

# 21 Days of Fasting and Prayer Devotional Guide

#### **HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

The 21 Days of Fasting and Prayer Devotion Guide is designed to help make your fasting and prayer experience a season of focused worship and spiritual growth. God will bless and grow you in a special way. You will hear from God in ways you have not before if you have ears to hear his leading. This guide is intended to open your heart to His voice.

The focus of the devotions are as follows:

- · Up Relationship with God,
- · In Relationship with our hearts,
- · Out Relationship with others.

There are four main themes which include:

- · Prayer
- · Our salvation & the gospel
- · Daily help for the spiritual journey
- · Loving others

You will find the devotions structured for our daily worship experience. Begin with a brief prayer to ask God to focus your heart and open your life to His leading. Then walk through each of the four parts of the devotion.

# Scripture

Reflect on God's truth from His Word.

# **Devotional Reflections on the scripture**

Receive encouragement from believers reflecting on God's truth applied to our lives.

# **Daily Prayer Challenge**

Receive a challenge to put these truths into practice in our lives to receive God's full blessing and help.

# **Brief Prayer**

Pray God's truth and ask for His help to know Him and live your live for His glory.

May God richly bless your times of worship and prayer. Prepare your heart for a special season that God will use to transform your perspective and the direction of your life.

#### YOU WERE MADE FOR WORSHIP

#### Isaiah 43:19-21

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise."

God's grace is not only amazing—it's active. In Isaiah 43, He promises to do a new thing: to bring life where there was none, to carve rivers through despair, and to refresh His chosen people in seasons of joy and sorrow. But why? Verse 21 gives the answer: "that they might declare my praise."

You were made for worship. Not just in song, but in response to grace. When God makes a way through grief or celebration, when He pours out peace in chaos or calm, your worship becomes a testimony. It's not about perfect circumstances, it's about a perfect Savior who forms, fills, and frees us to glorify Him.

Today, let your praise rise from the places He's redeemed. Worship is your response to His grace.

#### **Daily Prayer Focus**

Ask God to help you perceive the "new thing" He is doing in your season—whether joyful or heavy—and respond with worship.

# **Prayer**

Lord, thank You for forming me for Yourself. In seasons of joy and in moments of despair, You are doing a new thing. Open my eyes to see Your grace at work. Let my life declare Your praise. I worship You not for what I feel, but for who You are—my Way-Maker, my Living Water, my God.

#### **TEACH US TO PRAY**

#### Luke 11:1

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

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

"Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Before Christ entered the disciples' lives, they knew prayer as repetitions and from head knowledge. When our Lord, Christ, prayed, they witnessed a personal and imitate prayer as a child to father in a remarkably close relationship from the heart. Jesus taught them four key steps in communication with God in verses 2-4: first, recognizing God as a Holy Father in spirit of worship, next, asking for daily provision, then, petitioning for help dealing with sin by avoiding temptation beforehand, and last, asking and granting forgiveness after the fact. The health of our prayer life is like a cistern that my family had when I was a child. When the cistern went empty, my siblings and I had to climb down into it to clean it before new water was added. When we open a dialogue with God, we need to come as child to a Father with a broken spirit and from a contrite heart, Psalm 51:17. God knows our heart completely and our needs before we ask. We need to remember that God sent us a helper, in Roman 8:26 it said, "Likewise the Spirit also helped our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered".

Daily Prayer Challenge: The ACTS method is a very good guideline that helps us stay focused while praying. Adoration is the first step in expressing reverence and acknowledging His greatness in worshiping Him. Confession is when we humble ourselves before God and confess our sins. Thanksgiving involves showing gratitude for His forgiveness for our sins and blessings we received. Supplication is lifting our and other petitions to God by being specific not generalized.

# **Prayer**

My Heavenly Father, I come with a grateful heart to honor you and praise you for your mercy and grace. Forgive me where I miss the mark of honoring you in my actions today and help me to make a positive difference in someone's life tomorrow. I thank you for your son, Jesus Christ, for paying my sins debt, also for the blessing that you bestow on me today. Lord, thank you that you care about every detail and concern in my life. In Jesus name, Amen.

# THE GLORY AND GOODNESS OF GOD - ADORATION

#### **Matthew 6:9-10**

"Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

When we pray, we often come to God with our needs and wants. Most of the time, we don't even think about thanking God during the good times because everything is going so smoothly. We come with our troubles, expect an answer on our time, and exit the prayer.

When we look at the Bible, we see that we need to begin our prayers with adoration for our Lord. We often forget about how big and powerful our God is. We try to put Him in a box, but every breath out of our lungs is a gift from the Lord above. God's sovereignty over our lives needs to be recognized and praised each and every time we meet with him. When we begin our prayers with a heart of adoration, we move the focus off ourselves and onto our Father.

# **Daily Prayer Challenge**

When you pray, do you place the focus on yourself or do you recognize and bring honor to the Lord Almighty? Next time you pray, begin with a heart of thanksgiving and praise.

# **Prayer**

Dear Lord, you are sovereign over all. Everything on heaven and earth and under the earth bows to you. We thank you for your Son and the sacrifice he made to save us from our sins. Thank you for having a plan for our lives. Thank you for blessing us with your Holy Spirit. May we never take for granted the gifts you have given us. Let your will be done in our lives, and in everything we do, may we work to bring glory, honor, and praise to you. Amen.

# ASKING FOR HELP WITH SIN AND TEMPTATION - CONFESSION

#### Matthew 6:12-13

"and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

This Scripture is part of the Lord's Prayer. It may be easier to ask God for forgiveness than it is to forgive others, but when we add the phrase "as we also have forgiven our debtors," to this prayer, it means that we have forgiven people who have wronged us. When we keep unforgiveness in our hearts, we open ourselves up to other sins. Forgiving someone means that you let go of anger, resentment, and wanting revenge. Sometimes it means you reconcile with them, but not always. If the person is not safe, you don't even have to talk to them to forgive them. But when you forgive, you free yourself from thinking about the situation over and over, which is holding you captive to that person and situation. Releasing the situation to God frees you from it. When you forgive, it doesn't mean that what they did is okay, and it doesn't mean you will forget about it. But it does mean you can be free from it.

# **Daily Prayer Challenge**

Is there a situation in your life that you continue to think about and hold onto? Is there a person in your past that you need to forgive? You do not have to wait for an apology from them, but you can forgive them today.

# **Prayer**

Dear God, I know you caution us from harboring unforgiveness in our hearts. It only hurts us, and it can lead to other temptations and sins like anger and rage. Lord, today I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_\_. I release him/her to you, and I am letting go of that situation, that unforgiveness, and that feeling of wanting revenge. Please heal my hurt and my heart.

# **GOD'S DAILY PROVISION – SUPPLICATION**

#### Matthew 6:11

"Give us this day our daily bread,"

Asking God for what you need is a demonstration of your trust in and dependence on Him. Another important verse about depending on God is Philippians 4:19; it says, "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." God is ready to give you what you need, but He is not a genie that will grant our every wish in life. He wants a relationship with us, and even though He knows everything about us, He wants us to ask him for those things we need. One of the names of God is "Jehovah-Jireh," which was used first by Abraham, and it means "The Lord will provide" (Genesis 22: 14).

# **Daily Prayer Challenge**

What is the "daily bread" you need from God today? Is it food? Or is it a job, or maybe you need help with a relationship, or maybe you need help with controlling your thoughts. Or maybe it's something completely different. Whatever it is that you need, God can handle it. That doesn't necessarily mean he will grant you just anything you want, but He will give you what you need.

# **Prayer**

, and I need	Help me give this all to you and
day. Help me to trust you.	Today, Lord, I'm worried about
you are my provider, and y	ou will give me all that I need for each
Lord, I choose to believe w	hat Scripture says and believe that

#### MY CUP OVERFLOWS - THANKSGIVING

#### Psalm 100:4-5

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations."

#### **James 1:17**

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

Psalm 100 reveals the perfect guide to worship, thanksgiving and praise. The Hebrew word for thanksgiving used here is todah which means the outward act of giving thanks with outstretched hands in adoration—it implies a choir of worshippers joining in. The Hebrew word for praise is tehillah, an act of public exaltation or a hymn offered to God. The very act of thanksgiving is worship. We worship not out of obligation, but because our Lord is inherently good and faithful. God's character is one of continuous blessing. His nature is unchanging, and His immense generosity is rooted in His very being. He is perfect, lacking nothing, yet He pours out good things on us.

As believers, let us approach Him boldly and with confidence, knowing that His gifts are morally good and perfectly suited for our specific needs. The God who gave good gifts to Moses, Abraham, and David is the same God who gives us good gifts today. Let us approach our Heavenly Father not only with our voices lifted but with outstretched arms—a gesture of surrender and adoration. When we shift our focus from obligation to a joyful, confident response to who God is, we can truly experience todah, that deep, expressive thanksgiving.

# **Prayer**

Father God, we come before you and thank you for the freedom to enter your presence at any time. We praise you for being approachable and knowing your guidance is directed toward our eternal best interest. We ask that you forgive us for the times our human minds struggle to grasp the magnificence of your goodness. Father, your word shows us over and over how perfect your ways are. We ask that our worship reflects back to you how genuinely thankful we are for your goodness, for your stability, for your faithfulness and for every gift you bless us with.

# **MY DAILY NEED - ASK, SEEK, KNOCK**

#### **Matthew 7:7-11**

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"

In my Bible this last sentence is highlighted by a circle around the work "ask". It can be easy to look around us and see the things that are going wrong. If left unchecked, these things often stir up feelings of hopelessness. "What can I do about all this??" "The only thing left is to pray and hope it works out...." We often try everything in our own power before turning to God for a last-ditch effort.

Let this verse be a reminder today that your Father in heaven sees exactly what you're going through, and sometimes He's just waiting for you to ask Him to move. Come to him first, He's a good Father and loves to delight his children, ask him and watch him move on your behalf!

What things in your life have you been trying to solve on your own? Take some time today to ask God for the solution instead, remembering that He's a good Father; all powerful! He's waiting for those who will come to Him and ask.

# Prayer

Father, we come to you today asking for these burdens to be lifted. Lord forgive us for thinking we can do it better on our own, or for not trusting you with our outcomes.

We lay down the burden of solving our own problems and ask that you show yourself faithful in our situations. Holy Spirit, fill us with the faith to wait on your provision today. Thank you for being such a loving Father to give good gifts! We love you Jesus, Amen.

# SUFFICIENCY IN THE GOSPEL

#### 2 Peter 1:3

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence."

The gospel serves as a means by which God daily constructs me into what He wants me to be and also serves as the channel through which He gives me my inheritance every day of my Christian Life. Hence, it could be said that the gospel contains all that I need "for life and godliness." It is for this reason that God tells me to be steadfastly entrenched in the gospel at all times and never to allow myself to be moved from there. The mere fact that God tells me to stay inside the gospel at all times must mean that He intends to supply all of my needs as long as I am abiding in that place of luxury.

# **Daily Prayer Challenge**

Ask Christ to keep the simple but powerful message of the gospel fresh on your heart each day. Ask the Holy Spirit to entrench the gospel in your mind as you rehearse again and again the story of what Christ did for you out of love and compassion.

# **Prayer**

Father, thank you that you loved me enough to send your son to pay the penalty for my sin. Jesus, thank you for humbling yourself in form of a human servant to live a perfect life to please the Father and apply your righteous life to sinners. Holy Spirit help me remember that you saved me through this gospel and that I am now a child of God saved for godliness and good works. Help me live for you each day from these gospel truths.

# FREEDOM FROM SIN'S POWER

#### Romans 6:14

"For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."

#### Colossians 2:8-10

"See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits[a] of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority."

As Christ followers we need to remind ourselves daily that because we are "in God" our sins are forgiven. Paul says because of God's grace we are no longer compelled to sin.

This verse is a declaration for believers that we are no longer bound by the old system of trying to earn righteousness through the law. Instead we live under God's unmerited favor, empowered by His grace through faith in Christ to overcome sin and live a new life in resurrection.

In a spiritual sense we died with Him and to our sin. We were then resurrected to a new spiritual life. Now Paul instructs us to continue to remember we are no longer slaves to sin. We must not offer our bodies to be used for sin, but instead offer ourselves as instruments of righteousness.

Pray for the ability not to lean on our own efforts, but rely on God's enabling grace to live righteously. Learn to live a new life in Christ by knowing, reckoning and yielding to God.

# **Prayer**

Lord we thank you for your grace that has forgiven our sins. We ask you to remind us that it is not our efforts but your grace that has saved us. Help us to follow you and strive to be more loving, more kind and more giving, more like Jesus.

#### **RESTING IN CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS**

#### **Romans 5:1-2**

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

When we try to find peace by relying on our own abilities and performance, we are sadly destined to fall short. The constant whirlwind of life makes it easy to live in this mindset, always striving to be "enough." But here's the amazing truth outlined in Romans 5:1: Our faith in Jesus grants us an all-access pass to ultimate peace and confidence.

Because we have been justified by faith, we have a peace with God that can only be granted through Christ. We no longer need to carry shame or doubt, because our access to God's presence was secured when Jesus took on the cross. We stand firmly in His grace. If we can stand confident before the God of the universe, no earthly challenge can rob us of the peace and joy we have in Him.

# **Daily Prayer Challenge**

Reflect on any scenario that brings anxiety or self-doubt in your life today, and use the truth of Romans 5:1 to thank God for the already accomplished peace and access you have been granted through Jesus.

# **Prayer**

Lord, we come before you humbly, choosing to rest in your perfect grace today. We thank you that our standing with God is secure because we have been justified by faith, and our access to you is guaranteed by Jesus Christ alone. Help us to release the burden of needing to earn your love and to walk confidently in the finished work of the cross! Amen.

#### MY DAILY PROTECTION

# Ephesians 6:10-13

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand

against the schemes of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm."

Every day brings battles. Some are seen but many are unseen. Ephesians reminds us that our true struggle isn't against people, but against spiritual forces that seek to discourage, divide, and derail us. But God doesn't leave us defenseless. He offers His own armor; truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word to protect and empower us.

This armor isn't decorative; it's essential. We don't fight in our own strength, but in His. When we feel overwhelmed, weary, or under attack, we don't retreat; we stand. Not because we're strong, but because He is. Today, before you step into the world, into joy or conflict, peace or pressure; put on the armor. Let His strength be your shield.

#### **Daily Prayer Challenge**

Ask God to clothe you in His amazing armor today. Pray for strength to stand firm in every spiritual battle.

#### **Prayer**

Lord, I put on Your armor today. I choose truth over lies, peace over panic, and faith over fear. Strengthen me to stand firm—not in my own power, but in Yours. Guard my heart, guide my steps, and help me remember that the battle belongs to YOU.

# **DEFEATING THE FLESH WITH FULLNESS**

#### John 6:35

"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

Though saved, I am daily beset by a sinful flesh that always craves those things that are contrary to the Spirit. These fleshly lusts are vicious enemies, constantly waging war against the good of my soul. Yet they promise me fullness, and their promises are so deliciously sweet that I often find myself giving into them as if they were friends that have my best interests at heart.

On the most basic of levels, I desire fullness and fleshy lusts seduce me by attaching themselves to this basic desire. They exploit the empty spaces in me, and they promise that fullness will be mine if I give in to their demands. When my soul sits empty and is aching for something to fill it, such deceptive promises are extremely difficult to resist.

Consequently, the key to defeating fleshly lusts is to eliminate the emptiness within me and replace it with fullness, and I accomplish this by feasting on the gospel. Indeed, it is the gospel that I experience a God who glorifies Himself by filling me with His fullness. Jesus promises, "He who continually comes to Me will never hunger or thirst again." (John 6:35) When I feast on Christ my hunger for sin diminishes and the lies of lust simply lose their appeal. The antidote for fleshly desire is gospel feasting.

When you face temptation make your focus Christ and the gospel rather than letting your temptation and sin consume your thoughts. Fill your mind and heart up with Christ to fullness so your heart does not need to seek satisfaction in the flesh.

# **Prayer**

Father, I grow weary of struggling with sin. I'm tired of constantly feeling like a spiritual failure. Help me to lay hold of your promise to always provide a way out of temptation. Help me to not just put off temptation but put on Christ to fill up the emptiness I often try to fill with fleshly indulgence. Give me eyes to see the spiritual feast you have prepared before me and to feast on your goodness, blessings, grace, salvation, future glory and all the other delicacies that are mine in Christ. In Jesus name, Amen.

#### **HELP WITH DISTRUST**

#### Psalm 56:3-4

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

Every time I deliberately disobey a command of God, it is because I am in that moment doubtful as to God's true intentions in giving me that command. Does He really have my best interests at heart? Or is He withholding something from me that I would be better off having? Such questions, whether consciously asked or not, lie underneath every act of disobedience. However, the gospel changes my view of God's commandments, in that it helps me to see the heart of the Person from whom those commandments come. When I begin my train of thought with the gospel, I realize that if God loved me enough to sacrifice His Son's life for me, then He must be guided by that same love when He speaks His commandments to me.

# **Daily Prayer Challenge**

What is one aspect of your life you are not trusting in God with? Take that one thing and give it to God. Don't let it consume you. Use prayer as your vessel of worship to our God.

# **Prayer**

Lord, we come to you in adoration. You came before us, to help set the way. You gave us your Word. You are a good God. You are forever faithful to us. We come to give you, our fears. We are declaring that we cannot trust in our own abilities. For we have been shown through your faithfulness, we must trust in you. We love you Lord!

# PERSPECTIVE IN TRIALS

# 2 Corinthians 12:9

"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."

#### John 16:33b

"...In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

According to the song by The Shirelles, 'Mama Said There'd Be Days Like This,' and they were right! Some days, weeks, months, and seasons are tough! Hardships come in the form of relationships, finances, loss, loneliness, and the list goes on. Jesus gave us a heads up on this topic in John 16:33 when He said, "...In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Paul also experienced hardships, but he found a promise from God in the midst of these hardships. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 he writes, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul is speaking of God's grace and power that is made perfect in weakness, not our power. We can't go through these trials on our own and come out better for it, only through God's grace and power.

As you pray, ask God to reveal to you areas of your life you need to receive His grace and receive His power. What hardship could be impacted by God's grace and power?

# **Prayer**

Dear Jesus, I thank you for the hardships that come into my life as they are an opportunity for you to reveal your grace and power. Thank you for your promises that you have overcome the world and you are with us in our struggles. Today I commit my thoughts, actions, and conversations to you, that you may receive all the glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# OVERCOMING FEAR AND ANXIETY

#### Proverbs 29:25

"The fear of a man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe."

Satan uses fear to separate us from the glory and capabilities of God. When we fall into fear from any of the almost innumerable possible sources in this world, we have turned to ourselves for answers and fallen into Satan's trap.

Fear means that we have turned to relying on our own;

- · Perception of the problem
- · Judgment on what the situation needs
- · Resources to apply to the issue
- · Strength to persevere

While we don't realize it, the bigger issue is that it has distracted us from the Father. Fear steals our peace, our joy, our blessings, and most of all, our relationship with the loving Father. No matter the circumstances we find ourselves in, it's God's will to do what is best for us, and our outcome to be to His glory.

# Matthew 6:31-33

"Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the Gentiles seek after these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Is there an issue in your life that has caused you anxiety, and have you turned inward for answers? Give the problem to God. Praise Him for who he is and that He has control of all things.

# **Prayer**

Father, I know that you want to provide for me. I know that you are Jehovah-Jireh, and you want me to rely on you for the things you have intended for me. Take away my fear and take control. I will rest in your will, your power, and your wisdom. I praise you for being my creator, redeemer, and caretaker.

#### SAVED FOR GOOD WORKS

# Ephesians 2:10

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Through the gospel I learn not only to the saving works of God on my behalf, but I also learn that one of God's key purposes in doing these works is to put me to work myself. The Bible tells me that when Christ redeemed me, He did so in order that I might now be 'zealous for good works." When God "works" in me day by day, He does so in order to produce in me that desire and the power to "work for His good pleasure." Indeed, though I am saved by grace and not by works, I am God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them"

# **Daily Prayer Challenge**

Ask God to give you a love for good works that He saved you to perform. Seek God's view of works not to earn his love or dread serving others but a joyous delight for the privilege to serve Christ through doing good works for Him.

# **Prayer**

Father, I thank you that you saved me from my sin. Help me remember you also saved me to do something for you. You prepared good works for me to perform. Thank you, Jesus, that you did the ultimate good work by living a perfect life and enduring the cross for our salvation. Now help me find joy serving others as my good works done in worship to you.

# **FORGIVE FREELY**

# Ephesians 4:32

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Forgiving is a choice in our lives, but not an option. To forgive is to obey what God has commanded, and was beautifully displayed by His son Jesus Christ. God sent His son to die as the final sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. But we are not merely recipients of forgiving grace through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross; we are also called to be givers of that forgiving grace.

#### Colossians 3:13

"You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."

When we remember how God has fully forgiven us for everything we have ever done to wrong Him, that helps us to forgive those who have hurt us. Unforgiveness yields resentment, bitterness, and anger. When we make the conscious choice to extend grace to those who don't necessarily deserve it, we initiate the act of forgiveness. We don't forgive for our sake, or even for the one who wrongs us, but for Jesus' sake!

Is there someone you need to forgive today? What is holding you back from extending forgiveness? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how you can cultivate a more forgiving spirit in your life.

# **Prayer**

God, help me to reflect Your character by being kind, compassionate, and forgiving. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and soften my heart, so I can extend to others the same mercy and forgiveness that You have so freely given me. Amen

#### A HEART FOR THE LOST

#### **Romans 9:2-3**

"I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel."

#### Romans 10:13-15

"For 'everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?

And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

We, as believers, are all called to love one another. Just simple acts of love are an amazing way to show God to those who may not be able to see Him clearly. When Jesus said in Matthew 28:19 "Go and make disciples of all nations" He was and IS talking to us. This does not mean that we need to board a plane, head to a third world country and begin to preach. Our mission field is right outside our doors. It may be the clerk at the store, or someone we take a meal to. It could be the nursing home aide caring for a loved one and watching how we react to life's trials. It could even be someone you don't recall showing God's love to at all. Yet they see it. They feel His love through us. We don't know the impact that our love has on others. Folks who would, for whatever reason, may not feel comfortable in a church are looking to us, the believers in Christ, for proof that GOD IS LOVE. Live your Love out loud and ask the Father to show you someone to love on today. We may be the only 'Bible' they read.

Pray that God will give you an opportunity to how His love to others. Pray for those God puts on your heart who are lost and needing salvation? Maybe a co-worker, or a family member?

# **Prayer**

Father, thank you for sending your son to die for me. Thank you for the many blessings you provide. Forgive me for not having a continual need in my heart to reach the lost for you. Please place in my heart a sorrow and an unceasing anguish for them. Help me to see those around me who are searching. May I be the light that shows them the love that is only from you. May all honor and glory be yours as I strive to serve you more. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

# A HEART FOR THE POOR

#### Matthew 6:2

"Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others."

# Galatians 6:10

"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

With today's economic pressures, it can be easy to overlook taking care of those in need. We think about how expensive everything has gotten – the mortgage, groceries, utilities - EVERYTHING! But, throughout Scripture, God reminds us to look outward. Jesus was our perfect example. On this earth He did not have riches; but He knew that He could rely on the Father to provide everything He needed. And so, He was generous when meeting the needs of others. Let us remember that God uses us as vessels to provide for and minister to others so that He will be glorified. Let's allow Him to use us to meet the needs of others because we know that He will provide us with whatever we need, too. Let's challenge ourselves to do this, not for recognition or personal gain, but for His glory!

Do you make it a priority to serve those in need? Instead of worrying about your own needs, ask God to show you someone who has a greater need and then act in obedience to fulfill that need for His glory.

# **Prayer**

Lord, we thank you for all that you have provided for us. You love us deeply and show it through your lavish generosity. Help us recognize those in need and give us a heart of obedience and generosity so that we will fulfill that need. We want to honor you through this act of love and obedience.

#### LOVING OTHERS - LIVING GENEROUSLY

#### 2 Corinthians 8:7-9

But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Paul's appeal to the Corinthian church in this passage would cause many of us to bristle: "So Paul, you're saying I should give you money so I can prove my love is genuine? Gee, sounds like a great deal...for you." Talk of money (or 'generosity') makes us instantly cynical, even if every other box in a relationship is checked positively (as we see in verse 7). We go to the worst assumptions about someone's motivation as soon as the topic of 'how much is this going to cost me' comes up. Even if (as in verse 8) they ask us nicely. But going into verse 9, I have to ask myself the question; how would my view of Christ change if He had come to us rich and entitled (honestly, as He deserves), if Jesus had turned up his nose to common food with common people, if He had demanded to be carried on the shoulders of servants instead of the back of a donkey? Even though Jesus deserved this treatment infinitely more than any ruler or celebrity the world has ever known, He turned it down in return for poverty. Not as a command, but as a choice.

What are you owed? What is justly due to you? Is it money? Respect? Time? Attention? Pray that today, as you reflect on the people who owe you, you would consider the effect Jesus had on all of creation by leaving what He was due on the table. May God show us the things that we can generously leave in abundance when we could rightfully claim them as our own.

# **Prayer**

Lord God, highest and greatest, creator of heaven and earth, of the universe, of all existence, of math, physics, time, and space. All glory, honor, power, and riches belong to You. Everything in creation except the hearts of mankind declares Your majesty by its very nature. Yet You came to us, to live in poverty, humiliation, and ultimately, to be tortured and die, simply and amazingly to draw that one thing that denied You into Your loving embrace: Our sinful hearts. Because of this, by Your resurrection and forgiveness, you made us rich in fullness and communion with You. May our hearts seek to follow in Your footsteps, oh God, our rightful Master and King.

# **HOPE OF HEAVEN**

#### 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

#### Colossians 1:27b

"Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The more I experience the riches of Christ in the gospel, the more there develops within me a yearning to be with Christ in heaven where I will experience His grace in unhindered fullness. Our present blessings of salvation are but the "first fruits of the Spirit," the first installments of an unimaginably great glory which I will reap forever in heaven.

Such a heavenward focus yields enormous benefits to me while on earth. The mere hope of seeing Christ in glory releases the purifying influence of heaven upon my life from day to day. Hope of eternity with Christ in heaven enables my heart to thrive during the most difficult and lengthy of trials here on earth. When looking at the sheer weight of unseen glories to come, my troubles seem light by comparison; and when looking at the staggering length of eternity, I am encouraged to endure for a little while until we reach glory.

Each day, thank God for the hope of eternity with Christ and ask Him to keep your heart fixed on heaven's glory. Pray for strength to endure trials with joy, remembering the eternal reward ahead.

# **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, thank You for the riches of Your grace and the hope of eternity with You. Fix my heart on heaven's glory, purify my life, and strengthen me to endure trials with joy until I behold You in unhindered fullness forever. In Jesus name, Amen.

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