eph 4:1). Of course, it was exactly this same faithfulness in walking according to his calling which caused Paul to be in prison (Phil 1:14-16).

Does that mean that we are likely to be imprisoned for our faith? There is a possibility, but it is far more likely for overseas missionaries. Let us remember them in our prayers.

So how are we to walk in a manner worthy of our calling? We are to stay true to all that the Lord has called us to do. Be a faithful follower, loving God in the fullness of heart, body, mind and spirit, and loving your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:30-31).

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for calling me to Yourself.*



## 2 August

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called ...." Eph 4:1*

God, who created all that is (John 1:2-3), has called us to Himself (Eph 4:1). Let us not rush past, and miss appreciating this simple fact.

And more than that, we know the incredible love with which God loves us by the fact that Jesus came as one of us (John 1:14).

Even more incredibly, Jesus came to die so that death could be defeated (Phil 2:7-8). Jesus came so that, through His death, we might truly know God, the One who was calling us to Himself. By His death, Jesus has made a way for reconciliation with the Father.

In the face of such incredible generosity, what is our response?

Paul urges us to walk *"in a manner worthy of our calling"* (Eph 4:1). Just as Jesus came to honour the Father (John 1:18), let us honour Jesus by living in a manner worthy of our calling.

Pray: *Dear Holy Spirit, please help me to honour Jesus by my life.*

## 3 August

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling ... with all humility ...." Eph 4:1-2*

Jesus is our role-model in living true to our calling. In emulating Jesus, let us honour Him in faithfulness, serving with humility, just as He did (Matt 20:28; John 13:1).

Of course, there is a risk that we will identify with the calling rather than with the Caller. If we see ourselves as "called," we may be tempted to become prideful. We need to bear in mind that "whoever believes in [H]im should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

This does not diminish our calling. God still calls us to respond. But, when we keep our focus on the Caller, we are more likely to serve "*with all humility*" (Eph 4:2). We appreciate that this is the work of the Lord, and our gratitude keeps us from pridefulness.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for calling me to Yourself, and for making a way for me to be reconciled.*



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It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises  
to your name, O Most High ... ~Ps 92:1



## 4 August

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling ... with all humility ...." Eph 4:1-2*

Focusing on the Caller instead of our calling also means that we can share of this calling with others in humility and grace. We are not inviting others to an "exclusive club." Rather we are inviting them to take up their cross and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23). We are inviting them to join us in following Jesus as our role-model, with humility.

Our words will carry a lot more weight if we do what we say, rather than simply say it (Jas 1:22).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, I seek to faithfully follow You, taking up my cross each day, with humility.*

## 5 August

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling ... with all humility and gentleness ...." Eph 4:1-2*

There are occasions when I need to declare Jesus' name with courage and boldness. I seek to make His name known, and that sometimes means that I need to step outside of my comfort zone, under Holy Spirit leading.

But, in living out my calling each day, I should not be boldly declaring my compliance. This sounds like the sort of behaviour which Jesus asked us to avoid (Matt 6:1-6). Instead, let us live our life of faithfulness with *"all humility and gentleness"* (Eph 4:2).

This is also closer to the witnessing which Peter recommended to his readers. *"[I]n your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense ... with gentleness and respect"* (1 Pet 3:15).

Pray: *Dearest Holy Spirit, please speak to my spirit if my conduct is not done with all humility and gentleness.*



## 6 August

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling ... with patience ...." Eph 4:1-2*

How we live our lives before others will speak a lot more of our gracious Lord than the words that we use to explain Him.

By their actions, Peter and John, *"uneducated, common men"* were recognised as men who *"had been with Jesus"* (Acts 4:13). Similarly, Peter himself recognised that believing wives could be instrumental in the conversion of their husbands by their *"respectful and pure conduct"* (1 Pet 3:2).

Let us remain walking *"in a manner worthy of the calling [of the Lord] ... with patience"* (Eph 4:1-2).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for the joy and the privilege of being Your faithful follower. My prayer is that You may draw others to Yourself through my life.*

## 7 August

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling ... with patience ...." Eph 4:1-2*

In following the Lord as patient witnesses, in reality we are accepting that this is fully a work of the Holy Spirit. He is the One who will plant the seeds, even if He uses our lives to do that. He is also the One who will water those seeds and, finally, He is the One who will bring the growth. We can watch with awe and wonder as the Kingdom fruit unfolds (Mark 4:20, 26-29). But we cannot rush ahead of the Lord. We are called to witness with patience (Eph 4:1-2).

May patience bring a rich reward as we honour the *"Lord of the harvest"* (Matt 9:38).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for the part that I can play in Your harvest. Please help me to remain patient when I want to rush ahead of You.*



## 8 August

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling ... bearing with one another in love ...." Eph 4:1-2*

Paul, then a *"prisoner for the Lord,"* wrote asking that witnesses would bear *"with one another in love"* (Eph 4:1-2).

I believe that the *"one another"* is as applicable to those with whom we witness as it is to those before whom we witness. In both cases, we need to be patient, with humility and gentleness.

Fellow believers, whether in our family, our friendship groups, our neighbourhood or among our work colleagues, may have a different way of bearing their cross daily (Luke 9:23). Some may live more transparent lives, joyfully sharing the richness of their relationship with the Lord. They tell of His strength in their weakness, His comfort in their sadness, His provision in their loss, and His blessings in abundance. Lovingly accept the generosity of their sharing, being mindful too of non-believers.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, help me to live faithfully before You.*

## 9 August

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling ... bearing with one another in love ...." Eph 4:1-2*

Some of those with whom we witness may live more introspective lives. They are living their walk in actions of patience, humility, and gentleness, rather than in sharing their experiences of God's faithfulness in words. Their faithfulness may prompt questions from others about their hope, their faith, and the Lord (1 Peter 3:15).

Let us also be ready to share of the faith and hope that we hold, whether through words or with actions, being respectful of those among whose lives we have an opportunity to witness.

*Pray: Thank You, Lord, for these opportunities. Please help me to love others faithfully, even when they witness for You in ways which are distinctly different to the ways I do.*



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Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ~1 Thes 5:16-18



## 10 August

*"... bearing with one another in love ...." Eph 4:1-2*

When we are witnessing to our faith in a *"manner worthy of the calling"* (Eph 4:1), we also need to extend love to those whose lives we touch (2). Bearing with them in love may mean being prepared to hear stories of their god and their faith experiences.

Let us be *"quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger"* (Jas 1:19) when others may have different beliefs about the God we worship. Our God does not need us to defend Him. Rather, I believe that He would prefer that we were faithful in showing love (Matt 5:44). In this way, they may open their hearts to hear us and what we believe.

*Pray: Father God, thank You for the opportunities I have to share my faith.*

## 11 August

*"I ... urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling ... eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ...." Eph 4:1, 3*

Just as we should be *"quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger"* (Jas 1:19) before non-believers, let us also exercise patience among our fellow Christians.

Yes, there may be doctrinal differences between us. We have some different understanding of how we can bring worship and honour to God. But we are united in the Body of Christ.

Yes, we see things differently in some cases. Yes, we conduct our services differently. But, we can still conduct ourselves with a spirit of unity (Eph 4:3-6). Then our Lord will be honoured (John 17:21-23).

May our witness before a watching world be conducted *"in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called"* (Eph 4:1).

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please forgive us when we are more focussed on those things which divide us than on those things which unite us.*



## 12 August

*"I ... urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling ... eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ...." Eph 4:1, 3*

The Lord has given us His peace, a peace which the world cannot give us (John 14:27). We are to *"maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Eph 4:3).

Let us work together to maintain that unity in peace.

Our words or actions should not be the cause of strife between believers. Instead, we should look for ways to maintain that unity of the Spirit and that peace.

When we have opportunities to engage with those who hold different beliefs, whether as believers or non-believers, let us seek Holy Spirit wisdom to guide our words, our hands and our hearts (Jas 1:5).

*Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, please give me wisdom as I engage with others.*



## 13 August

*"You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, [Y]ou still them."*

Ps 89:9

Sometimes in life, in some seasons, it just seems as though wave after wave of difficulty come crashing, and crushing, on top of your head.

At times like this, you begin to get a very small appreciation of what Job must have felt (Job 1:13-19; 2:7-10). When that thought strikes you, remember that *"In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong"* (Job 1:22). Job accepted that all things come from God (2:10b).

When we face our challenging times, we can call out to God to still the waves (Ps 89:9). We can also call out to God for wisdom (Jas 1:5). This may be wisdom on how to negotiate these "waves," or who might be able to give us some answers or support.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please hold me in Your loving arms when there are raging seas and rising waves in my life. Please help me keep my focus on You.*



## 14 August

*"You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, [Y]ou still them."*

Ps 89:9

When we listen to wisdom, let us make sure that it is divine wisdom. Seek first for God's hand to still the waves. If this does not happen, seek His wisdom.

In Job's case, his friends believed that none of these things could have happened without a cause. As Eliphaz said, *"As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same."* (Job 4:8).

In a similar way, those who speak wisdom over you and your circumstances may not be speaking divine wisdom. Hold this wisdom loosely and check with God and His Word in prayer. In this way, the Holy Spirit may give you clarity, or guide you in what you need to do.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please still my storm.*

## 15 August

*"You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, [Y]ou still them."*

Ps 89:9

When the disciples faced a raging storm, Jesus was with them. He is also with you. His disciples, seasoned fishermen, were fearful in this wild storm. They initially could not seek comfort or help from Jesus because He was asleep. In fact, they accused Him of being uncaring (Mark 4:38).

Jesus first response was to rebuke the wind and speak *"Peace! Be still!"* to the sea (39). Then He challenged his disciples on their lack of faith (40).

When we are going through our own storms, we can be confident that Jesus is with us (Heb 13:5). We can call on Him to still the waves (Mark 4:39; Ps 89:9), confident that He will still them unless He has a greater purpose. Rather than accuse Him of being uncaring, keep trusting.

Pray: *Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You for those times when You calm the storms of my life. Please help me to keep my faith and trust in You.*



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Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his  
steadfast love endures forever! ~1 Chron 16:34



## 16 August

*"Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!"* Ps 143:1

Whether we are being pounded by the waves of external pressures or being lashed by the arrows of the enemy, we can call out to God for His mercy (Ps 143:1; 89:9).

Our Almighty God has the power to still the waves (Mark 4:39) or to hold back the seas (Exod 14:21). But, sometimes, we may be crying out against a transformation which is important to our development, as a caterpillar might reject the cocoon. If our trust is truly in our Saviour, then we will rest in, and accept, His will.

Pray: *Forgive me, dearest Lord, when I have pushed back against Your transforming touch and Your will. I seek to accept Your moulding.*

## 17 August

*"Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!" Ps 143:1*

Sometimes we seek God's mercy because we are in a David versus Goliath battle (1 Sam 17:19-50). We need the might of God to come to our aid. We need our Mighty Warrior God to hear our prayer and to respond to our *"pleas for mercy"* (Ps 143:1).

When God met the power of the enemy, He did not send a giant. He sent a young man who had witnessed the faithfulness of God and who was willing to use the skills that he had learned (1 Sam 17:34-37, 48-50).

Perhaps God is calling you to use some of the skills with which you have previously known success? Is there a strategy which has worked on a smaller scale, in a different situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind with His wisdom so that you may discern His intention.

*Pray: Thank You, Lord, for the successes which I have enjoyed in the past. Please show me how I can use the skills which You developed in me then in order to achieve success now.*



## 18 August

*"Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!" Ps 143:1*

Perhaps, instead, there is someone close by who can offer you assistance for this task. They may not seem like a likely helper (1 Sam 17:33). They may not use the strategies with which you are familiar, nor seem equipped for the work at hand (38-39). Yet God may have been preparing them for such a time as this (1 Sam 17:34-37, 48-50).

Be prepared to consider the merits of their offer of assistance, without suspicion (1 Sam 17:28-29). Be ready to listen well (Jas 1:19). This may be God's answer to your need (Ps 143:1, 3; 1 Sam 17:48-50).

Welcome the offers of help that you receive, or which are suggested, and seek the Lord in prayer, with patience.

*Pray: Dearest Holy Spirit, please give me discernment as I negotiate how to address this task and solve this difficulty.*

## 19 August

*“Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!  
For the enemy has pursued my soul ....” Ps 143:1, 3.*

Sometimes we need the help, encouragement, and loving support of others because we are in a spiritual battle.

Do not be deceived. Peter identified that *“the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”* (1 Pet 5:8). We are told to *“Resist him, firm in your faith ...”* (9). James, similarly, tells us to *“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”* (Jas 4:7).

How do we resist the enemy?

David, in overcoming the roaring lion, used a sling and stones (1 Sam 17:34-37). Jesus, in overcoming the devil, used God’s Word (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). Let us be ready to have suitable instruments to resist the enemy. To do this, let us hide God’s Word in our hearts (Ps 119:11). Then, like David, we can reach into our store (1 Sam 17:49) and respond with what is suitable, as Jesus did.

Pray: *Thank You, Lord Jesus, for role-modelling how I can resist the enemy.*



## 20 August

*“... my spirit faints within me; my heart within me is appalled.” Ps 143:4*

When we store God’s Word in our hearts (Ps 119:11), it is also available for you to use when *“my spirit faints within me”* (Ps 143:4).

Perhaps today you are feeling overwhelmed with relational, financial, health or job issues. Maybe all of those! Do not be afraid. God is still with you, as He was with Job (Heb 13:5; Jas 5:11). Lean into Him and His Word.

To draw comfort for your anxious heart, read Matt 6:25; Phil 4:6-7; 1 Pet 5:7. To give you peace, John 14:27; 16:33; Isa 26:3; Col 3:15. To strengthen you to persevere, try Isa 40:31; Rom 5:3-5; Heb 12:1-2; Jas 1:25. And remember, *“I am with you always, to the end of the age”* (Matt 28:20).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You that I have the assurance of Your constant presence with me. Please help me to store Your Word in my heart.*

## 21 August

*"I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that [Y]ou have done;  
I ponder the work of [Y]our hands." Ps 143:5*

When David prepared to battle with Goliath, he recalled God's past faithfulness. *"And David said, 'The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine'"* (1 Sam 17:37).

It was with this same confident assurance in God's faithfulness that David could write *"I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that [Y]ou have done; I ponder the work of [Y]our hands"* (Ps 143:5).

Look back over God's past faithfulness to you, and take renewed comfort from that, as David did. Though this season may be tough, God has an excellent track record in helping us through. Keep your trust in Him.

Pray: *Thank You, Lord, that I can recall many instances of Your faithfulness in the past. My eyes and trust are on You.*



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Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! ~Ps 107:8



## 22 August

*"I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that [Y]ou have done;  
I ponder the work of [Y]our hands." Ps 143:5*

What if your "collection of God's faithfulness" is feeling a little dry or barren right now? Though you can see how God has been working incredibly for many years in your life, there is a heaviness in your spirit which you cannot seem to shift.

Call on the Holy Spirit to reveal anything which may be hidden from your eyes, but weighing heavily on your heart. Is there an underlying difficulty which is causing your current challenges to remain unresolved?

Take time to pray, asking loving and supportive friends to intercede for you too. Then your breakthrough may be granted, and your spirit refreshed.

Pray: *Thank You, Holy Spirit, for Your enlightening wisdom.*

## 23 August

*"I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that [Y]ou have done;  
I ponder the work of [Y]our hands." Ps 143:5*

If you are a new believer, you may think that you do not have a "collection of God's faithfulness" on which to draw.

In fact, as you look back over your journey to knowing trust in God's sovereignty, you will likely be able to see that God's hand has been upon you for some time. As you reflect, you will get flashbacks of God's favour, His timing, and His provision.

It is through these remembrances that you can "*I meditate on all that [He has] done*" and "*ponder the work of [His] hands*" (Ps 143:5). Know with confidence that the Lord is faithful and kind and true.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, I joyfully recognise that Your hand has been upon me all through my journey, as You led me to faith in You. Thank You for the intimacy of Your care.*



## 24 August

*"I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that [Y]ou have done;  
I ponder the work of [Y]our hands." Ps 143:5*

Even on those days when our eyes are dulled from seeing how You have been at work in our lives, we can recognise Your hand in the lives of others. We have heard stories of Your faithfulness. We have read of Your steadfast love and care through Your Word.

While these may not be our stories, they can still be used by the Holy Spirit to bring refreshment to our spirits. They attest to Your character, the genuineness of Your love, and how You have faithfully protected and guided those who have committed their lives to You (1 Cor 1:9).

Continue to trust in God's faithfulness and allow your heart, soul, mind and spirit to know rest in Him. "*The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms*" (Deut 33:27).

Pray: *Dear Lord, thank You for Your goodness to me.*

## 25 August

*“Let me hear in the morning of [Y]our steadfast love, for in [Y]ou I trust.*

Ps 143:8

On some days, the accumulation of hurt and pain may seem to outweigh what we can possibly carry. Stop!

Why are you carrying them?

Lay them down at the Lord’s feet (Ps 55:22). Jesus offered Himself so that He could take those things which were weighing heavily on us. Instead, He wants to give us His yoke, *“For [M]y yoke is easy, and [M]y burden is light”* (Matt 11:30).

God also gave us community, so that we could support each other in mutual care, encouragement, and love, especially in times of strife (Gal 6:2).

Pray: *Thank You, Lord, that You are willing to accept my burdens. Thank You too that You have placed a supportive community around me.*



## 26 August

*“Let me hear in the morning of [Y]our steadfast love, for in [Y]ou I trust.*

Ps 143:8

On some days we may say with Jesus, *“Sufficient for the day is its own trouble”* (Matt 6:34). But, as you lay your head down for refreshing sleep, it is a comfort to say, *“Let me hear in the morning of [Y]our steadfast love, for in [Y]ou I trust* (Ps 143:8). As David wrote, *“Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning”* (Ps 30:5).

This may be a season of long days or sleepless nights, and maybe both. But we can rest assured that God’s faithful love remains resting on us. He will continue to bring joy and blessings into each day.

Remember each day to look for His hand of blessing. This will keep our eyes focused on the Lord, and our hearts and spirits in a state of openness, ready for the unfolding wonder of His love, with humility and gratitude.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for ministering faithfully to me.*

## 27 August

*“Let me hear in the morning of [Y]our steadfast love, for in [Y]ou I trust.*

Ps 143:8

We all need some quiet times with the Lord.

Though our days may be particularly busy, it is especially in those seasons when we need to be more intentional about seeking the Lord. He is the only One who can speak His peace into our hearts so that we can continue to keep them soft, obedient and committed to His heart (John 14:27).

If today is in such a season, go now or set an alarm for the morning or for a time later today when you will intentionally seek time with the Lord. He seeks to come beside you, offering you His restoration and refreshment.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, thank You that You are always with me, ready to cover me with Your steadfast love. Help me to draw near each morning.*



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And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. ~Col 3:17



## 28 August

*“Let me hear in the morning of [Y]our steadfast love, for in [Y]ou I trust.*

Ps 143:8

Though mornings may not suit everyone as a special time with the Lord, setting aside a specific time for fellowship is important. Having experienced that special refreshment yesterday or this morning, you will be more committed to repeating it. Look for ways to be more intentional. During His lifetime, Jesus was always intentional about times with the Father. Sometimes Jesus spent the whole night in prayer. This was especially important during times of big decisions, such as choosing His twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-16). May we also be intentional about coming before the Lord in prayer for the deeper things on our hearts.

*Pray: Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You for Your example as a prayer warrior.*



## 29 August

*“Let me hear in the morning of [Y]our steadfast love, for in [Y]ou I trust.*

Ps 143:8

Maybe our intentional time with the Lord is a necessary affirmation of our trust. Maybe we are asking to *“hear in the morning of [Y]our steadfast love”* (Ps 143:8) because we need that added assurance, as Thomas did (John 20:29). This time will help to still our hearts, calm our fears, and know God’s special closeness, for in Him we trust.

Come, when you are able. Come and confess anything which might be causing friction in your relationship (1 John 1:9), so that you may know and experience the tenderness of the Lord receiving you back into full fellowship (Hos 2:14). He wants to restore you, to declare you again as His beloved child (Luke 15:22-24).

*Pray: Thank You, Father God, that I can run back to You even when I have allowed barriers between us. Thank You for accepting me with grace.*



## 30 August

*“Show me where to walk, for I give myself to [Y]ou.”* Ps 143:8b NLT

Maybe you are sensing some barriers in the relationship with the Lord because you are no longer certain that you are still walking faithfully in His will.

It is not that you have intentionally walked away from His ways, but you are no longer sensing a closeness. It may be that the Father wants you to step up to a deeper level of relationship with Him. He wants to move you from old habits of engaging and draw you into richer fellowship. Draw nearer, asking the Holy Spirit to show you any way that you may be at risk of straying, and recommit your whole heart, mind, soul, and spirit to faithful love (Mark 12:30). Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you (Jas 4:8).

*Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, please show me any way in which I am beginning to stray from the path, or am putting barriers between You and me. I fully want to love and serve with all that I am and all that I have.*

## 31 August

*“Teach me to do [Y]our will, for [Y]ou are my God! Let [Y]our good Spirit lead me on level ground!” Ps 143:10*

As winter finishes, let us consciously shake off any old thinking, old patterns of behaviour, and any old sinful habits.

Come afresh and ask God to *“Teach me to do [Y]our will, for [Y]ou are my God”* (Ps 143:10). The Holy Spirit can guide us on the right way, prompting us with the right paths to take, and help us to turn our feet from the valleys of fear, pain, anxiety and stress.

This does not mean that there will be no more fear, pain, anxiety or stress in our lives. There likely will be. But, we can ask for help from the Holy Spirit in not revisiting what He is resolving. We can leave these matters in His care.

Pray: *Dear Holy Spirit, thank You for Your wise guidance.*



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I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices ... ~ Ps 16:8-9



## 1 September

*“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” Ps 8:1*

It is likely that this spring has arrived without the usual “spring cleaning,” as it was completed instead during the early weeks of the Covid lockdown.

But, while our calendar may have been changed around, the unfolding patterns of nature remain in place. As the temperatures warm, we see a beautiful unfolding of God’s majestic creation. For these flora and fauna, 2020 has been a pretty usual experience.

As the unusual features of Covid continue or resolve, let us not miss the enduring beauty of God’s creation. Let us know refreshment in body, mind, and spirit as we see the Creator’s handprints. Look, smell, be blessed.

Pray: *Gracious Lord, thank You for the joy, grace and blessings outdoors.*

## 2 September

*“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is [Y]our name in all the earth!” Ps 8:1*

Spring has sprung, and maybe this new season or new month represents another new season or new awakening for you. Maybe it is the time when your body, mind, and spirit need a good stretch. Then, refreshed, we can proclaim again, with David, *“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”* (Ps 8:1).

It is good to joyfully proclaim God’s majesty and wonder. It is good to consciously open our eyes to the incredible blessings we experience in nature each day. Even if today is a cloudy, rainy day, there is the distinct possibility that there is a beautiful rainbow about to emerge somewhere.

When we live with a joyful expectancy of God’s rich blessings, our eyes and heart will often find them. This is different to a spirit of entitlement, which breeds anger when the entitlement is unmet. Rather, joyful expectancy seeks to identify the unexpected blessings in the otherwise ordinary and mundane. Seek those blessings with a grateful heart.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, thank You for the joy of seeing Your fingerprints.*



## 3 September

*“You have set [Y]our glory above the heavens ... I look at [Y]our heavens, the work of [Y]our fingers ....” Ps 8:1, 3*

I love to finish my evening run in time to be able to face the majesty of the setting sun as it glides down, arrayed in gold, towards the western horizon. This is the work of God’s fingers and it is beautiful to behold (Ps 8:1, 3).

For others, God’s majesty is seen in the delicate contours of a delicate rose bud. Where do you see the fingers of God entwined in the beauty of nature?

Today, when you see these things, let praise for God rise up in your spirit. In recognising the majesty of God, we catch a glimpse of His creativity, His purposes, the delicacy of His touch. We recognise Him again as Mighty God.

*Pray: Thank You, my God, for the joy of knowing You.*

## 4 September

*"... what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" Ps 8:4*

Over the past few days we have explored and enjoyed the majesty of God's creativity. Yet His fingerprints on nature are only part of what He has achieved. The same God who created the majesty of space and the intricate delicacy of a butterfly's wings also created humanity.

But God did not stop at creating humanity. He is mindful of people and cares for them (Ps 8:4). It is an incredible thing to bring to mind, that the same Creator who is part of the "big leagues" of creating gigantic planets and stars could also be attentive "*when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth*" (Ps 139:15). And He still cares; "*... [Y]our hand shall lead me, and [Y]our right hand shall hold me*" (10).

*Pray: Dearest Lord, thank You for the incredible beauty and intimacy of Your loving concern. Thank You for how amazingly You care for me, and how graciously You are concerned for me.*



## 5 September

*"... what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" Ps 8:4*

God shares an incredible intimacy with His creation. But God is still God. He is not a genie who can be treated like an attentive puppet in the hands of humanity. God is God and God is love (1 John 4:7-8). God gives generously from that place of love.

In response, humanity is called into a loving relationship with God. Our part is also to love, with grace, generosity, service and humility. Rather than greeting God with demands, let us worship Him with thankful, humble, repentant and devoted hearts, minds, spirits and lives.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, I am truly sorry for those times when I have been bossy in my prayers and resentful when they have gone unanswered. I worship and adore You.*

## 6 September

*"... what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" Ps 8:4*

We can be in right relationship with God, seeing Him in His majesty, but also recognising Him in His intimacy. When we can have a real relationship with Him, we can bring our true feelings before Him, even if these are anger or frustration.

God knows us, and He already knows what is in our hearts (Ps 139:4; Mark 7:18-23). Nothing we say will come as a surprise to Him, but sometimes He waits for us to say what is on our hearts so that we can articulate it, own it, and express it before Him. He wants us to be honest with what we are feeling. As a good, good Father, God would prefer that we came with our anger than that we tried to wear a mask of compliance. God accepts that this is what we are feeling, even though our hearts can be deceived (Jer 17:9).

*Pray: Thank You, dearest Lord, for accepting me as I am, and still caring.*



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I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word  
I hope ... ~Ps 130:5



## 7 September

*"... what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" Ps 8:4*

God accepts that sometimes we are not happy with the answer which we have been given. Three times Paul *"pleaded with the Lord about [the thorn in the flesh], that it should leave me"* (2 Cor 12:8). God's ultimate response was *"My grace is sufficient for you, for [M]y power is made perfect in weakness"* (9).

Paul was not admonished for pleading. He was able to state his case, and so can we. Yes, we need to have a worshipful and respectful relationship with God, but that does not preclude us from being honest.

*Pray: Thank You, Lord, for the opportunity to truly share what I am feeling with You. Thank You for accepting me as I am.*

## 8 September

*“Our Father in heaven ...”* Matt 6:9

Just recently we have been considering our relationship with God. Perhaps we think of this most predominantly as our times of prayer before Him. Jesus’ apostles saw the importance of prayer in His life (Luke 11:1-2). In response, Jesus taught them how there were to pray (Matt 6:9-13).

In praying like that, Jesus was telling His disciples to call on God as their Heavenly Father, just as He did. We can recognise that He cares for us as a Father. But He is not like our earthly fathers. Though they are called to give their best, God the Father truly does give His best and loves us in the best way possible. Earthly parents are still to be honoured (Exod 20:12).

Though our earthly fathers were responding in their human imperfections, our Heavenly Father is perfect. His decisions will always be best, be made from a place of perfect love, knowledge, wisdom and grace, and will always result in the best solutions (Luke 11:11-13).

*Pray: Dearest Father God, thank You for how perfectly You love us.*



## 9 September

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be [Y]our name.”* Matt 6:9

Just as we are instructed to honour our earthly father and mother (Exod 20:12), Jesus calls us to honour God the Father (Matt 6:9). His name and His person are to be considered holy. In hallowing His name, we are to regard as holy the very essence of His person, His character.

How do we do that? We speak of God the Father with respect, never taking His name in vain or using it inappropriately. Sadly, this is the opposite of what happens in the world with the name of Jesus. But these things should not happen among believers. Let us guard our words (Matt 5:37; Jas 1:19; 5:12), rather than make rash oaths, as Herod did (Mk 6:26).

*Pray: Gracious Lord, I seek to always speak the Father’s name with holiness and respect.*

## 10 September

*"Your kingdom come, [Y]our will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*

Matt 6:10

After acknowledging God the Father and the holiness of His name, we pray that His Kingdom will come, that His will will be done on earth, just as His will is done in heaven (Matt 6:10).

In becoming Jesus' followers, we are also committing to having a part in God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus came that His Father's will might be done (John 6:38). We are called to join in Jesus' work (John 14:12-14).

The Holy Spirit can guide us in doing the work which has been planned beforehand for us to do (Eph 2:10). Let us be faithful in serving, witnesses to God's coming Kingdom.

*Pray: Thank You, Lord Jesus, for instructing us on how we are to pray, and how we are to live in faithful service.*



## 11 September

*"Give us this day our daily bread ...."* Matt 6:11

Jesus told us that we can expectantly come to the Father and ask for our daily bread (Matt 6:11). The Father already knows those things we need (Matt 6:8). He will not be neglectful in providing for us (Matt 6:25-34).

This does not mean that we will have full pantries overflowing with all sorts of goodies. Consider instead the experience of the Israelites as they crossed the wilderness. God provided manna, but this manna was given each day, their daily bread. On the sixth day they could gather twice as much, in order not to work on the Sabbath (Exod 16:4-5). Apart from that, the excess portions gathered bred worms and stank (20, 22-24).

Similarly, our daily bread will be sufficient for the day and our circumstances.

*Pray: Thank You, Lord, for blessing me with my daily bread .*

## 12 September

*"Give us this day our daily bread ...." Matt 6:11*

We can expectantly come to the Father for our daily bread, and I believe that we can also confidently trust that He will supply what we need. This is not simply bread, but *"all these things [which] the Gentiles seek after [which] your heavenly Father knows that you need"* (Matt 6:32). The emphasis is on need. These are not simply those things which the world identifies as "needs." Rather these are needs which *"your heavenly Father knows that you need"* (Matt 6:32).

I believe that there may also be needs beyond food, drink and clothing (Matt 6:31) included in these daily needs. This list may also include purposeful work (Eph 2:10), whether paid or unpaid, and community (Gen 2:18). Come to the Father in trust, believing that He will faithfully supply.

Pray: *Thank You, Father God, for supplying those things I truly need.*



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I will return her vineyards to her and transform the Valley  
of Trouble into a gateway of hope ~Hos 2:15 NLT



## 13 September

*"... and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."  
Matt 6:12*

Jesus tells us to ask for forgiveness for our debts. But He makes that debt forgiveness dependent on our forgiveness of those who are indebted to us. Jesus wants the two linked. We are coming to ask for forgiveness of our debts, but it is on the understanding that we are already after forgiving those who owed us.

In forgiving their debt first, we have effectively placed ourselves in a very vulnerable position, as we have limited the means available to pay what we owe the Father. In fact, we could never repay what we owe the Father, but Jesus has paid that price on our behalf. In gratitude for His sacrifice, we can extend forgiveness to others.

Pray: *Thank You, Dearest Lord, for taking my debt upon Yourself through Your death.*



## 14 September

*"... and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."*

Matt 6:12

An appreciation of our indebtedness to God should overflow to granting debt-forgiveness to others, being generous in loving others well.

One Gospel example of forgiveness was of the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair (Luke 7:36-50).

She showed generous loving service to Jesus by her attentive care. Jesus respected what she had done for Him and granted her forgiveness of her sins. Perhaps recognition of her deeper debt prompted deeper love (43).

In contrast, Simon, the host, had not honoured his guest (44-47). Further, Simon began to doubt Jesus for accepting the care of this woman of the city (39). The woman's larger sin debt flowered into deeper love in her heart, while Simon's lesser debt reaped a less generous response (41-43).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, I seek to respond with forgiveness and generous love toward others.*



## 15 September

*"... and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."*

Matt 6:12

The woman who generously loved Jesus was granted forgiveness of her sins, though they were many.

In another Gospel example, a servant pleaded his case and was forgiven a huge debt. But that servant then withheld debt-forgiveness to a fellow servant who was indebted to him for a far lesser amount.

Though he had received generosity, he did not extend generosity. Maybe he was more focused on his exposure to vulnerability than the generosity he had received. We know that the employer who extended forgiveness reinstated the debt when he knew how his servant had reciprocated. This was consistent with Jesus' prayer (Matt 6:12).

Pray: *Dear Lord, thank You for forgiving me and loving me generously. I seek to do likewise.*

## 16 September

*"And lead us not into temptation...." Matt 6:13*

Why would Jesus tell us to ask the Father, *"And lead us not into temptation"* (Matt 6:13)?

The Message paraphrase is *"Keep us safe from ourselves"* which, I believe, captures the essence. Jesus wants us to ask for the Father's protection when we are at risk of temptation. God is not a tempter (Jas 1:13). *"But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire"* (14). Rather than risk being lured away through desire into sin and death, draw nearer to God (Jas 4:8). Seek wholeness and His holiness (1 Pet 1:16). Choose His ways, above the ways of the world (Jas 4:4). This also means resisting the devil so that he flees from you (7).

When you sense that you may be at risk of temptation, ask the Father to lead you to a fellow brother or sister who can be an accountability partner.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for keeping me safe from myself.*



## 17 September

*"... but deliver us from evil." Matt 6:13*

Jesus wants us to appeal to the Father to *"Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil"* (Matt 6:13 MSG).

The company we keep has an important influence on our lives, our hearts and our spirits. While we are engaging in deep fellowship with those whose values are more consistent with worldly ways, we are also at risk of choosing worldly values (Jas 4:4). *"Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded"* is James' solution (8). It is simply too easy to absorb the world's value system, especially as *"the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"* (1 Pet 5:8).

The solution? Find godly friends who will help you to grow in your relationship with the Lord (Prov 27:17).

Pray: *Thank You, Lord, for the accountability partners, mentors, Christian leaders, and godly companions which You have placed around me for the journey. I am grateful.*

## 18 September

*"You are ... [M]y servant whom I have chosen...." Isa 43:10*

You, a servant? The job title may not exactly thrill you. However, being the Lord's servant is an incredible honour. Mary, Jesus's mother, was God's servant (Luke 1:38). The Lord Jesus Himself took the position of servant during His earthly ministry (Matt 20:28) and we are also called to serve as a defining part of our ministry and faithfulness to Him (Gal 5:13).

In calling Jesus "Lord," we are accepting our servanthood under Him. He rightly deserves this position. He is the greatest among us who also came and served (Matt 23:11). Through death, He rescued us and reconciled us to the Father (Eph 1:7-10).

*Pray: Dearest Lord, thank You for serving us through Your death and resurrection. I gratefully accept You as my Lord, Jesus.*



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... having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints ... ~Eph 1:18



## 19 September

*"You are ... [M]y servant whom I have chosen...." Isa 43:10*

The Lord has chosen you to serve Him (Isa 43:10). The type of service He requires of you may be revealed in the gifts with which He has blessed you. If so, pursue God's glory through the responsible and obedient use of these gifts.

Gifts such as creativity, discipleship, hospitality, teaching, generosity, encouragement, or other gifts may be used for God's glory. If you have these gifts, they can be offered and applied in the loving support of Christ's Body. In this way, all may experience the blessing of this giftedness (Eph 4:11-16).

*Pray: Thank You, Father God, for the way that You have blessed some among us with gifts for nurturing, supporting, guiding and encouraging the Church, and building it up. Thank you for how they are used to glorify You.*

## 20 September

*“You are ... [M]y servant whom I have chosen....” Isa 43:10*

For some, their gifts may not be as clearly recognised. Though their hearts seek to glorify the Lord, they are unsure of the gifts they can offer.

In blessing us with gifts, God does *not* try to hide the gifts which He has placed in us. Instead, those around us should be able to identify our gifts through observing how we reach out towards others. In other instances, through prayer and meditation, our gifts become known. If you are not sure how God has gifted you, ask the Holy Spirit to place opportunities or people around you so that they can be identified. In some cases, a “gifting questionnaire” may help.

These gifts are really gifts for the whole Body of Christ (Eph 4:11-16). In reaching out to lovingly support and encourage others, many of these gifts are disclosed. See what opportunities to assist or enable others appeal to you. This may be your gifting.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please guide me in discovering Your gifts in me.*



## 21 September

*“You are ... [M]y servant whom I have chosen....” Isa 43:10*

Yesterday we explored how gifts could be discovered by the ministry or work to which you feel called. If you are still unclear on your gifts, consider the ministry, neighbourhood, work space or family to which God has called you. Ask your fellow brothers and sisters to pray with you for revelation.

It is possible that you have held back from getting involved in ministry because you are unsure of your suitability for the role. Perhaps you could consider the ways that God has been speaking to your heart, including those things which fill you with delight. Maybe this is God’s hand of favour upon you, drawing you toward the area which will be blessed and a blessing through your engagement. Ask too for help and advice.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, I want to offer my gifts for Your glory. Please show me how that can happen. Please sing to my heart from those spaces where you would have me minister.*

## 22 September

*"Every day I will bless [Y]ou and praise [Y]our name forever and ever."*

Ps 145:2

Do you have a set time when you come before the Lord in prayer and worship every day? If not, maybe you could start now?

We know that habits take time to form, but perseverance in sticking with it helps to create time and space for the new habit.

Maybe you could make it a practice to pray for two people every day right after you have read this devotional? Each devotion ends in a prayer, so that can be your prompt. You may even be able to apply that day's prayer to your friend or family member's situation?

Maybe you are not sure what or how you should pray for your two people? The Holy Spirit assures us that He Himself *"intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words"* (Rom 8:26). Even if we do not know what to pray, the Holy Spirit covers their needs on our behalf.

Pray: *Dearest Holy Spirit, thank You.*



## 23 September

*"Every day I will bless [Y]ou and praise [Y]our name forever and ever."*

Ps 145:2

Maybe your first and ultimate prayer for your two friends or family members is that they may have a saving relationship with the Lord.

Are we able to bless the Lord and praise His name forever and ever before them? If so, we can begin to open their eyes, hearts and spirits to the joyful relationship which we share with the Lord. This could be an ice-breaker toward their own relationship.

Maybe you could ask them to join you at a service, even if it is a YouTube recording of a previous service. This may speak to their hearts, minds and spirits, drawing them closer to knowing God in His fullness.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, please help me to engage well when praising You.*

## 24 September

*"Every day I will bless [Y]ou and praise [Y]our name forever and ever."*

Ps 145:2

Your deepest heart desire may be for those most beloved to you to know God's saving grace. As influencers, we seek to honour God and praise His name.

Sometimes, though, the enemy has poisoned our friends or family against the Lord's name, blinding them (2 Cor 4:3-4). Through enemy interference, they are averse to any mention of God. Respect that.

Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom on how to be the best witness for God's Kingdom so that you can still faithfully give God glory and bring your beloved ones closer to a relationship with the Lord.

*Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, please open my understanding to new ways that I might be able to give you praise and glory before my family and friends. Please clear the enemy's blindness from their eyes.*



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**"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord.**

**They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." ~Jer 29:11 NLT**



## 25 September

*"One generation shall commend [Y]our works to another ..."* Ps 145:4

As a parent or grandparent, you can be a powerful influencer for God before the next generation(s). King David declared, *"One generation shall commend [Y]our works to another"* (Ps 145:4). He knew the power and influence held by parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents.

The Israelites were also told to share their beliefs as they journeyed along with their children and grandchildren in the ordinary tasks of everyday life (Deut 6:7; 11:19). Be diligent, with gentleness, grace and wisdom.

*Pray: Dearest Lord, please help me to faithfully present stories, promises and truths about You to the next generations. I seek to honour You.*

## 26 September

*"One generation shall commend [Y]our works to another ...." Ps 145:4*

With social-distancing and the movement of families to different states and places, it may be more challenging for *"One generation [to] commend [Y]our works to another"* (Ps 145:4).

During Covid 19, we have all had an opportunity to see the wonderful contact which has been achievable through Zoom, FaceTime, Microsoft Teams, and others. Though family may be physically distant, they are still able to connect in meaningful ways. They are still able to influence and minister to each other, though physically separated.

Though you may not be able to engage in the same physical space, you can still speak God's truths before the next generation(s). You can also shine the light of God's love for them through the way that you interact with them. Even if they may not exactly remember all the words, in years to come they may recall the love and faithfulness in your heart and your message. Shine brightly for the Lord's glory.

Pray: *Thank You, Dearest Lord, for all the ways that You provide for us to have contact with the next generation(s).*



## 27 September

*"One generation shall commend [Y]our works to another ...." Ps 145:4*

What if we are the end of the family line? Though you may not be able to be an influencer to the next generation in your family, you can still *"commend [Y]our works to another generation"* (Ps 145:4).

It is likely that there are other young people within your sphere of influence. These may be the kids or grandkids of your friends. They may also be your own nephews or nieces, or those of the next generation. If not, there are likely little ones with whom you could share God's parables or promises. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead the way.

Pray: *Thank You, Holy Spirit, for Your suggestions on ways to glorify God in humble faithfulness.*

## 28 September

*"One generation shall commend [Y]our works to another ...." Ps 145:4*

Your efforts to influence the next generation may also be curtailed because of rejection. Your children or your grandchildren may reject the message of God's Kingdom, on their own behalf, or for their children.

The answer? Show grace and respect, with humility.

As Peter told the believing wives in the Diaspora, they were to continue faithfully living godly lives before their non-believing husbands. In this way, *"they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see [their] respectful and pure conduct"* (1 Pet 3:1-2).

It is possible to witness without words. And the way we use words, or silence, can also be a strong influencer in helping another to witness the Kingdom (Jas 1:19). Persevere, that the Lord's message may be known.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, I offer my life and my service as a way to have Your Kingdom known. Please shine through me for Your glory.*



## 29 September

*"...and shall declare [Y]our mighty acts." Ps 145:4*

You may have direct opportunities to influence the next generation through familial or Sunday School teaching. If not, you can still *"declare [God's] mighty acts"* (Ps 145:4).

This may be as simple as joyfully and clearly praising God for the myriad of blessings which He continues to pour out over our lives. It may be unusual blessings, like a new grandchild. It may be the glorious sunrise which greeted you this morning, the tasty bread on special at the bakers, or the delightful book which you found at the library. We know that *"[e]very good and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father"* (Jas 1:17). *"Rejoice in the Lord always"* (Phil 4:4).

Pray: *Thank You, Dearest Lord, my heart is overflowing with joy and gladness. Please bless my loved ones, and draw them to Yourself.*



# 30 September

*““Rejoice in the Lord always ....” Phil 4:4*

Now that another devotional is ending, my prayer is that you have been inspired to commit each day more fully for the Lord’s glory.

Begin each day by calling Him your Lord, committing to seek Him in all ways, to worship Him with gladness, and to ask His blessings over all you will meet this day.

Confess your shortcomings as soon as they happen. Ask for boldness to share your faith, and ask that the Lord would help you to stay faithful. Seek to reflect His love to all, with purity, humility, gentleness, and grace.

*Pray: Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You for being my Lord, my Reconciler Please help me to honour You in all my ways and to share my faith with my loved ones. I rejoice in the Lord.*



*“Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.*

*God has given each of us a gift from [H]is great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*

*Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to [H]im forever and ever! Amen. (1 Pet 4:8, 10-11 NLT)*

*The Holy Spirit was the inspiration behind these thoughts and we pray that they will encourage, challenge and stretch you in your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the will of the Heavenly Father.*

*Gelly McAuliffe-Bunker for PURE Devotional Ministry*



# Notes

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