

21 Days of Prayer & Fasting

Student Devotional

**RISE UP
YOUTH**

Congratulations on starting your 21 days of Prayer and Fasting. There will be a new devotional every day during these 21 days of prayer and fasting for you to read!

We hope you experience the Lord's presence in new and bold ways through this journey. Our prayer is that these devotionals help you grow in your relationship with the Lord and encourage you to lean into the Father-heart of God.

Before Jesus began His earthly ministry, He fasted (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13). By following His example of prayer and fasting, we submit to the Lord's Will and position our hearts to mirror that of Christ. We pray that you will begin to experience this transformation in your life and that you continue to allow God to mold your heart into the image of Jesus.

Romans 8:29 reminds us of the Lord's plan for us when it says, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters" (NIV). Your obedience to the Lord is allowing Him to conform your heart into the image of Christ!

Thank you for going on this journey with us! We can't wait to see what the Lord is preparing to unlock in you in this season!

-The Rise Up Student Devotional Team

Day 1: Abide in Me

By Lukus Keeton

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” John 15:4-11

These verses tell us that if we try to live a life without the Lord, we will be living an empty and fruitless life. John 15:5 says “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” This verse is basically saying that a life without the Lord will be unfulfilled. When we live unfulfilled lives, we tend to try to fill them with things of the world like fame, money, friends, busy schedules. We often get in these habits of trying to fill our lives with the wrong things, but the Lord is the only thing we need to fill our lives with.

What Jesus is inviting us into here isn’t just believing in Him, but abiding with Him, staying connected daily. A branch doesn’t try harder to produce fruit; it simply stays connected to the vine. In the same way, our job isn’t to strive or perform for God, but to remain close to Him through prayer, His Word, and obedience. The fruit of the Spirit comes naturally when we stay connected.

The next time you catch yourself filling up on worldly things, I want you to take a break and talk to God. Now, as you’re going through the week, I want you to remember that if the Lord is all you have, then you have all you need.

Day 2: Turn God into a Habit

By Leah Craft

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” Matthew 6:33 NIV

God desires to know His children personally, but, far too often, we become so weighed down by distractions that we forget to welcome Him into our daily lives. Walking daily with the Lord allows us to know Him personally.

Think of the book of Daniel, found in the Old Testament. From a young age, we see Daniel not only had faith, He was faithful. Within Daniel's lifetime, a new king rose to power. This new king was not a Godly man, and he was surrounded by evil influences who deeply despised Daniel. These men used their influence to manipulate the king into ordering a decree that would lead to Daniel's death. When these men saw Daniel, they saw his love for God, and they abhorred it so fiercely that they wanted the king to feed him to the lions! Daniel's faith was in God, however, and he would not surrender that faithful walk over to the fear of death.

Daniel 6:10 tells us, “Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.”

The words “just as he had done before” highlights that Daniel had prioritized the Lord long before this moment. The Lord was a part of his routine, and spending time with God was a habit. Prioritizing the Lord doesn't always mean some angry king and his evil advisors are going to feed you to some lions they have on speed-dial, but it does mean you'll have confidence to stand firm on the Lord when difficulties arise.

Daniel was found praying, and he was indeed thrown into the lions' den, but, because of Daniel's faith in God, he did not fear the physical world seen with his eyes. Daniel was confident in the Lord, and the Lord saved him. The next day, the king came to check on Daniel, and, because Daniel was alive after an entire night with hungry lions, the king recognized the Lord as being the one and only God!

Daniel had made a routine of being in relationship with God, and God used that faithfulness to bring many people into relationship with Himself!

Are you living your life in a way that allows God to reach others through you and your connection to Him? Turning time with God into a daily habit can start small, but trust that you'll quickly find Him to be your best friend. Spending time with the Lord refills us and allows us to be a light to the world.

Here are a few ways you can make a habit of spending time with the Lord:

- 1. Pray each morning before you get out of your bed!**
- 2. Read your Bible each day (If you don't know where to begin, I recommend starting with the Gospel of Mark).**
- 3. Set your phone's wallpaper to a Bible verse and change it weekly.**
- 4. Use meal times as a reminder to pray! Every time you eat, thank God for something He has done for you that day!**
- 5. Listen to sermons throughout the week!**
- 6. Switch your playlist to worship music!**
- 7. When you pray, don't just talk to God. Ask Him to speak to your heart as well! Turning God into a daily habit takes time, but the reward is never ending!**

Day 3: I Look at Him (Seen)

By Honor Draughn

God knows the struggles we are going through, and we cannot overcome them with our own strength. We have to lean on God for strength. He is our strength. Without Him, we are lost. It's easy to think that God is too good for us or too big, but no, God wants a relationship with you. He loves and cares for you. He calls us sons and daughters, and He left the 99 to be with us.

John 5:1-8 says,

“Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, ‘Do you want to get well?’ ‘Sir,’ the invalid replied, ‘I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.’”

Jesus saw the man and his struggle. The man didn't have to say a word. Jesus knew. The man had been ignored, stepped over, had no one, and he felt he had nothing to live for, yet he had hope. This man, for years, had been unable to walk. Then, Jesus came and did the impossible in his life. He can do the same in your life, too. God sees you when no one else does.

Even when you feel hopeless and all alone, you have God. You can never out run Him. He is always with you, and He will never leave nor forsake you. He will love you no matter what, and there's nothing you can do to change His love for you.

If you feel hopeless and alone, some ways to help yourself feel seen are...

1. GIVE IT TO GOD

Surrender it to Him. You can't get through the trials in your own strength. Put it in God's hands.

2. HAVE FAITH

Believe that nothing is impossible for God, and He can do the impossible in your life. There's nothing He can't do, and there's nothing too big or small for Him. This is the God who moved mountains, parted the sea, made the sun stand still, and all these things God can still do today. He is the same God He was back then.

3. CALL ON HIS NAME

The enemy tries to make you feel isolated, like you have no one, and like you're on this journey alone. The next time he does that, you call on the name of Jesus. There's power in the name of Jesus. There's nowhere you could go and nothing you could do that would make you out of reach for God.

Day 4: Reward For Following Jesus

By Logan Dillow

“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.” Matthew 16:13-20

Following Jesus is often presented as a difficult path... and it is. Jesus never promised comfort, popularity, or an easy life. Instead, He calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. At first glance, that sounds like a loss. But Jesus teaches us that what looks like loss in the world's eyes is actually the greatest reward we could ever receive.

The world tells us that reward comes from success, money, recognition, and pleasure. But those things are never fully satisfied. They fade, break, or leave us wanting more. Jesus offers something better: a transformed life, a restored relationship with God, and an eternal hope that cannot be taken away.

One of the rewards of following Jesus is purpose. When we follow Him, our lives are no longer about chasing temporary things. We begin to live for something greater than ourselves. Even in hardship, we know our lives matter because they are part of God's plan.

Another reward is peace. Life doesn't become easier when we follow Jesus, but we are no longer alone. Jesus promises to walk with us through every trial. His peace doesn't come from circumstances—it comes from trusting Him.

Joy is yet again another thing we can gain from following Jesus. We don't try to find it in other things anymore—we have it in the pure and true form. There is nothing else we can get joy from, except following Jesus. We may not always feel that way, but we have the purest way of life through Him.

The greatest reward, however, is Jesus Himself. In following Him, we gain forgiveness, freedom from sin, and the promise of eternal life. Heaven is not just a place—it is being with God forever. That is a reward far greater than anything we possess here on earth, and one we'll take with us to heaven.

Following Jesus costs us our old way of living, but the reward is a new life—one filled with purpose, peace, joy and our savior who died for us. When we choose Jesus, we don't lose anything that truly matters. We gain everything.

Day 5: Find Your Secret Place

By Leah Craft

“Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” Luke 5:16 NIV

Where do you go to withdraw from the busyness of life in order to find rest in God's presence? Luke 5:16 gives us a glimpse into how Jesus prioritized spending time alone with God in prayer. The places to which we withdraw go by many names, one being A Secret Place. A Secret Place is simply a location without much noise and distraction, where God's presence is invited to dwell with increased potency for the purpose of prayer, worship, and hearing God's voice.

The invitation for God to magnify His presence should transcend to everywhere we go. We should invite God to be magnified in our homes, bedrooms, cars, yards, classrooms, and in ourselves! Did you know we can ask God to magnify His presence in us? Beyond inviting the Lord to dwell with us everywhere, we should also pick a place (or places) in which we can be still and quiet to meet with God in prayer. If Jesus lived in a way that shows us the importance of withdrawing to be alone with God, we should also withdraw to communicate with the Lord!

Establishing a place as a Secret Place isn't complicated. In fact, you only have to do one thing for the Lord to magnify His presence there: Surrender that place to Him. When a believer surrenders something to the Lord, God puts His hand upon it, lets His will be fulfilled through it, and allows His blessing to flow more fully. Where can you invite God's presence to dwell among you today?

Matthew 6:6 says, “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

This verse reminds us to be alone in God's presence because He hears us, fancy words or not. You can talk to God anywhere. He can speak to you anywhere, but a Secret Place, where you can be alone in the quiet of His presence, makes it a lot easier to hear and listen to Him. Think of it like this: it's pretty hard to hear someone talking to us if we are in a huge crowd, right? Similarly, it's hard to hear God talking to us when we are surrounded by distractions.

Here's a quick prayer I encourage you to pray over your home, your Secret Place, and yourself:

Dear God, I give this place to You. Please magnify Your presence here and let me encounter You. I surrender this place and the boundary lines of this property to You, and I welcome Your Spirit to fully dwell here. Make this a place of worship and prayer, sacred to You. God, I pray that You fill this space and that nothing from the enemy can enter this place. Lord, make me a place where Your presence is magnified. Please fill my heart with Your Spirit and let Your Spirit rest upon me and overflow out to others. All that I have, God, I give to You.

It's in the name of Your Son, Jesus, that I pray, Amen.

Day 6: Elimination of Hurry

By Honor Draughn

We get so caught up in everything going on around us that our vision is blurred to the kingdom of Heaven. We are trying to accomplish tasks and check off a checklist. It's all a hurry, hurry, hurry all the time. If we would just slow down and be present and let God's peace come over us, then life wouldn't feel like such a mess.

In Matthew 11:28-30 says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

God is saying come to Me all who are tired and weary, and I will give you rest. He says learn from My ways, and you will find rest. The enemy wants us to get caught up in everything happening around us. He wants the chaos of the world to get to us, but when the world feels like it's going to end and everyone is running scared, you're going to be calm and have peace knowing that God's in control. Your roots will be planted in His truth. You won't be shaken when the whole world is falling to pieces.

*“I wanna have slow feet, slow plans. Steadfast in patience.
Rid me of my quickness. I’ll be soon to listen
It seems as though the slower I go, the faster I arrive.”
- “Slower I Go” by SEU worship.*

This song reminds me to slow down in my hurry. How is God supposed to speak to me if I'm constantly going all the time? God speaks through the quiet. If I don't stop and make time for Him to speak to me, I can feel the difference in myself.

How to eliminate hurry:

1. Make time for God

- Open your bible
- Listen to worship music
- Go on a walk
- Spend time with Him behind closed doors
- Pray & spend time in nature and with pets

God wants you to spend time with Him, make time for Him, and find your own ways to get in His presence.

2. Slow Down

Sometimes we are just in a mindset where we have a whole to-do list for the day, but if we already have our whole day planned out, how is God going to be able to use us to grow His Kingdom. We can't be so focused on our own plan over what God may have for us.

3. Be in the moment

Sometimes, we get so caught up in the world around us that we miss opportunities from God. God wants to use us for His glory, but we have to fix our eyes upon Him. Everything blocking our view we need to get rid of so we can have our ear tuned to God and see the beauty of His creation.

Day 7: Sabbath

By Lukus Keeton

The Bible is constantly reminding us to keep the Sabbath day holy. Now, you might not even know what the Sabbath day is, so I'm going to fill you in. When God was creating to universe, He did it in 6 days, and, on the 7th, He rested. The 7th day is known as the Sabbath day. The Lord tells us to keep this day holy. People often think that the Sabbath day has to be on Sunday, but it doesn't. Many people do their Sabbath day on Monday or Saturday. The most important thing is not what day you choose for your Sabbath, it is that you keep it holy- which means you spend time with the Lord.

Choose to spend some time today resting in the Lord's presence, and make Sabbath a habit!

“But if you are careful to obey me, declares the Lord, and bring no load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy by not doing any work on it”

Jeremiah 17:24

“But if you do not obey me to keep the Sabbath day holy by not carrying any load as you come through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle an unquenchable fire in the gates of Jerusalem that will consume her fortresses” Jeremiah 17:27

Day 8: What is Spiritual Formation

By Leah Craft

Spiritual Formation is the process of being transformed into the image of Christ. In Romans, Paul writes, ***“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”***

Romans 8:29

Some time after Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension back into Heaven, the early church began to grow. Those who rejected the idea of Jesus being the Savior began to attack Christians, and one of the most famed attackers was a man named Saul. The book of Acts

holds the miraculous story of this man and how he was actually "predestined to be conformed into the image" of Jesus. Acts 9 tells

us that Saul rejected Jesus as Lord and even killed those who followed Him. When we keep reading, however, we see an incredible shift in the story.

Scripture tells us; ***“Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ Saul asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied.”***

As we read on, we are blessed to witness Saul's transformation through redemption, salvation, and even baptism. The Lord saw what was happening to His people, and, not only did He put a stop to it, He took what was meant to bring harm and used it to accomplish good (Genesis 50:20). ***Acts 9:15 says, “This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.”***

God conformed Saul into the image of Christ, not externally but internally. Just as the Lord transformed Paul from a man who killed Christians to actually becoming a Christian, the Lord also wants to cause a great transformation in you! Paul serves as a great example that none of us are beyond God's abilities to transform.

So, what is Spiritual Formation? It's spiritual transformation. It is the act of being transformed into the image of Christ, our Lord and Savior. What a beautiful gift that is to us! When we are saved, the Lord wants to conform us into the image of His Son, Jesus, so that Jesus can be the firstborn (the oldest) among us—the many brothers and sisters!

I encourage you to pray this prayer over your life:

Dear God,

Thank You for seeing me and wanting me to be a member of Your family. Thank You for scripture that reveals the transformation You made in Paul. You are mighty to save, and there is no one too far gone from experiencing forgiveness and transformation in You. Lord, help me follow in Your footsteps as I walk with You daily. Give me a light that shines You to others, and please keep it burning bright in me. All that I am, Lord, I give to You. Thank You for being a good Father and my best friend.

*It's in the name of Jesus Christ that I pray,
Amen.*

Day 9: The Problem

By Lukus Keeton

There's a common problem in everyone's lives: we all have an enemy with the same intentions and those are to steal kill and destroy. Now, this enemy is always going to try to overpower you, and the bad news is, he can. The good news? I thought you would never ask. We have a powerhouse in our corner fighting for us, and

He is the Lord. There is always going to be an easier way out, an alternative motive for what you are doing, or people making fun of you for doing the right thing. These people are always going to be in your life, but so is the Lord. These people are put in your life to make you stronger. Some of you probably thought about big biceps and abs, but that's not the strength you need. You need mental strength, which the Lord can provide you, if you let Him.

Philippians 4:13 says,

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Now, you have to put in the effort for the Lord. You can't let things come between you and Him. He has an overwhelming, undying love for you. God wants to be with you, but you have to put in the work.

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” John 10:10

“If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them” James 4:17

Day 10: You are not in Control

By Logan Dillow

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

One of the hardest truths for us to accept is that we are not in control of our lives. We like to believe that if we plan well enough, work hard enough, or make the right choices, we can control circumstances. But the devil has a way of reminding us how limited we really are.

Unexpected struggles, unanswered prayers, and sudden changes reveal that control was never truly ours.

The Bible is clear that God alone is in control. This truth can feel uncomfortable at first, especially when we want certainty or immediate answers. But it is also incredibly freeing. If we were fully in control, the weight of every outcome would rest on us. God never intended us to carry that burden.

James warns us against assuming we control the future: ***“You do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” James 4:14***

Our lives are temporary, but they are held in the hands of an eternal God who sees the beginning and the end, and can make sure every outcome results in the one that He has planned all along.

Surrendering control means choosing trust over fear. It means placing our plans, our failures, and our future into God's hands. When we stop trying to be in control, we make room for God to lead us where we could not lead ourselves.

The reward of surrender is truth. When we trust God's direction, even when it doesn't make sense, we discover that His plans are far greater than ours, and we get truth in a world of deceit, opposing what the Lord says is true and pure. God's control is not harsh or careless—it is loving, intentional, and good.

We find freedom when we stop asking God to bless our plans and start asking Him to guide our steps. While we aren't in control of our lives, the one that does control our lives makes sure they are planned in the best way possible.

Day 11: No Accidental Saints

By Leah Craft

When we look at the Lord's creation, the intentionality with which He works becomes evident. This begs believers to follow in those same intentional footsteps. What does it look like to live for the Lord with intention?

Let's look at one of the most inspirational Bible stories captured in the Old Testament. Daniel Chapter three holds the story of three brave men who chose to stand, even when the world told them to bow. With intentionality, these men stood firm, even when an angry king threatened their lives. It's hard to picture "No

Accidental Saints" and not think of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (more recognized by their Babylonian names, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego). At that time, the king of Babylon was Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar refused to acknowledge God at all. Instead, he created a statue for people to worship. This statue, of course, was not a divine being and his statue was nothing more than a counterfeit. Similar to how counterfeit money is good for nothing, counterfeit "gods" are good for nothing. Despite this, Nebuchadnezzar made his statue and ordered that everyone in his kingdom bow to it or be burned alive. What a terrifying reality. Knowing their God to be Holy and sovereign, even over the king of Babylon, however, these three brave men stood firm. They did not compromise and bow in order to avoid trouble. No, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah's allegiance was to God and God alone. They would not dishonor God's holiness by bowing before a counterfeit god.

This was met with anger from the king. He was mad. Really mad. I mean, make-the-fire-seven-times-hotter-than-normal kind of mad. Nebuchadnezzar did not consider that God could save those three men, but Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah said to Nebuchadnezzar, "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and He will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand" (Daniel 3:17 NIV). These men lived with intentionality as they served the Lord, knowing that God was more than able to do the impossible. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah knew Who they served and how to stand up and say, I will not bow here. They knew God's Fatherly love firsthand, and they held to the hope that God could save them.

The king was not moved by Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah's courage or faith, and he ordered them to be thrown into the fire, but the story doesn't end there. Three men were thrown into that "seven-times-hotter-than-normal" furnace, but

four men walked in the flames, and the fourth was Jesus, Himself. When

Nebuchadnezzar noticed the fourth man, he couldn't believe his eyes. Those men were alive and walking through the fire unharmed! And, you better believe that Nebuchadnezzar saw the fourth man, Jesus, walking with them! Still utterly shocked, the king ordered that someone get them out of the fire. The three men walked out unbound, unharmed, and they didn't even smell like smoke! The king was so amazed with God's power that he publicly declared that the Lord is God!

These men staked their lives on God, and their faithfulness allowed God to reach the lost. We all bow to something, but to whom or what we bow is the question.

Are you bowing to God, or are you bowing to a counterfeit? God is the rightful King of creation, and He is calling out to you to follow Him faithfully. The same God who saved Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from king Nebuchadnezzar later sent Jesus to die for your sins so that you can be saved and live in relationship with Him for eternity. God stands by His children, even through the fire. When you are intentionally in relationship with the Lord, there are no Accidental Saints —there are only chosen, chased down, and graciously redeemed children of God.

Questions:

1. What false labels has the enemy tried to put on you? How can you stand in who the Lord says you are?
2. What "statues" are trying to take the place of God in your own life?
3. How can you choose to stand for the Lord, even when the world tells you to bow?
4. Where have you experienced God walking with you through the fiery furnaces of life?

Day 12: Theory of Change

By Honor Draughn

Change is something that takes time. Lots of times, when we pray, we want our prayers to be answered instantly. Even though God is able, that doesn't mean He will do it instantly. We have to

remember it's in God's timing, and He is working all things together for our good and His glory. He knows what's best for us.

He sees the whole picture when we can't. Even though it's hard to see in the moment, we have to be patient and know that God is not done working. It might be a few months or years before we

get an answer, but we have to continue to have faith and know that God will, God can, and, even if He doesn't do it, I'm going to

praise Him anyway because I know that God is good. When we are baptized, it symbolizes us putting to death our old lives and being made new in Christ. Following Jesus and walking how He did changes us in so many ways, but it takes time to transform our lives, and we aren't perfect. Jesus is perfect and that's a lot of pressure because we are nothing close to perfect, but He just wants our best.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” 2 Corinthians 5:17

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 1:6

This is saying that, with Jesus, the old you is gone. He has made you new. Your name is no longer Anxiety, Worthless, or Depressed. Your name is now Son or Daughter. God is not done with you yet. You have a purpose, and He has a plan for your life. What the enemy does for bad, God turns it around and uses it for good. So, even if your life looks like a mess, and the mess feels like it's never going to end, know that it will. God's light shines the brightest in the darkness.

Reminders to tell yourself:

1. This trial will end.
2. What the devil meant for bad, God meant for good.
3. God is working all things together for my good and His glory.
4. God is not done with me yet.
5. I am made new and have a new name.

Day 13: Losing Strategies

By Logan Dillow

“For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.”

1 John 2:16-17

Many of us approach God with strategies. We think that if we pray the right way, serve enough, avoid certain sins, or act more “spiritual,” then we will finally be close to Him. Without realizing it, we turn our relationship with God into a system. But God never asked us to figure Him out or earn our way to Him. The Bible tells us the exact opposite of that. Isaiah reminds us that even our righteous acts are filthy rags before Him (Isaiah 64:6). That doesn’t mean obedience doesn’t matter... it means obedience is not the doorway to God. Grace is.

Jesus constantly challenged people who relied on religious strategies. The Pharisees followed rules perfectly, yet they missed the heart of God. Meanwhile, sinners, tax collectors, and the broken found themselves welcomed by Jesus, not because they had a plan, but because they came in humility and faith.

When we cling to strategies, we often hide behind performance. We try to prove ourselves to God instead of letting Him do the things Himself. There's nothing we can possibly do to deserve God, but he sent his son to die for us sinners so we may have Him. God is not impressed by our methods- He desires our hearts. True faith begins when we stop trying to impress God and start depending on Him.

Losing our strategies doesn't mean losing discipline or devotion. It means releasing the idea that closeness to God is something we achieve. Instead, we receive it as a gift through Jesus. Relationships replace religion. Trust replaces striving.

The moment we stop asking, "What can I do to get to God?" and start asking, "God, I need You," we discover that He has been with us all along, waiting for us to come back to Him, fully surrendered without our own agenda.

Day 14: Sabbath

By Leah Craft

“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done” Genesis 2:2-3

The word Sabbath means, “to rest”, which is exactly what we see God do on the seventh day of creation. Rest is a gift from God that allows us to replenish our energy and spend time with the Lord. An example of the rejuvenation and preparation that comes through rest is modeled for us in the Old Testament.

In 1 Kings chapter 19, there is a pivotal shift in the story that begins by showing the effects of exhaustion.

Elijah, a prophet of the Lord, had encountered a miraculous (but very tiring) series of events. Elijah was so tired, in fact, that he did not think he had the strength to go on. Despite this, the Lord saw Elijah and gave him much needed rest and nourishment. Scripture gives us the full story of what led to Elijah’s exhaustion, but it also shares how gracious and loving our Father is to notice our needs and sustain us.

1 Kings shares; “Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, ‘Get up and eat.’ He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, ‘Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.’ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God . . . The Lord said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’” 1 Kings 19:5-9

Elijah had experienced exhaustion to his very core, and he was about to give up, but God replenished and cared for him.

While Elijah was worried about his physical needs, God provided for both his physical and his spiritual needs. God gave Elijah the rest and replenishment that he needed, and then Elijah got to be present while the Lord walked by! Rest allows us to be recentered and anchored in the Lord, by the Lord. God gifts us with rest, and it is important to remember that rest isn't laziness. It's preparation for something great!

I encourage you to be intentional about following a restful Sabbath this Sunday. Ask the Lord to lead you as you rest and grow in Him. Remember, rest isn't a detour. It's a time to recharge in the Lord.

Day 15: Jesus is the Prototype

By Logan Dillow

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

1 Corinthians 11:1

When something is called a prototype, it means it is the original model—the standard everything else is built from. In the Christian life, Jesus is not just our Savior; He is the prototype. He shows us what life looks like when we surrender to God’s will.

Jesus lived in complete dependence on His Father. He didn’t act on His own authority or pursue His own life and choices.

He said, **“I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.” John 8:28.** Every word, action, and decision flowed from obedience and trust in His Father. That is the life He’s laid the groundwork for us to mimic.

As the prototype, Jesus shows us how to love. He loved unconditionally, even when it cost Him everything. He served instead of seeking status. He forgave instead of holding a grudge. He chose humility over authority and compliance over comfort. The life Jesus lived is the road we are made to take, leading straight back to the one who built that road.

But following the prototype doesn't mean copying behavior without changing yourself. We cannot live like Jesus in our own flesh. That is why He gives us the Holy Spirit—to be in and with us. We don't become more like Jesus by trying to do more, but by following His foundation for us.

When we compare our lives to Jesus, we realize how far short we fall. Yet instead of scrutiny and condemnation, this comparison leads us to grace. Jesus didn't just show us the way—He created the way. Through Him, we are forgiven, restored, and chosen to live differently.

Jesus is the prototype not to discourage us, but to define us. As we follow Him, our lives are slowly shaped to reflect His life, so we can live the life we have to the fullest.

Day 16: Making Space for the Gospel

Honor Draughn

It's so easy to get caught up in everything happening around us. As Christians, we are meant to go the opposite way of the world, and that's a very challenging thing to do. Sometimes we feel distracted by the things around us. We must prioritize God above all else: sports, relationships, hobbies, and so on. All of these things make us happy, and people sometimes use that to fulfill themselves, but those things can never fully fulfill us. Happiness is short-term joy, and long-term joy is long-term, and God gives us joy.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" Romans 12:1-2

We need to surrender our lives to God and make room for Him to move in us and in our lives. Then we will start to see God moving in us and in our lives.

How can I make room for God?

1. Put God First

- Put Him above everything else in your life.
- Make God first in your life.
- Start your day with God. Before you pick up your phone, pray or read your Bible.
- Make time for just you and God where you pray, read your bible, or worship.

2. Slow down

- We have to tune our ear to heaven and have our eyes fixed on God, so that when He calls us to do something, we don't miss it.
- We don't want to go so fast that we can't do the work of Heaven.
- If we get caught up in the chaos of the world, we don't have God's peace with us, which is what the enemy wants. He wants us to be distracted from God, so we miss Him. The enemy wants to come between you and God.

3. Ask God, "What would you have of me today?"

We want to do God's will, not our own.

- We don't just want to go off a checklist of what we have to do. We want to say yes and amen to whatever God wants from us and be filled with joy that we get to do the will of God.
- We were designed with a purpose. We are here for a reason, not just to live and do our own will. Most people say "you only live once", but we know this is only the beginning and is nowhere close to the eternity we will have in Heaven.

Day 17: Preach the Gospel

By Lukus Keeton

One of the most powerful things anyone has is their voice. The Bible says that your tongue is a double edged sword and can do the same amount of good as evil. With that being said, when Jessie gave me the opportunity to preach at a One Night, saying I was nervous is an understatement. I didn't know how everyone was going to react and if I was even able to do this. I now know that the Lord put me in that position to teach me how to lean on Him. The Bible tells us to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Lord has given each and everyone of us a voice and a purpose. Our purpose is to tell everyone we can about what the Lord has done for us.

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven”

Matthew 5:13-16

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” Matthew 28:19-20

“Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me” Psalms 66:16

Day 18: Demonstrating the Gospel

By Logan Dillow

Scripture: Matthew 25:34-45

The Gospel is something we believe, but it is also something we demonstrate. The message of Jesus is not only meant to be spoken—it is meant to be lived. Our words tell people what we believe, but our lives show them whether it is real, and what's to be sought after by themselves.

Jesus demonstrated the Gospel long before He preached it. He touched the untouchable, welcomed the outcast, and served the overlooked. He didn't just talk about love—He embodied it.

Ultimately, the cross became the greatest demonstration of the Gospel: grace given to those who could never earn it, or work enough for it. Nobody could bear our shortcomings and sins but him.

When we follow Jesus, our lives become a reflection of that same path he walked. Forgiveness demonstrates the Gospel in a world that holds grudges. Modesty demonstrates the Gospel in a culture that promotes self-indulgence. Selfless love demonstrates the Gospel in a world driven by 'the-easy-way-out.'

Demonstrating the Gospel does not mean living perfectly. In fact, honesty about our weakness often speaks louder than pretending to have it all together, which we will never have control of how our lives are going. That's something that is guaranteed without previously surrendering your life, no matter how much you try, you will never have a grasp on your life. When people hear of our flaws, our shortcomings, our weaknesses, everything we've done in the past, we can reflect onto them what we have done, and what they are doing now.

The Gospel is demonstrated when our faith changes how we treat others, how we respond to conflict, and every single aspect of how we live the life we have been granted for a short time. Our actions don't replace the message—they either support it or contradict it.

God calls us to be living evidence of His grace. When our lives align with the truth we express, the Gospel becomes visible. Non-believers may not read the Bible, but we are a living reflection of what it says.

Day 19: Burdens of Love

By Leah Craft

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

There is no better example of how to carry one another’s burdens than the actions of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus carried humanity’s burdens as He was on the cross, and He spoke the words, ***“It is finished” John 19:30***, forever freeing believers from our sins.

With this comes our call to action. As believers, we are called to walk in the footsteps of the Lord, serving others as He served us! God wants us to carry each other’s burdens to Him. We are not meant to pick up a burden, carry it around, and pick up another and another until we’re too weighed down and heavy hearted to move forward. Rather, when we see a friend carrying a burden, we are meant to help them carry it to the cross and have them leave it there with the Lord.

Imagine seeing your friend struggling to carry things to their car. You’d run over, grab some of the load, and help them place it in the trunk of their car. You would not carry their things with you for weeks on end. Similar to how we would leave our friend’s things in their trunk, we carry each other’s burdens to Jesus, and we leave them there with Him, fully trusting that He knows what to do!

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

When we trust the Lord with our burdens and submit them to Him, He works them together for our good and His glory. When we trust in the Lord, He leads us in His ways, and He will never lead us astray.

Practical ways we can carry one another's burdens:

1. Pray with them right then and there! When a friend tells you something that they are struggling with, help them take it to Jesus in prayer.
2. Invite them to church! Invite people into the presence of God, so He can reveal the One who carried their burden of sin on the cross.
3. Gift them a Bible! Have a few bookmarked sections that will be helpful for them in their current circumstances.
4. If someone is carrying a burden that harms them or someone else in any way, tell a trusted adult.

Ask the Lord to walk with you and lead you through this life. Surrender your burdens to Him! God loves you so deeply, and He wants to walk with you through every step of this life. The burdens we carry to the Lord find safety and healing at His feet.

Day 20: Communal Relationships

By Lukus Keeton

One thing that is very important is being around other believers. Everyone needs their group, even Jesus had His group: the disciples. If we are not around other good people, we can often fall victim to certain people's bad influences. If we don't have our groups of people, we can often feel lost, and, as we make these groups that we are going to be around, we need to make sure they are Christ believers.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” Hebrews 10:24-25

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved”

Acts 2:42-47

Day 21: Sabbath

By Honor Draughn

The Sabbath is meant to be a day of rest. We rest on the 7th day, just as God did when He created the universe. If the God of the universe rested, that shows how much, as normal followers of Christ, we need to rest. The Lord gives us rest. Sometimes, we just need to lay everything down at the Lord's feet

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."

Exodus 20:8 NIV

"Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your ancestors."

Jeremiah 17:22 NIV