

FOLLOWING JESUS DAY BY DAY

PURE

People

Undergoing

Regeneration

Everyday

PURE

Devotional Ministry

This booklet is written to encourage, support, enrich and guide Jesus' followers, personally or in ministry, in honouring God, but is never, under any circumstances, to be sold or made available for sale. Mistakes in citation and reference are unintentional. Credit for the message contained belongs to the Lord because 'He has done great things' (Joel 2:20). 2024



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 HCSB)*

PURE Devotional Ministry

*Donations towards the PURE or CURL ministries can be made to Gelly McAuliffe-Bunker BSB 06 4185 A/c 1010 5409
Please direct any queries to gelly.mcauliffe.bunker@gmail.com*

**Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are from the ESV translation of the Holy Bible.*



1 April

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ..." 1 Pet 1:3

As we commence a new Devotional, we are still rejoicing in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us not consider Easter as 'done and dusted.' Rather, let us carry the wonder, joy, gratitude, and grace of this special occasion with us into the rest of this year, and beyond.

Because of Jesus, we are living in freedom. Because of Jesus, we have true hope.

During this devotional, this month, this week, or even just today, let us live in the joy of that freedom, and seek ways to share our joy.

Pray: Thank You, Dearest Lord, for the freedom You gained for me. Help me to live in the fullness of joy and freedom, and carry it as a fragrance to others.

2 April

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ...” 1 Pet 1:3

As we return to our usual working, family, personal, and ministry lives after the Easter period, are we living our newness?

We are born again!

Today, for the next ten minutes, or even one, take a moment to thank the Lord. Take a moment to fully focus on Him.

Ask yourself, is my life different because of Jesus? Am I consciously using the opportunities and challenges which God allows in my life to glorify God?

If not, today is a new day. Today is the beginning of a new season of refreshed freedom and conscious joy. Step into that freedom and joy.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for leading me in deeper understanding of who You are calling me to be.*



3 April

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ...” 1 Pet 1:3

What mercy Father God has shown to us. It is only through His great mercy that He *“has caused us to be born again”* (1 Pet 1:3). This mercy is ours because of the character of God.

God’s mercy is not dependent on our righteousness. God is not obligated to show mercy to us because of anything that we have done. And neither does God withhold His mercy because of anything we have done. For that we can be thankful.

Pray: *Dear Father God, thank You for making a way for me to come to You. Thank You that You extend mercy.*

4 April

"According to his great mercy"

1 Pet 1:3

Yesterday we mentioned that God the Father does not need to extend mercy because of anything that we have done.

The mercy He extends to us is not a reciprocation for any mercy we have extended. Neither does God show mercy because of any good deeds we have done. Anything we could do would just be a drop in the ocean compared to the goodness, mercy, kindness, and grace which God shows to us every single day (Jas 1:17).

Our part is not to return mercy for mercy to God. Our part is to give thanks to God, and glorify His name.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for Your mercy and grace.*



Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

~Luke 6:36



5 April

"According to his great mercy"

1 Pet 1:3

We said yesterday that our part is not to return mercy for mercy to God. But, as we know, we are called to be merciful because God has been merciful to us (Luke 6:36).

God has extended mercy to us because His character is to love us. God does not extend mercy because of any goodness in us. It is precisely because **He** is good. However, we are not called to be a sponge of God's mercy. He wants us to extend that same mercy to others. And, when we do, let us do it in a way that brings Him glory.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for every single time that You have extended mercy and grace to me. I know that I do not deserve it, so thank You.*

6 April

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ...” 1 Pet 1:3

Do we truly know, in our heart, minds, and spirits, that God loves us? If you are uncertain, please read the sentence above again and then answer Yes!!

God does indeed love you. He created you, and He has incredible plans for you. *“He has caused [you] to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet 1:3).*

It is true! God loves you with an unstoppable love and, through Jesus, you have access to a living hope.

Soak in that today. Sense it deeply in your heart, mind, and spirit. If it still does not feel real, ask a friend to pray with you and for you.

Pray: *Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You for freedom through You.*



7 April

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ...” 1 Pet 1:3

Some time ago we declared that we do not need to work for God’s mercy. It is true. God’s mercy is ours because of who He is and His character.

So there is nothing that you need to do to earn His mercy.

On the other hand, there is nothing that you can do that would put you outside of the reach of God’s mercy.

We all fail in different ways. We fall short. We do what we know we should not do. We lose our temper. We make bad choices. We all sin (Rom 3:23).

But none of these can create an insurmountable gap in reaching God. That is because Jesus has made a way. God, in His love, made a way for humankind to be reconciled. God invites us to be born again. If you have not yet, maybe you will choose today to ask Jesus into your heart.

Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for all You have done, and for interceding.*

8 April

“Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!”

Ps 95:1

Oh how joyfully we praise God for His faithfulness to us.

As we gather together as a post-Resurrection community, may our hearts rejoice in the Lord our Saviour. By Him and through Him we are free and being joined together as His Body, the Church. The freedom in which we stand is by God’s grace and through Jesus’s sacrifice.

If today you are facing challenges, choose instead to express joyfulness to the Lord, the rock of our salvation. He is with you. Lay your tears, your burdens, and your grief at His feet. He is your comforter. Resting in His grace, we can truly experience rest from our burdens (1 Pet 5:7), enough to raise our voices in joy and praise.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You that I can bring my concerns to You, trusting in Your grace.*



9 April

“Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!” Ps 95:1

If you sing or write or draw or play sports, you will know that sometimes we need to push through in order to progress. If we only exercise, craft or sing when the mood takes us, we may not develop much as a singer, writer, artist, or sportsperson.

Sometimes we simply need to choose a writing or drawing, singing or exercise time, and simply get on with it. Does that mean that it will not still be an enjoyable experience? Yes, it can be!

In our chaos, we may not want to *“make a joyful noise”* to the Lord (Ps 95:1). Yet, as we raise our voice in praise, our praises to God will draw our attention to Him and His glory. In this we begin to experience His peace.

Pray: *Dear Lord, please help me in my battles.*

10 April

"Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!" Ps 95:1

In the middle of our battles yesterday, when we chose to praise, was it an insincere praise?

I do not believe so. I believe that, instead, we had become so wrapped up in our chaos that we lost sight of our Almighty God. Our challenges and issues became clouds before the light of God's goodness and grace.

When clouds block the sun, we continue to recognise that the sun is there. In a similar way, we know that God is there. We know that He deserves our praises. In committing to praise we are bringing our practices into line with our beliefs.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, You are my true Son-shine. I praise You.*



Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise
the Lord!
~Ps 150:6



11 April

"Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!" Ps 95:1

If today you are struggling to earnestly praise the Lord, could it be that you are holding too tightly to the worries, troubles, and concerns of your heart, rather than holding tightly to God?

Imagine for a second that you see a little child struggling down the street with an oversized package, would you not feel compelled to help?

You probably said, "Yes." That is a Yes from your human heart. Imagine how much stronger the Yes will be from the father of this child.

When you are carrying heavy burdens, imagine the Yes of your Heavenly Father. Let Him help you. Let God burden-bear for you.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for offering to take my burdens.*

12 April

"Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!" Ps 95:1

Are you still carrying those burdens?

Could it be stubbornness or ingrained independence which is turning your heart from full reliance on God?

You may feel responsible for the difficulties you are facing, and believe that you can resolve them yourself, rather than burdening God with them. Or perhaps you do not believe that God would resolve them in ways which will match your purposes or intentions?

Yes, it can be challenging to give over control to God. Yet, like Jesus, let us say, *"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done"* (Luke 22:42).

Pray: Dearest Father God, please forgive me when I want to stubbornly handle things in my own way. I surrender this to You. Thank You.



13 April

"Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!" Ps 95:1

Are you still facing difficulties alone?

You know that your Father is there to help you. He wants to help, but He will not insist on taking it out of your hands.

Instead, offer Him your chaos. Maybe some of it is wrapped in guilt? Maybe some of it is filled with regret? Some of it may even be hidden under a blanket of humility. You do not believe that God should have to deal with this.

Father God would like you to trust Him with these things. He knows that you cannot and should not handle it by yourself. He is your Loving Father. Please open your hands and let Him accept those things.

In relief, you can sing and dance and be at rest.

Pray: Dearest Triune God, thank You for accepting these things.

14 April

“Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!” Ps 95:1

Today you may be experiencing an additional feeling of freedom and joy. This may be especially so if you were one of those who struggled to give the Lord your burdens.

Know too that it was not just a self-righteous, stubborn, or guilty reluctance on your part. We also have an enemy who loves to remind us of missteps we have taken and how this is ‘not important enough’ to be bothering God.

If it is important enough to be causing us concern, you can know that God is concerned too. God wants to take anything which is causing us grief. Please let Him help.

God is your strength. Rejoice in *“the rock of our salvation!”* (Ps 95:1).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, how joyfully I praise You.*



15 April

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.”

Ps 34:18 NLT

Breathe.

Sometimes, in your crazy-busy world, taking an extra minute to breathe deeply seems like an extravagance. Yet is it?

Come with me to the well where Jesus met the woman in the middle of the day (John 4:6-28). It was hot, about midday, and Jesus wanted a drink of water (v7). He was tired and thirsty, yet He did not rush her.

For her, it was unfathomable that a Jewish man would ask a Samaritan woman for a drink (v8).

Are we sometimes reluctant to ask for or accept help from others? Yet, without this conversation, her whole village might have taken longer to know the Lord (John 4:39).

Pray: *Dearest Lord Jesus, please help me to seek and accept help.*

16 April

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.” Ps 34:18 NLT

Do you sometimes visit places at times when they are likely to be less busy? Why is that?

It may be that you want to achieve what you want to achieve without being tied up in conversations? Possibly that was also the intention of the woman at the well. Making a trip to the well in the midday heat was not normal practise.

Yet was this also a concerning exercise in social avoidance? Is this sometimes the reason why you choose irregular times for activities?

If you are not sure, ask the Lord in prayer to give you insights.

Pray: Dearest Lord, I seek to glorify You with my choices. Please reveal any hidden motives where I am responding in fear or unconscious concern.



Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord! ~ Psalms 27:14



17 April

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.” Ps 34:18 NLT

As we hear more of the story of the woman at the well, regarding her husbands (v17-18), we suspect that she may have been the subject of gossip. Could that be at least a part of the reason why she came at midday? We do not know why she had five husbands, so grief or rejection may also be experiences she was processing.

Maybe you can relate, either as the subject of gossip, or as one processing difficult experiences. Although tempting, processing challenging experiences without support can exacerbate the level of difficulty. Ask God to guide you to the right trusted friends. *“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed” (Ps 34:18 NLT).*
Pray: Dearest Triune God, please shelter and guide me.

18 April

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed." Ps 34:18 NLT

The woman Jesus met at the well was possibly anticipating rejection and judgment (John 4:7-28). Instead she received compassion and grace.

Have you ever avoided a situation because you anticipated a negative response? Could it be that this was a taunt from the enemy, to prevent you meeting God's purposes for you?

The Lord is ready to shower you with compassion and grace too. Do not let fear keep you away. Trust in the Lord and simply take the first step. Then trust Him to guide you in the second step, and in all that follow (Ps 3:5-6).

Pray: Dearest Triune God, thank You for staying close, thank You for guiding my steps, thank You for meeting me with compassion and grace.



19 April

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed." Ps 34:18 NLT

The woman at the well appeared to be isolating herself. She went to draw water when others were less likely to be there. Possibly she limited her contact with others in different other ways too.

Have you ever chosen that path when you are grieving or your soul feels restless?

Yet, after talking to Jesus, see what this woman did? She went and shared the good news with her fellow villagers. And what was the outcome?

"Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me all that I ever did'" (John 4:39).

The woman who had been isolating herself was now calling others to know Jesus. This led to Jesus staying for two days. *"And many more believed because of his word" (John 4:41).*

Be brave. God's plans for you are amazing too (Jer 29:11; Eph 2:10).

Pray: Dearest Father God, thank You. I lay my fear before You.

20 April

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.” Ps 34:18 NLT

Yesterday I asked you if you have ever chosen the path of isolation when you are grieving or your soul feels restless?

We can be deceived into thinking that this is a better path, as we are protecting those we love from the not-doing-so-well version of ourselves. But ask yourself, if someone beloved to you were not-doing-so-well would you want them to go this journey alone? Would you not rather prefer to wrap your arms around them, take them out for a coffee, a tea, or a long walk, and help them to become restored to their true selves?

Their true selves will likely still be hurting. Their true selves will likely still be grieving. But I believe that they will be doing at least a tiny bit better because they have been able to share their hurts with those they love.

Pray: Dearest Lord, please enable me to sense the hurts of those I love.



21 April

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.” Ps 34:18 NLT

When others are hurting, we come beside them, to listen, to encourage, and to burden-bear, as far as we are able.

When we are hurting, sometimes we need to ask for help, to be willing to speak and share what we are going through, and to open ourselves to experiencing burden-bearing and encouragement from others.

Sometimes that can be difficult. We do not want to burden others. We do not want to make a fuss. We do not want to keep a ‘me’ focus. Yet it is important. And sometimes just getting something out of our own heads is helpful in itself. The ‘giant’-ness of the problem can shrink in the loving eyes and words of another. Be willing to share, that we may grow and learn together (Prov 27:17).

Pray: Dearest Lord, thank You for those You draw near in friendship.

22 April

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed." Ps 34:18 NLT

Sometimes our reluctance stems from embarrassment. We do not want others to see how we have fallen, or we are ashamed of what we have done. Like everyone else, we are sinners (Rom 3:23).

Even at times like this, there are some friends with whom we can be completely open and vulnerable. These are often friends who are acquainted with pain, and are ready to extend grace, humbly and gently. If you do not yet have such a friend, ask for Holy Spirit's guidance.

If there is not yet one in your circle, ask Holy Spirit to prepare your heart to extend grace in humility and gentleness. Then you can be His instrument in the lives of others.

Pray: *Dearest Holy Spirit, please lead me and transform me according to Your perfect will.*



As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

~ Prov 27:17 NLT



23 April

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed." Ps 34:18 NLT

Whether with a beloved friend or alone, come before the Lord when troubles strike. He *"is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed"* (Ps 34:18 NLT).

God will nurture, heal, and restore you. He knows the hurts you have endured, the embarrassing things you have done, and the shame you feel, like nobody else can. Lean in toward His loving embrace.

Even when the hurts you experience cannot be shared, the Lord is when you, rescuing you from what would crush your spirit. Rest in Him, and ask Holy Spirit to bring beside you those who can help in practical ways.

Pray: *Dear Lord, please guide me by Your wisdom.*

24 April

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Ps 16:11

God makes known to us the path of life (Ps 16:11a). How should we interpret this?

In his epistle, James tells us to not jump ahead of God, planning and scheming according to our own whims. *"Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that'"* (Jas 4:15). In Proverbs also we are told to *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths"* (Prov 3:5-6).

How do we do that?

Let us begin by spending time in God's Word.

Pray: *Dearest Lord God, thank You for Your Word which guides me.*



25 April

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Ps 16:11

Today we remember those who bravely chose to follow the command to step forward into battle-zones. Let us pray for the families of those who never returned, for those still in battle-zones, and for the families of all who have been, or are currently, in battle-zones.

We may never fully comprehend what each one has suffered, through what they have seen and experienced and, for their families, what they have lost, whether for weeks or months, or long-term.

We call to mind too our Saviour who gave His life that we might experience freedom. Lord, we glorify You, and ask that You would especially intercede for those battling today.

Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, please be a present comfort and strength for those in battle zones, and those who love them.*

26 April

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Ps 16:11

Two days ago we were considering how to discern God’s path for our lives. God’s Word tells us that He *“will make straight your paths”* (Prov 3:6).

But how can we know that the plan forming in our head is from God rather than from our own imagination?

In our changing world of security concerns and electronic subterfuge, many of us have become quite adept at recognising what is genuine and what is a fake. How? We look for giveaways, typical behaviours and patterns, and things inconsistent with those. Where, for example, someone is trying to pass themselves as your parent or spouse, they are unlikely to be successful. Our relational experience equips us.

Similarly, we can know God’s voice more clearly as we spend time with Him.

Pray: *Loving Father God, please help me to know Your voice more clearly.*



27 April

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Ps 16:11

Yesterday we talked about recognising God’s voice. Would you?

If you are not confident that you would, you may be asking, “How can I recognise God’s voice?”

We learn to recognise God’s voice in a similar way that we learn the voice of those people beloved to us, through practice. In talking and listening to others, we begin to develop a sense of what they might say and what they never would. Over time, our ability to discern is strengthened.

But how can we know with God? Come back tomorrow!

Pray: *Dear Lord, please help me to discern Your voice, Your path for me, and Your plans.*

28 April

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Ps 16:11

We can anticipate how someone might respond from our knowledge of them. In the same way, we can begin to recognise God's voice by spending time with Him in His Word.

As we spend more time in the Bible, we gain a deeper sense of God's character and how He responds to people and situations. As we grow in that knowledge, we can begin to see core character traits, such as love and grace, and repeating patterns of faithfulness.

Pray: Thank You, Lord, for the opportunity to know You more. Please help me to grow in discernment.



You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

~ Ps 139:3-4



29 April

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Ps 16:11

Learning more of God's voice, God's ways and God's heart begins by spending more time in His Word.

In God's Word we can read about His interactions with various individuals and various groups. As we reflect on these exchanges we can begin to discern the heart of God behind His actions. We can begin to know God, to sense His perspective, and open our spirits to hear His voice through His Word. Make a plan for regular time in the Bible each day.

Pray: Thank You, Lord, that I am able to discern Your heart through Your Word. Please help me to develop good Bible reading habits.

30 April

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Ps 16:11

Are there ways to know and appreciate God's voice and heart, apart from God's Word?

Yes, we can also get to know God through the witnessing of others, through prayer time before God, through messages shared, and through personal experience of God's voice. Spending time with God in prayer or in His Word remain the best ways to grow in personally knowing God.

Of course, spending time with God is rich beyond wishing to hear and know His voice. Draw nearer (Jas 4:8). Be mindful that, *"in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore"* (Ps 16:11).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You that I can draw near and know Your presence.*



1 May

"When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

John 19:26

When you read this Bible verse, how do you interpret it?

Is Jesus calling Mary to now include John as one for whom she is to take responsibility? Possibly.

Jesus had in His sights *"the disciple whom he loved,"* (John 19:26). Jesus may have anticipated that John, the youngest of His disciples, would be most impacted by His death, and the changes which would follow His resurrection. Jesus was calling His mother to a maternal responsibility for this young man too.

Pray: *Dear God, please bring beside me those whom You would like to love through me. Please help me to love well those You have placed in my care.*

2 May

“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”

John 19:26

Each of the Lord’s disciples grappled with the changes brought about by His death. Some departed, some doubted, and some denied.

Change also happens in our lives on a regular basis. God the Father knows and can anticipate what seasons and circumstances will most affect us. Like a Good Father, God will ensure that we know His close presence in our toughest seasons. He cares for us, and deeply loves us. Nothing can separate us from *“the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rom 8:31-39). Further, He who loves us will place around us those committed to Him.

Keep trusting.

Pray: Dearest Father God, thank You for Your loving care and compassion. Thank You for watching out for me even before I am aware of dangers.



3 May

“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”

John 19:26

When we face trouble, we can cry out to Him. *“I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. He will send from heaven and save me”* (Ps 57:2-3a).

Even if we cannot quite articulate how we feel or what we need, God understands. Even if *“we do not know what to pray for ... the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God”* (Rom 8:26-27).

Just as Jesus called His mother to recognise John as another son, God places us in families and communities, that we may encourage one another (Ps 68:6; 1 Thes 5:11).

Pray: Dear Lord, thank You for enabling me and those I love to persevere.

4 May

“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”

John 19:26

Whether we are parents or have parents, we know that this is a responsible role. *“Woman, behold, your son”* can be interpreted in that sense (John 19:26). Mary would offer this young man a home among her other family members.

Of course, like any and every relationship, there are at least two parties to the relationship. The woman could also consider this as a call to know the blessing of another son. In this culture at this time, a male relative could provide protection, support, and assistance in legal matters not otherwise available. Maybe Jesus was now assuring Mary that another son would step in for Him.

Pray: Dearest Lord, thank You for guiding me in my relationships. I seek to bring You honour and glory through them.



Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

~ Phil 2:4



5 May

“Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.” John 19:27

In this verse we get a very clear sense that John is offering care and protection to Jesus’s mother, Mary. From *“that hour [John] took [Mary] to his own home”* (John 19:27).

Do you courageously embrace the call that the Lord places on your life? Is there some space, capacity, role, or person to which or whom God is calling you to invest? Maybe in this next hour (John 19:27) you could commit yourself to obediently trusting God’s call and His enabling.

Pray: Dearest Lord, please open my eyes to where You are calling me.

6 May

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

John 14:27

When Jesus knew that His time with His disciples was drawing to a close, He gave His disciples His peace (John 14:27).

The peace which Jesus gave them was not the peace of this world. That is a peace which is present one minute and absent the next. No, the peace which Jesus left with His disciples, and also shared with us, is an enduring peace. It is a peace which is constant even under the trickiest of circumstances. With this peace we had Jesus’s assurance that we should not let our *“hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid”* (John 14:27). With this peace, our hearts, minds, and spirits can remain calm and not experience fear.

Pray: *Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You for the gift of Your peace.*



7 May

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

John 14:27

The peace which Jesus gives is the type of peace through which He could know peaceful rest, even as the sea was crashing wildly around Him in the boat where He slept. This storm was so bad that *“the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling”* (Mark 4:37). Yet Jesus was *“asleep on the cushion”* (v38).

We can know that peace through Jesus. Whatever we are facing, we can bring it to Jesus and have Him say over it, as He did to the waves, *“Peace! Be still!”* (v39). Come now, come today, and lay your clashing concerns, chaotic challenges, and constant chaos before the Lord.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for receiving my mess and flooding me with Your pace. Thank You!*

8 May

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.”

Jas 5:13a-b

James, in his epistle, writes of the value of prayer. However or whenever we are suffering, we can pray to the Father through the mighty name of our Lord Jesus.

What should we pray?

Even if we do not know what words to pray, Holy Spirit will help us, interpreting our groans and whispers according to God’s perfect will (Rom 8:26-27). We can simply call on the Lord in our heart-language, simply moaning when the suffering is too intense to be put into words. Or maybe we have some words, but we are concerned that they are not ‘right’ or ‘prayerful’ enough. God, our Loving Father, will accept whatever we earnestly pray, and will be present with us in our suffering.

Come when you are suffering and lay that suffering at the Father’s feet.

Pray: *Thank You, Lord, that I can simply come.*



9 May

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.”

Jas 5:13a-b

Do you sometimes find that people will ask you to pray to God for them, but they may not have the confidence to pray for themselves?

They may overestimate how much God will listen to you, perhaps interpreting your ‘holiness’ as greater than theirs. Let us remind them that our Good Father wants to hear from each child.

Our Father God loves each of His children with an incomprehensible love. He delights in each one, and He would love to draw each one more closely into His presence and a deeper sense of His love (Matt 23:37). Remember too, *“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you”* (Jas 4:8).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for the many beautiful ways that You prayed, and also affirmed the beauty and appropriateness of prayer.*

10 May

"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray."

Jas 5:13a-b

Yesterday we talked about how others may view us as 'holier' than themselves, and so ask that we might pray to the Father on their behalf. Rather than be carried away or become prideful, we need to remember that, compared to our Holy God, all our 'holiness' is but filthy rags (Isa 64:6).

Let us remind them that our Good Father wants to hear from each child. None is more holy than any other in God's sight, and yet He cherishes each one.

But that does not mean that we should not try to be holy, as God is holy.

Pray: *Dear Father God, I seek to follow faithfully.*



But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

~ 1 Pet 1:15-16



11 May

"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray."

Jas 5:13a-b

God has called us to be holy, as He is holy (1 Pet 1:15-16). But does that mean that our relationship with God is based on our ability to maintain holiness?

No! Jesus is the reason why we have a relationship with the Father. Jesus is allowing us to claim a relationship with the Father through Him and the death He suffered on our behalf. It is not because of any holiness on our part that we are deemed worthy by the Father. It is on what Jesus has done. Then, in thankfulness, we aim to please the Father, in holiness.

Pray: *Dear Holy Spirit, please guide me in living a holy life to honour God.*

12 May

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.” Jas 5:13a-b

Today as we celebrate Mother’s Day, may our prayer support go to those who are mothers, those in mothering roles, those who are still waiting on the Lord for their mothering journey to begin, and those who need the Lord’s special intervention in their mother heart.

Let us pray especially for our mothers, our grandmothers, great-grandmothers, mothers-in-law, and all those who have chosen or been led to mothering roles over us. We are grateful for each one, knowing that much of a mother’s role is self-sacrificing, and that we could never repay all the good blessings that have come through our mothers. We know that every good and perfect gift is from God (Jas 1:17). So let us praise Him.

Pray: Dearest Father God, thank You for our mothers.



13 May

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.”

Jas 5:13a-b

On prayer, is it possible that someone is asking for your prayer support because they want as many people as possible interceding with them?

Maybe, like the widow Jesus mentioned (Luke 18:1-8), they want God to change things in their favour, and believe that many requests will achieve success rather than the prayers of a single person?

We can intercede on their behalf, knowing that Jesus will also be supporting this prayer request (Matt 18:19; John 16:23). But anticipate too that God may not give the answer according to the order, timing, or method which the person has prayed would come to pass.

Encourage them to trust that God is sovereign. He knows His best plan. As they come to know God’s heart of faithfulness, love, and mercy, they will also come to trust in His timing and choices.

Pray: Dearest Lord, thank You that we can call on You to intercede with us. Please help us to grow in wisdom and trust.

14 May

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.”

Jas 5:13a

When others ask for our prayer support, it may be prompted by the prayers that we have prayed in the past.

Please remind them, though, that God the Father would prefer to hear directly from them. Just as we would prefer one genuine half-coloured picture from our child, rather than a sophisticated art piece from someone else, God would love for them to draw near in prayer.

Encourage them to pray in honest conversation with their Heavenly Father.

Pray: Dearest Holy Spirit, please prompt my friend with words which match what is on their hearts. Thank You.



15 May

“Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.”

Jas 5:13c-d

As I write this, evening bird song is adding a beautiful lilt to the day. Beautiful magpies just seem to raise their heads heavenward before their praises begin. Likewise, when we are cheerful, let us sing praise (Jas 5:13c-d).

Where do our praises start?

I believe that they start with a grateful heart. We open our eyes to how richly we are blessed, and then we thank God, the Giver of all good gifts (Jas 1:17).

Can you find a cheerful note in your day? Can you join in evening song, praising God for the day just finishing. If your day did not begin with a cheerful heart, ask God to add cheerfulness to your day, and then step outside later to join in praising Him.

Pray: Dear Lord, thank You for the amazing bounty of Your blessings.

16 May

"Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise."

Jas 5:13c-d

When James said, *"Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise"* (Jas 5:13c-d), do you think that it was self-centred praise which James had in mind?

James knew that *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights"* (Jas 1:17).

James knew that God deserves all for the praise for every good thing that happens in our lives. He also knew that suffering was to be offered to God in prayer (Jas 5:13a-b).

This brother of the Lord also knew that living in close harmony with God, beyond offering Him praise and asking for help, would lead to a rich and full fellowship with God (Jas 4:8). Let us draw nearer to God today.

Pray: *Dearest Triune God, I am grateful that, as I draw nearer, You do too.*



And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

~ Col 3:17 NIV



17 May

"Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise."

Jas 5:13c-d

James, the brother of the Lord, had a reputation of having knees like a camel, because of the long periods that he would spend in prayer.

This does not sound like a man constantly focused on praise. James knew that life held tough times too. He equally knew that these could be used by God to refine and strengthen us, where trials produce steadfastness, leading to perfection in the Lord (Jas 1:3-4).

Whatever comes our way, let us offer it to God in prayer or praise.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, I seek to walk closely with You, authentic and free.*

18 May

“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

2 Cor 12:9

Are you suffering from the epidemic of ‘busyness’ at present?

It would appear that many of us continue to add more items to our To Do lists, attempting to pack even more into each day. “If I can only get caught up, I can begin to get ahead.”

However the more we push ahead, the more this level of stretched-productivity is expected of us, so we move to hyper-productivity, and risk burning ourselves out.

Instead, let us recognise that we have limited capacity. We can do so much, but we also need a healthy balance of breaks, variety, and rest.

Ask the Lord to grow you in wisdom.

Pray: *Dear, Lord, I seek to faithfully follow Your example of balanced rest.*



19 May

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

2 Cor 12:9

Are we including Sabbath rest in our schedule?

Rest is an important component of reflection and recreation. We need to ‘turn off’ productivity mode so that we can rest. As we rest, our minds, hearts, and spirits have more time to adequately process experiences, gleaning wisdom, while also benefitting from rest and healing times.

When we practice Sabbath, we are accepting that God is our strength (2 Cor 12:9), and that He will continue to work, even as we rest.

Pray: *Dearest Triune God, thank You for empowering and healing me.*

20 May

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

2 Cor 12:9

As we take Sabbath rest, we are trusting that God can and will look after things, even if we are resting. It is through His power and His breath in our lungs that anything happens.

God supplies the power. We accept that power in trust, but we also need to accept that our bodies need to rest, and that God can work around us, if needed, while enabling us to rest. Our efforts are not essential to all that God wants to achieve. God merely agrees to work out His plans through us.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You that I can have a part in Your mighty sovereign will. Please help me to stay attuned to Your timing, Your enabling, and Your purposes.*



21 May

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’”

2 Cor 12:9

When we do not practice Sabbath, do we accept that God is our strength (2 Cor 12:9)? Are we not implying that we must continue to work, even as we should rest in His strength?

God is God, and we are not. God knows our frailty. He knows that He made us from dust (Gen 2:7; Ps 103:14). God made us dependent on Him. He knows that we need to rest, and He commanded it (Exod 20:8; 31:14; Deut 5:12)!! God also declared that the Sabbath is holy (Gen 2:3).

Let us also keep the Sabbath holy, resting in God’s strength, and trusting Him to sustain and heal us during our times of rest.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for the healing You bring to me in body, mind, and spirit, as I obey Your command for Sabbath rest.*

22 May

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’”

2 Cor 12:9

When we take a Sabbath rest, we are acknowledging that God is sovereign over our work.

God has prepared beforehand the work which we will do (Eph 2:10). He knows our humanity, and He knows that we need rest (Ps 103:14).

Therefore, God, our Sovereign Lord, knows the limits of what we can achieve in the six days in which we can work.

His strength is there for us for those six days. But, perhaps like the army which was unsuccessful in battling at Ai (Josh 7:1-5), the Lord will not be with our work on Sabbath, because of our disobedience (v12).

Pray: *Dearest Triune God, please forgive me when I am disobedient.*



Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work. It is a Sabbath to the Lord in all your dwelling places.

~Lev 23:3



23 May

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’”

2 Cor 12:9

Could it be that we are not taking a Sabbath rest because we are in catch-up mode? We believe that if we work seven days in place of six, we will have the extra time to do those things not now being achieved.

We are forgetting that our capacity to be productive is augmented when we include times of rest. Rest and reflection also increase creativity.

Rather than skip rest, lean into the Lord's strength (2 Cor 12:9).

Pray: *Dear Lord, thank You for times of rest, and Your enabling.*

24 May

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

2 Cor 12:9

As we acknowledge our need for rest, we are also acknowledging our dependence on God’s strength. We can join with Paul in declaring, *“Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me”* (2 Cor 12:9).

As we are faithful to God’s command for rest, we are also acknowledging our reliance on God to restore us, as well as providing all that we need to achieve what He has called us to do.

This is truly God’s work. Rather than run ourselves ragged, let us acknowledge that, resting in His grace, power, and sufficiency.

Pray: *Dearest Triune God, all these things are achievable through Your power, and Your enabling. Thank You.*



25 May

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

2 Cor 12:9

As we take Sabbath rest, we can thank God too for the restoration to resilience He achieves in our bodies, minds, and spirits. As we recreate, He is re-creating us.

But does God’s sovereignty mean that we should simply rest in His power for the other six days, rather than give our best? If this is the Lord’s work, for whom are we ultimately working?

Yes, we are working for God, as His instruments. So let us dedicate our minds, hearts, gifts, and energies to giving our best for His glory.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for the work before me. Please help me to engage wisely and diligently, that You may be glorified.*

26 May

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

2 Cor 12:9

Possibly you excluded yourself from the work I mentioned yesterday. You may be saying, “That’s all very well for those who work for the church, but my role is different.”

Does that mean that God is less concerned with the work that He has given you to do? Does He not also strengthen you in your call?

Yes, He does.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). God does not just call some people. God has plans for all of us (Jer 29:11).

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for the plan and purpose You have prepared for me. I rejoice in You, and commit to God-glorifying work.*



27 May

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Eph 2:10

Do you understand that the work you do is important for God’s glorification?

Maybe you serve coffee? You can do it in a way that shares the aroma of Christ. How you do what you do can still bring honour and glory to the Lord. Do you demonstrate patience, kindness, and a willingness to show grace? You are witnessing for Christ.

You may not get an opportunity to ever mention the name of Christ at your work, and it would likely be inappropriate during your times of active service. But that does not mean that you cannot be the Lord’s representative.

Pray: *Dear Lord, I seek to serve You with each coffee I make.*

28 May

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Eph 2:10

You may not work in a direct-service role, but your efforts can still represent God’s character.

Perhaps you are an accountant? You can do it with all the integrity that God’s positioning calls forth. You may demonstrate by what you will not do as much as by the work that you do.

Let all your choices be those which honour God, respecting Him as Lord over all aspects of your life. Through your frontline, God is becoming better known.

Pray: *Dear Holy Spirit, please guide me as I seek to serve with a gracious, wise, and courageous heart.*



Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

~ Rom 12:16



29 May

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Eph 2:10

You may say that this does not apply to you, as you do not ‘work,’ meaning paid work.

Maybe you are a stay-at-home parent? You can shine Christ before your children, nurturing and prioritising them in this foundational period. Then, under your care and influence, they will, like Jesus, increase *“in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man”* (Luke 2:52).

In this period, God has placed you as His instrument in the lives of your children and your spouse. Be wise and fruitful (Prov 31:10-31).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for Your guidance and enabling in this season.*

30 May

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Eph 2:10

Maybe instead of working with our family or outside our home, we are attempting to gain meaningful employment.

Perhaps, as you discern where God may wish to place you, you could volunteer to serve where God has gifted you. Then you can shine Christ in your neighbourhood and among your community.

As you show your willingness to serve, God may open doors into the space of His longer-term plans. But, in each place in between, God can still be calling others to Himself through you. Honour Him through *“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law”* (Gal 5:22-23).

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for how You are leading me.*



31 May

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Eph 2:10

As we walk in our lives, we have a frontline, the space where we can shine God’s love, compassion, grace, and care toward others.

This is the work to which we are called, and in which God will strengthen us. This work may not appear to be ‘God’s work,’ but in God’s eyes, His calling to you means that it is God’s work for you. It might seem unimportant. It might seem menial. Your work at this time might be finding work or retiring from work. But these are still frontlines where God can be at work. You are still a loved instrument in His hands, whether confined in hospital, babysitting grandkids, or folding drop-off marketing material. Each role is important to the whole (2 Cor 12:14, 21-26).

No matter where God has placed you, you can honour and serve as if it is the Lord you are serving (Matt 25:35-45). You are.

Pray: *Thank You, Loving Father God, for all that You have planned and are achieving. I love You.*

1 June

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 NIV

"In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33a). Jesus did not try to sugar-coat life on earth; 'will' and 'trouble' were used together. James said, *"whenever you face trials of many kinds,"* (Jas 1:2 NIV).

We can anticipate challenges, difficulties, and pain.

Yet, before Jesus speaks about the inevitable trouble, He mentions peace. He does not simply refer to peace, but Jesus assures us that we *"may have peace"* (John 16:33b). Why?

We can have peace because Jesus has *"overcome the world"* (v16e).

Pray: *Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You.*



"For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

~ Rom 5:10



2 June

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 NIV

Life on earth can be pretty amazing, from the colourful and captivating sunrises and sunsets, to the exquisite beauty of time with beloved ones. Yet life can also be harsh, unrelenting, with twists, turns, and troubles.

Jesus forewarned us of the troubles to come. Without His forewarning, the peace we have in Jesus may have been shaken. Instead, knowing, we can rest in His peace above the crashing waves of this world. Jesus is the Overcomer.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, I cannot ever fully express my thankfulness to You.*

3 June

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 NIV

While we rest in the lifeboat of the Lord's love and peace, there are others still flailing in the crashing waves. What can we do?

Sometimes it is as simple as waiting for them to notice that we have a peace which they desire. They may be "*won without a word*" by your conduct (1 Pet 3:1). At other times, they will ask "*you for a reason for the hope that is in you*" (v15). Share, with "*gentleness and respect*" (v15), that they may come to know the Lord.

Live as authentic witnesses to God's perfect peace, knowing that the Lord has overcome the world.

Pray: Dearest Lord Jesus, thank You for speaking Your peace over me. Please gather those coming to mind now into Your peace too.



4 June

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 NIV

In the uncertainty, cruelty, and topsy-turviness of this world, do you sometimes feel that you are not being an authentic witness to God's perfect peace?

As mentioned, times of challenge, difficulties, and trouble are part-and-parcel of life. Everybody faces situations which test them. It is in how we respond that we can be authentic witnesses for Christ.

Will we sometimes get it wrong? Yes! While we want and seek to be authentic witnesses to God's perfect peace, God knows that we are still weak and frail human beings. Keep your eyes on the Lord and give your best response in each circumstance. God does not ask for more.

Pray: Dear Lord, thank You for Your patience with me.

5 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

We recognise and accept that these are challenging times. Many situations may make us feel nervous, afraid, worried, or sad. However, we should not lose hope. As Jesus said, *“But take heart! I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33 NIV).

Remember too that we are not facing these difficulties alone. We have the Lord’s power to strengthen us (2 Cor 12:9), His peace to hold us (John 14:27), plus His Holy Spirit to guide us (John 14:26).

Trust in God’s amazing grace, and continue to walk by faith.

Pray: *Dearest Triune God, thank You for Your enabling.*



6 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

Yes, we accept that these are challenging times, with wars overseas, and people crying out for food and basic necessities. But what about the very mundane things that cause us sleepless nights?

God did not simply create the world and then leave us to our own devices. Neither is God not simply concerned with the big issues of our day. God sees and cares for each one.

In writing to the Roman Churches, Paul wanted us to remember, *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom 8:31).

We can continue to trust in our Sovereign Lord. He has our best in mind, and will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb 13:5), committed to being with us *“to the end of the age”* (Matt 28:20).

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You that I am not forgotten. Thank You for being sovereign over my life too.*

7 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

God is our Creator. He is entirely Other to us. Yet, Jesus also took on flesh so that He might open the way to reconciliation and freedom. Jesus became Man.

Every other person or creature in this world is a created being. They are like us, made from the dirt (Gen 1), and with a finite time on this earth. Yes, in some ways, roles, and capacities, people can appear to be very powerful. Yet they remain creatures.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for being for me.*



I will not leave you orphaned. I'm coming back. In just a little while the world will no longer see me, but you're going to see me because I am alive and you're about to come alive. At that moment you will know absolutely that I'm in my Father, and you're in me, and I'm in you.

~ John 14:18-20 MSG



8 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

We know that some people have power and authority over us, such as officers of the law of the land. God saying that He is *“for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom 8:31) does not give us permission to dismiss the law.

The laws are there to protect us and others. We need to remain respectful of them. If they impinge on our freedoms, maybe we were attempting to do something inappropriate? Let us remain as faithful God-followers.

Pray: *O Lord, Jesus, I commit again to following You, the way, the truth and the life. You light my way forward. Thank You.*

9 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

Laws are established, upheld, and are in place to uphold the values of society as well as protect the interests of the weak. Rules, though, as in Jesus’s time, can be introduced to guide in law-abiding. When these are prompted by the same core beliefs, they can assist in achieving good outcomes.

However, sometimes rules can be added and applied in order to protect the interests of one group in society. These may not be consistent with the intention behind the established laws. In fact, these may unnecessarily limit the freedom of some people(s).

Let us trust in God’s mercy and grace, and pray for Him to bring about any necessary resolution.

Pray: Dearest Father God, please help me to walk diligently, with my eyes and focus on Your will and purposes.



10 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

Rules can be applied in a variety of different spheres and circumstances. You may live under the ‘rules of this home,’ whether a family or community home. These rules are generally to nurture the wellbeing of each person within the home, while limiting unnecessary impinging on personal freedom, and enabling healthy relationships and growth.

When we face challenges from these rules, a first step might be to pray, and ask God to examine our hearts on why we are struggling under these rules. Possibly compliance will enrich our growth toward better interpersonal interactions and more satisfying relationships. Then we can thank God, as well as being a blessing in our home.

Pray: Thank You, Triune God. I seek that my life would be a light for Your glory. Please grow me in wisdom and faithfulness.

11 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

Yesterday we mentioned ‘rules of the home,’ whether a family or community home. We know that in a family home, the members will grow up. Rules which were important and essential for a younger age, may no longer be applicable. In fact, those rules could now curtail the freedoms of family members.

What is our part? Whether we are the parents, the grandparents, the children, or the grandchildren, be attentive. As James guides, *“be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God”* (Jas 1:19-20).

Rather than jump ahead with shouts of ‘Unfair,’ seek to understand why the rules are in place, what they are intended to accomplish, and how, instead, they impinge, collecting factual examples.

Pray: Guide me, please, Holy Spirit, by Your wisdom, grace, and goodness.



12 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

We have been considering rules and whether it would be in the best interests of all or some for them to be altered. This may be necessary because those following the rules have grown in maturity.

Before we comment on the rules of another, we need to get on our knees before God and understand our motives in rule-changing. Are these me-focused or other-focused?

If these rule-changes are prompted by selfish motives, perhaps there is another way that our wishes can be met, outside of this environment?

If our rule-change prompts stem from concern for others, let us ask God for opportunities to speak the right words. He is for us (Rom 8:31).

Pray: Dearest Lord, please guide me and help my understanding.

13 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

Are there rules in your home that favour some but may cause mismatched restrictions on others? These restrictions may have been necessary when they were younger, but now hamper their progress.

Ask God to guide your choices so that appropriate freedoms are offered to the right people in the right way. Wise guidelines will allow them to stretch beyond their comfort zones while still offering them protection, and helping them to instil good practices.

Growth in maturity is a blessed outcome. Let us reframe rules to enable a healthy balance through providing care from a safe platform for growth.

Pray: Dearest Lord, please help me as a nurture the growth of the young people in my home.



Beware that you don't look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly Father.

~ Matt 18:10



14 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

When our young people have grown and become parents to young people themselves, we may have many opinions on how they are being raised.

We may have thoughts and feelings we would like to share on the rules under which they live, whether they are too restrictive or too lenient. Let us return to James's advice to *“be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God”* (Jas 1:19-20). Our part is to love, God brings the growth. We know that God is for us, our children, and our grandchildren (Rom 8:31).

Pray: Dearest Lord, I am grateful that I can trust in Your saving grace.

15 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

We have been considering rules and how they are set in place for the wellbeing of all. But what about when changes take place and the existing rules may need to be reconsidered?

As we grow and mature, the rules which suited and assisted us may no longer work in our best interests. Consider Covid. The pre-Covid rules and permissions needed drastic cutbacks during the early challenges of the Covid pandemic. These changes were made to protect people and prevent spread. Applying Covid rules now would unnecessarily prohibit the freedoms of many, while others still need strong protective rules in place.

Wisdom in relation to our freedom, and that of those under our care, whether the young or the elderly, needs to be practised. Whether others are involved, in sharing the responsibilities as fellow-recipients or as rule implementers, let us show grace (1 Pet 2:17).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, please protect my loved ones.*



16 June

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Rom 8:31

God has called and released us into the Kingdom of His light, love, grace, and peace (Col 1:13-14). When we face challenges in our relationships with others, let us remember that God is sovereign. Like us, these others are created beings. Rather than fret about how they impinge on our liberties, will, or space, let us turn in faith and prayer to God. *“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom 8:31).

God is our champion, our protector, our strength, and our God. Let us keep our hope in Him. God is faithful (Lam 3:22-23).

Pray: *Dearest Father God, I am grateful for Your overflowing goodness. I seek to pour out Your goodness and love on others too.*

17 June

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”

Rom 12:12 NLT

The hope that we have in Jesus is not a ‘wistful hope’ but a confident hope.

This hope is not like the ‘hope’ that it will or will not rain today. It is not the ‘hope’ that the bus will arrive on time so that your day flows as planned.

No, this is a confident hope. We **know** that God is true to His promises. We **know** that Jesus’s resurrection means that we will also be resurrected to everlasting life. We **know** that Jesus is coming back. These are some of the promises in which we have confident hope.

Pray: Dearest Lord God, thank Your promises are faithful. Thank You that I can rest my confident hope in You and that You will never fail me.



18 June

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”

Rom 12:12 NLT

When our confident hope is in who God is, what He has done, and what He will still do, our hearts can rejoice and be thankful.

Now, have you ever noticed the difference that thanksgiving can bring into your situation?

You might have been worried about any number of things. But, when you begin to recall the confident hope you have in God (Rom 8:31), His faithfulness (Lam 3:22-23), and bring to mind all the blessings which God has poured into your life (Jas 1:17), thankfulness is sure to bubble to the surface. Rejoice, be glad, and thank God.

Pray: Dearest Lord, thank You for being my Mighty Saviour. Thank You, Jesus, for the sacrifices and sufferings You endured. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for Your constant companionship. Thank You, God, for Your faithfulness.

19 June

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”

Rom 12:12 NLT

When we have confident hope, we can be patient in trouble (Rom 12:12).

We know whom it is we trust. We know that God is faithful. We have personally experienced His goodness. Therefore, we rejoice in knowing that our God is sovereign. God has good, good plans, and He is bringing them to pass.

Yes, we may sometimes face trouble, strife or danger. But, we can be confident of this, if God allowed it to touch our lives, He will make a way for it to be for our benefit.

Pray: Dear Lord, thank You for helping me to face each difficulty with patient trust.



Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

~ Col 3:14-15 NLT



20 June

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”

Rom 12:12 NLT

Because we have confident hope in God’s character and sovereignty, we do not need to be afraid in times of trouble. It does not mean that we do not sometimes experience fear. We likely will. But, if it happens, we can take our concerns to the Lord in prayer (Rom 12:12).

God is with us (Heb 13:5), holding our right hands (Ps 73:23).

Pray: Thank You, Lord, although these burdens are far mightier than anything I can handle, You are mightier still. Thank You.

21 June

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”

Rom 12:12 NLT

Once we have travelled with the Lord through various trenches, we become more confident in coming to faithfully leave our burdens at His feet (1 Pet 5:7).

But what about those reading this who do not yet have a shared history with God? How can they know His heart? There is a story of two people who read Ps 23. Afterwards the person who read with beautiful articulation was applauded. It was said to the other, “He spoke well because he knows the Psalm. You spoke as one who knows the Shepherd.”

The Shepherd draws ever closer to know you too. As James shared, *“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”* (Jas 4:8). Draw near and know Him better. Then, even if you do not know the plan, you can trust the Planner.

Pray: *Dearest Father God, thank You for Your hand upon me.*



22 June

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”

Rom 12:12 NLT

As a new(er) believer, you may not yet have victory stories. However, God’s Word has a rich collection of other people’s victories with God. Read and soak in those, so that you may draw nearer in knowing God’s heart.

Hebrews 11 recalls many of the heroes of the faith, but the wonderful narratives in Genesis also recount God’s mighty hand in the affairs of people.

Even if you cannot yet recount your own mighty victory, come to God in faith when you need a Mighty Hero. God will be with you in the battles.

Pray: *Dear Father God, thank You that I can lean in to You in confidence when I face strife. I lay my prayers before Your throne, trusting You.*

23 June

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”

Rom 12:12 NLT

Why do we pray when we face challenges? Does God not already know?

Yes, God knows.

But in bringing it before God, we are inviting God to act in this time of trouble or difficulty. We are praying for Him to help, either on our behalf or on behalf of someone beloved to us. We are inviting God in and, in praying in Jesus’s mighty name, we are asking Him to intercede for us.

In submitting our prayer requests to God, we are also looking to God. This means that, at some level, we are acknowledging God’s power, might, and majesty. When we begin to fully appreciate that, we can discern that, compared to our Almighty God, this concern is a drop in the ocean.

Our God is far mightier than any trouble that can beset us. Come in faith and keep on praying (Rom 12:12).

Pray: *Thank You, Lord, that I can ask You to intervene and intercede.*



24 June

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”

Rom 12:12 NLT

As we claimed yesterday, God is mightier than any trouble that can beset us. As Paul wrote to the Roman Churches,

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” (Rom 8:31-34).

Let our hearts rest in God’s faithfulness.

Pray: Dear and Loving Father, thank You for interceding on my behalf. I am blessed to worship You as my God.

25 June

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”

Rom 12:12 NLT

Do you sometimes hesitate to come to the Lord because you are embarrassed about the trouble into which you have gotten yourself? Beloved child of God, God also knows that you are not holy. He is holy and omnipotent, so He already knows exactly what has happened to cause you embarrassment. You are not telling Him anything He does not already know.

However, in coming before Him, you are owning up to what He already knows. You are acknowledging what has happened, and your part in it. That took courage. What you did does not diminish His love for you. Father God stands ready to receive you graciously. Your concern turned you away, but now, in confession, you have turned back (1 John 1:9).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, it is unfathomable to me that You could not love me less.*



For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ~ Rom 8: 38-39



26 June

“Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.” Rom 12:12 NLT

In his letter to the Roman Churches, Paul asked his readers to *“Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying”* (Rom 12:12 NLT).

What a wonderful instruction! Paul is basically telling them to “hang in there, and keeping passing your concerns on to God in conversation.”

What a wonderful joy and privilege it is to know that we can take all concerns and troubles to our Heavenly Father. Keep doing that in prayer.

Pray: *Dear Triune God, thank You that I can simply pray my concerns to You.*

27 June

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Phil 4:6

As mentioned yesterday, Paul asked his Roman readers to *“Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying”* (Rom 12:12 NLT).

Was Paul dismissing the pressures, anxieties, and grief in their hearts, and telling them that he, Paul, did not want to know about them?

Not at all! Paul wanted those struggling in difficulties to know that God was near and that God could and would intervene according to His perfect will and timing. Paul directed them, *“in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God”* (Phil 4:6).

We too can, in every situation, take every care, worry, challenge, or strife to God in prayer.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You that I can lay my prayer requests before Your throne.*



28 June

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Phil 4:6

Yesterday we affirmed that Paul was not redirecting the concerns of the Philippians away from himself. Paul wanted them to turn with confident hope, as the Roman believers did (Rom 12:12), to their Heavenly Father. Paul was also redirecting them to present their requests to God because he knew the attentive, faithful, and perfect love of God.

Our prayers too can be laid out before the Lord and He will be attentive. God listens and responds for the best possible outcome (Ps 40:1-2).

This does not mean that our prayers may be immediately answered exactly to the stipulations we have made. God is still God and still sovereign. Let us wait on the Lord, and trust in Him (Ps 27:14).

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for all that You are planning to achieve.*

29 June

“Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”

Ps 27:14

We give thanks, we pray for those things for which we struggle to give thanks, and then we wait on the Lord, with courage and confidence (Ps 27:14).

As David attests, God hears our prayers, even when He does not even appear to be present. *“I had said in my alarm, “I am cut off from your sight.” But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help”* (Ps 31:22).

We can thank God for how He uses even adverse circumstances to grow us and also use in the lives of those beloved to us. We can raise them also before the Lord. Even if they do not believe that God exists, God knows that they do, because He created them, and has special plans and purposes for them. Let us wait on Him.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You, for the wonder of all You do.*



30 June

“Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”

Ps 27:14

As we finish another Devotional, let us make every effort to go in peace, and to live at peace with others, reflecting the *“unity of the Spirit”* (Eph 4:3) in our lives. May we be quick to listen, showing kindness and grace.

May we walk in the wisdom of the Lord (Jas 3:17), waiting on the Lord with courage (Ps 27:14), sincerely offering our lives for God’s glory, while carrying His light. May we recommit to the Lord in body, mind, and spirit.

Pray: *Dearest Lord, thank You for Your faithfulness in blessing us richly. May we see and greet others with Your mercy and grace, knowing peace.*



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

God has given each of you 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

**Scripture
quotations
marked**

are taken from

ESV

English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

HCSB

Holman Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1999,2000,2002,2003 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission.

MSG

The Message, Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

NIV

New International Version®, Copyright © 1973,1978,1984 by International Bible Society®. Used by permission.

NLT

New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved. biblegateway.com[accessed 12.12.2018]