



A word from Pastor Mike

I'm so excited that you've decided to join us for **21 Days of Prayer!** We're stepping into a powerful season together. Our theme this fall is "our eyes are on You Lord!" With everything that's going on in our world, it's easy to get distracted and take our eyes off of Jesus. For the next three weeks, we're setting aside intentional time to seek God, align our hearts with His, and believe for breakthroughs in our lives, our church, and our community! It's time for us to refocus and fix our eyes on Jesus!

Now, the idea of prayer may be intimidating to you, so allow me to put your mind at ease. Prayer is simply talking to God. If you know how to talk, then you know how to pray!

You may be thinking, *"I know how to talk, but when it comes to prayer, I never know what to say, or how to say it."* *"Should I sit or kneel?"* *"Should I close my eyes or keep them open?"* Listen, don't fill your mind with all of those questions, just start talking to God. Talk to Him the same way you would talk to a trusted friend.

This prayer guide is going to help you by giving you topics and themes to pray about, you just commit to praying every day for 21 days! Here's a couple of things that I've learned over the years about prayer.

- **Prayer gets easier as I do it**
- **Prayer brings me closer to God**
- **Prayer reminds me that my God is bigger than my problems**
- **Prayer replaces my anxiety with God's peace**
- **Prayer is a weapon that I can use against the enemy**
- **Prayer may not change my situation but it will change me**
- **I've never met a person who regretted getting closer to God in prayer!**

So let's seek the Lord together for the next 21 days. Let's believe that He is able to do immeasurably more than we can ever think or ask...and if He did it before, won't He do it again? Together we're going to see a victory in Jesus Name!

Love ya!  
Pastor Mike

***P.S.***

Don't forget that if you want a word *FROM* God you have to pick up the word *OF* God!  
Don't forget to make daily Bible reading a priority!

**Creating A Lifestyle of Prayer by Chris Hodges -**

***Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed. MARK 1:35***

Prayer is most effective when it isn't something we do every now and then, but when it's a lifestyle we cultivate. To understand how to have a lifestyle of prayer, we can look at the example Jesus gave during His life on earth.

### **HAVE A CERTAIN TIME**

Jesus got up early in the morning to spend time with His Heavenly Father. Make a daily appointment with God — whether it's first thing in the morning, at lunch, or in the evening — and faithfully keep it.

### **HAVE A CERTAIN PLACE**

Jesus had a specific place He went to pray. Having a designated place to pray helps us remove distractions and frees us to worship and pray out loud.

### **HAVE A CERTAIN PLAN**

When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He gave them a prayer outline. We call it "The Lord's Prayer." This outline, along with several other tools, is available in this guide. As we pray every day, our plans for our prayer time can vary, maybe including worship music, Bible reading, and quiet time to listen to God. It doesn't always have to look the same; it just helps when we have a plan for connecting regularly with God.

### **Every Day Prayer Focus**

- **Humble ourselves.** Asking for forgiveness for our sins and the sins of our land.
- **Seeking God.** Declaring our dependence on God in every area of our lives.
- **His Kingdom Come.** Praying for the completion of the Great Commission and for revival in our generation.
- **Hear from Heaven.** Inviting the Presence of God in our church and our lives (souls saved, signs, wonders, miracles, and transformed lives.)
- **Next Steps.** Praying for all people in their journey of faith to Know God, Find Freedom, Discover Purpose, and Make a Difference.
- **Believing God** for answered prayer to our specific needs (Connection Cards, Pastoral Care Update Cards, and prayer requests).

***Daily prayer focus to assist you in your personal prayer time***

**Oct 5** – Pray for God to move powerfully over the next 21 days

**Oct 6** – Pray for our leaders – Nation, State, and City (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

**Oct 7** – Pray for our Executive Team, Stewardship Team, Oversight Team, Ministry Leaders

**Oct 8** – Pray for revival in our city – The Bronx, NYC, Spiritual Awakening

**Oct 9** – Pray for our nation – outpouring of the Holy Spirit, revival in America, national missions New York Ministry Network, Church Multiplication Network, leadership training and church planting. Our US Missionaries: Jasmin Santos (Yale Chi Alpha) Charles & Kehinde Moodie (Chicago City Life Center), Reggie & Ibelsa Stutzman (The Prodigal Center), John & Caity Ginnan (Youth Alive NY), Expect Hope, Love Life NYC, Dream Center NYC (Stephen & Priscilla Perumalla)

**Oct 10** – Pray for our world – World missions (for safety reasons we cannot name our missionaries however they are located in Africa, India, Jordan, Scotland and Central & South America.) Please pray for God's protection for them and their families, pray for God's favor & growth in their ministries.

**Oct 11** – Pray for the persecuted church in our country and around the world (Gal 6:2)

**Oct 12** – Pray for Healing, Signs, & Wonders

**Oct 13** – The Lost – outreach, family members, friends

**Oct 14** – Discipleship & Growth Track – That God would give our church a hunger for His Word

**Oct 15** – Dream Team – leadership development, covering over every leader, fresh vision and volunteers for Set-up/Break-down, Usher/Greeter, Audio/Visual, Connect & Worship Team (Including NS Deaf Church)

**Oct 16** – Children and Students Kidsong & A.T.F.

**Oct 17** – 9941 (Young Adults Ministry)

**Oct 18** – A Building (A Permanent location for Sunday Services)

**Oct 19** – Pray for upcoming Encounter weekend

**Oct 20** – Pray for strong families and marriages

**Oct 21** – Our Church's vision for 2026 – outreach projects, heart for the house, campus launches, leadership development, finances, leaders

**Oct 22** – Your personal vision for 2026 – freedom from habits, debt, relationships, ministry, reaching my full potential

**Oct 23** – Personal freedom and deliverance – breakthrough in every area!

**Oct 24** – **\*Encounter Night 1\*** Pray for your specific needs (finances, health, family members to be saved and other personal needs.) Pray for the sick – anoint with oil.

**Oct 25** – **Encounter Night 2\*** Pray for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit

**Oct 26** – Give thanks with a joyful heart for all God has done over the past 21 days!

## PRAYER MEETINGS



All prayer meetings will be held at Newsong Church  
135 Einstein Loop, Bronx RM 42  
Discounted parking is available. All are welcome to attend.

**Prayer Times**

**Sunday Mornings @ 9:30-10:00 am**

**Monday-Friday @ 7-8pm**

**Saturday Mornings @ 10am**

**Have a prayer request? Text Prayer to 877-899-7323 or simply scan the QR Code with your phone!**



**“Our Eyes Are On You Lord”**

# A 21 Day Devotional by Pastor Mike Tolone

Dear Church Family,

The Holy Spirit led me to create a devotional to help keep your eyes fixed on Jesus over the next 21 days. I pray that these thoughts and various moments from my life will help to strengthen and encourage you in your spiritual journey. You'll find that each day has a verse to read, a brief commentary or story, a reflection question and a sample prayer to pray. My hope is that the Holy Spirit will deepen your walk with Jesus and direct your steps as you walk with Him!

So let's take this 21 day journey together one step at a time! Stay prayerful. Stay expectant. Keep your eyes on Jesus! Thanks for the privilege of being your pastor!  
Love you lots!  
-PM

# Week One: Shifting our focus

## Day 1: “Vertical Vision”

“...We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”-2 Ch 20:12 (NIV)

Fear and worry have a tendency to cloud our vision. Think about it...the very reason you're worried or afraid is because you don't know what the outcome will be. I can't tell you how many hours of my life I've spent worrying about something that either never happened, or wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be. There were, however, countless times when the threat was real and the future uncertain...a troubling diagnosis, the loss of a job, the sudden death of a loved one. It's in these instances where we tend to panic and start frantically searching for solutions.

King Jehoshaphat didn't panic or shut down. When faced with the news that other nations were coming to wipe them out, he didn't look around him for a solution...he looked up. He understood that everything was out of his control, he was powerless so He looked up to the God who is all powerful.

You may be facing some uncertainty today...Maybe your initial reaction is to panic. Instead of allowing it to worry you to death, use it to draw you closer to God. What if the most spiritual thing you can do today is look up and admit that you are powerless, but our God is all powerful! Instead of trying to find a solution...trust the One who is more than able!

## Reflection Question:

What's one area in your life right now where you need to have vertical vision instead of trying to figure it all out?

## Prayer:

Father, I don't have all the answers. I feel the pressure to fix things, to be strong, to figure it out. But I choose to lift my eyes to You today. Give me wisdom and peace in Jesus name. Amen

## **Day 2: “God is bigger than our battles”**

1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.-Ps 46:1 (NIV)

I was active in sports all through high school. My favorite sport by far was wrestling. I loved the one on one competition...unlike team sports where you can blame someone else for "dropping the ball", in wrestling, it's just you and your opponent. Win or lose it's on you.

My sophomore year our team was tied for first place with a rival school. Emotions were high as our team loaded up the bus and headed to our meet. Our coach warned us that it was going to be rowdy, but none of us expected what we walked in too. The Gym was packed, and the sound of the crowd was deafening...Our team won by only a point or two, and the loud home crowd became hostile. The fans were pushing and shoving our team members as we were heading to the locker room and we knew we were in trouble. With no time to change we got back to the locker room and just started grabbing our gear so we could get to the bus...I remember grabbing my school jacket and slinging my duffel bag over my shoulder as I was trying to keep up with the rest of the team. In the midst of all the chaos I got separated from my team, and went out the wrong exit.

I walked right out into a crowd of fans who immediately started grabbing me and pushing me around. Before I knew what was happening out of nowhere a strong arm grabbed my bag and pulled me right out of the mob. It was my Dad. He had been waiting by the bus and when he didn't see me with the rest of the team he went looking for me.

That's how our heavenly Father is with us. You might find yourself in the middle of a battle, but He is our refuge (a safe place to escape too) and our strength (a strong arm to pull you to safety)

Your problems might seem as hostile as that home crowd was...they may be massive...but our God is bigger! He's not absent or uninterested in you...He's ever-present and mighty to save! Next time you find yourself in the midst of a battle, fix your eyes on your heavenly Father and remind yourself that He is bigger!

### **Reflection Question:**

Are you fixing your eyes on the battle or on Jesus?

**Prayer:** Father, remind me today that You are my refuge and my strength. You are bigger than any battle I'm facing today. You are my ever-present help in time of need! Holy Spirit, please help me remember this truth. In Jesus Name. Amen



### **Day 3: “Faith over Fear”**

10 fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.-Is 41:10 (ESV)

I was playing hide and seek with my grandchildren the other day. My granddaughter Sarai wanted me to hide with her as her brother was counting down. She wanted to hide in the utility room, but I wanted to hide in her mother’s office. I whispered to her “hurry up honey, it’s okay” but she just stood there peering into the dark utility room. She looked at me and said.. “Papa, I’m afraid, I want you to come with me.” As I heard her brother yell “here I come” I quickly left my amazing hiding spot (behind the door) and started running towards Sarai. The minute that she knew I was going to be with her, she bolted into that dark utility room and found the best hiding spot before I could even join her. Needless to say, her brother found me and she won the game!

You see the thing is that Sarai knew where she wanted to hide, but she was afraid of that dark utility room. That’s what fear does. It keeps us from going where we want to go...it keeps us from doing what we want to do. Fear can be paralyzing. But the moment she knew I was going to be with her...her fear turned to faith.

That’s how God wants us to live. You may be facing a “dark room” today. God’s not asking you to pretend that it’s not dark. He’s reminding you that He is with you in the dark...and His presence changes everything. Let that truth empower you to move forward. Fear tells us we can’t, but faith tells us that God can!

**Reflection Question:** What fear are you carrying with you today?

**Prayer:** Father, this fear I’m carrying is trying to keep me from moving forward. Help me to remember that You are with me. Today I choose to keep my eyes on You instead of my fear. Holy Spirit, give me the strength I need to take a step forward! In Jesus Name Amen.

#### **Day 4: “Worship in the waiting”**

25 Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening-Ac 16:25 (NLT)

A few years back, my wife Cyndie had complications from what was supposed to be a minor surgery. As a result, her body was unable to properly digest food. She became physically weak and began rapidly losing weight. This physical battle took a toll on her emotionally as at the same time she fell into a deep depression. As her husband, I felt so helpless, because there was nothing I could do to take away her physical and emotional pain. There were long nights where I would just hold her and pray for her as she silently wept in my arms. In this dark season, Cyndie’s faith was being tossed around in an ocean of fear and doubt. She became angry at God and even contemplated walking away from her relationship with Him.

Life’s situations can do that to us. Physical and emotional pain can become a dark “prison” that makes it hard for us to see the light of hope. It’s in these moments, that we have to remember in the darkness what we learned in the light. That’s what Paul and Silas did. They worshiped Jesus not just when they were free, but when they were in a dark prison cell. The truth is, that God is still good even when things are going bad. He is worthy of our praise no matter the situation. Worship is powerful because it takes my eyes off of the chains that are holding me down and puts them on the Chain Breaker!

You may be wondering what happened with Cyndie. Well, because she was so physically weak, I would come home during my lunch break to check on her. She was basically on a liquid diet drinking green smoothies because it was all her body could handle. As I opened the door I heard worship music blasting in our bedroom. I opened our bedroom door and there was Cyndie weeping and worshiping on her knees. Her hands were raised before God, her Bible open in front of her, and she was just worshiping in the midst of her pain. It was at that moment that I knew that no matter what, Cyndie was going to be okay. I closed the door and went back to the office.

Something shifted in Cyndie that day. She decided to worship Jesus while she was waiting for her breakthrough! Eventually God healed her physically and emotionally! If you ask her she would tell you many things she learned during that dark season, but one of the greatest lessons was worship in the waiting!

**Reflection Question:** What breakthrough do you need from God today?

**Prayer:** Father, today I fix my eyes on You. I worship You for Who you are, not just for what You can do. You are good in every situation. Today I declare Your greatness and give you the honor and praise that only You deserve. Holy Spirit please help me to worship while I’m waiting for my breakthrough. I trust You today! In Jesus Name Amen

### **Day 5: “Rest from the stress”**

14 And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”-Ex 33:14 (ESV)

Have you ever had “one of those days?” I had one just the other day...It was one of those days where you could actually feel the level of stress rising hour by hour... (I'll spare you the details). Days like that are a fact of life, and if you're going through one of those days, you're not alone.

Moses was pretty stressed too. He was leading a congregation of 3 million difficult people through the wilderness and into the promised land...(The other day I couldn't even lead my grandson into the living room to find his shoe and I was stressed out, so I can only imagine how Moses was feeling)

God never promised that we would live stress free lives, but He does promise to be with us in the stress. God lets us in on a little secret here...He's given us a gift that will help us rest in the stress. The gift is His presence! When we enter into God's presence we experience peace and rest!

Notice that God says “I will give you rest.” This reminds me of Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28 He said *“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. (Mt 11:28 (NLT))*

If you want to stress less today, get into God's presence. Fix your eyes on Him by putting on some worship music, opening up His Word, praying and asking God to give you peace and rest in the middle of the stress. You don't have to wait until the problem is solved to find peace and rest...Peace and rest are available to you right now because they come from a Person and His name is Jesus!

**Reflection Question:** What situation has you stressed today? Take 5 minutes to sit in the silence and remind yourself that in God's presence there is fullness of joy. Ask the Holy Spirit to help turn your stress into rest!

**Prayer:** Father, thank You that I don't walk alone through this life. Thank You for the gift of peace and rest that come from Your presence! When I'm feeling stressed, help me to fix my eyes on You! In Jesus Name Amen

### **Day 6: “Dare to Hope”**

19 The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. 20 I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. 21 Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: 22 The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. 23 Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. 24 I say to myself, “The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!”-La 3:19–24 (NLT)

Poor Jeremiah. He was going through intense emotional stress as he watched his people turn away from God, and suffer the consequences of their actions. Jerusalem had been destroyed by Babylon and forced into exile. This was a moment that Jeremiah would never forget, his city was in ruins and his future was uncertain.

Maybe you’re going through a situation right now that’s causing you to feel uncertain about the future. Like Jeremiah you can “dare to hope.” Here’s how...

**Look Back:** In the middle of the mess, Jeremiah remembered that God’s love never ends! When the future seems uncertain it’s easy to forget that you’re not alone. God is with you and He loves you. When you’re going through it, look back and remember His faithful love for you in the past...

**Look Forward:** After remembering God’s love in the past, it helped Jeremiah to look forward to the future. This exile wouldn’t last forever, God still had a purpose and a plan for His people, and even though His people hadn’t been faithful to Him, He would be faithful to them. Every morning God had new mercy for them and that would help them through this time. Likewise, your situation...no matter how bad it is right now...it’s not the end. God is faithful and He will bring you through this. The God who carried you through yesterday, will carry you through today!

**Look Up:** Jeremiah looked up! He fixed his eyes on Jesus. He realized that his future is secure in Jesus...and so is yours! Our hope isn’t found in money, success, happiness or fame. Our hope is found in Jesus alone. He is our inheritance! There is no problem, sickness or disease that could ever keep a child of God from spending eternity with Jesus!

**Reflection Question:** What are you going through right now that is stealing your joy and making you feel hopeless? Write down three times in your life where God has brought you through something. I dare you to look back, look forward and look up

**Prayer:** Father, today I remember that You are faithful even when I’m faithless. Thank You for Your loving kindness. Thank You for Your salvation through Jesus. Thank You for Your mercy and grace. Thank You for adopting me into Your family. Thank You for



carrying me yesterday, today and tomorrow. Holy Spirit, help me to fix my eyes on Jesus and remember these things when uncertainty creeps into my mind. In Jesus name. Amen!

### **Day 7: “My Help Comes From The Lord”**

1 I look up to the mountains— does my help come from there? 2 My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth!-Ps 121:1–2 (NLT)

I had an amazing relationship with my Dad. He has been with Jesus for awhile now, but one of the things that I miss about him the most was his availability. He always made time for me. If I needed advice, he was there. If I needed a shoulder to cry on, he was there. If I needed someone to help me move (which was more times than I care to think about) he was there. Yet, as available as my Dad was, there were times when he couldn't be there when I needed him. Even the closest and most trusted people in our lives have limitations. The things of this earth that we trust in have limitations.

For example:

If I trust in my job to provide for me, what happens when I lose that job?

There's nothing or no one in this life who is 100% reliable all of the time...

The Psalmist was going up to Jerusalem to worship, and as he's traveling he notices the mountains of Jerusalem in the distance. He asks, “Does my help come from there?”

He realizes something that you and I need to know. Even those mountains as beautiful and majestic as they are can crumble to the ground. Our help can only come from God. God is the only One who has no limitations. The Psalmist looks past the mountains and looks to the One who created those mountains. Our heavenly Father is the only One who is able to meet any and every need that we have. Now don't get me wrong. It's okay to have a job and have a car and have a retirement plan...Those are blessings from God! But our ultimate hope isn't in those things...they are in God alone, the Maker of heaven and earth! It's time to fix your eyes on Jesus!

**Reflection Question:** Am I trusting in someone or something other than God?

**Prayer:** Father, today I acknowledge my complete trust in You. Forgive me for placing my trust in people or things that cannot do what You can do.

You created the whole universe so I know that You are able to help me in my time of need. Holy Spirit, remind me today that my heavenly Father will provide for all of my needs, and help me to rest in His limitless ability! In Jesus name. Amen!

## **Week Two: Strengthening Our Trust**

## Day 8: Pray, Pause, Push

10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord...13 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. 14 The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." 15 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. 16 Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.-Ex 14:10, 13–16 (NIV)

Have you ever felt like you were stuck between a rock and a hard place? That's where God's people were. They were stuck between Pharaoh's army (who was charging at them), and the Red Sea. Fresh out of options, I'm sure Moses was thinking "Well God, now would be a good time to do what only You can do!"

Sometimes we find ourselves in a situation where we have no idea what to do. Moses didn't know what God was going to do, but He did trust God enough to know that God would do something.

When we're in this kind of situation we tend to panic. We can be so filled with fear that we decide to try to make our own way. Fear will either drive us into the trap of the enemy or force us to tread water in a sea of doubt and despair. What did God's people do? They prayed, they paused, and they pushed.

**Pray:** It's been said that prayer should be our first response and not our last resort. When we don't know what to do...it's time to pray. When we feel like panicking...it's time to pray! Some people are afraid to pray because they think that they have to pray these long, eloquent, "King James English" type of prayers. Not true! Our text says that God's people "cried out to the Lord"! Sometimes the only prayer you can come up with is God help me!

**Pause:** Notice that after the people prayed, Moses told them to stand firm...in other words be still, pause. It's important to wait on the Lord for an answer. God answers prayer in many ways, including His Word, a sermon, or through another person. When we pause we can be still enough to listen for His voice.

**Push:** God responded with instructions to move forward. Charls Spurgeon writes "There is a time for praying, but there is also a time for holy activity." Many times God will ask

us to push forward in faith while He is working out the details. God was going to part the waters, but Moses had to extend his staff over the sea. You may be going through something today that makes you want to panic or give up. Take time to cry out to God. Then pause and listen for His instructions. While you're waiting for that breakthrough push yourself forward by reading God's word and serving at church. It's time for us to do everything we can do in this situation; while at the same time believing God to do everything that we can't do!

**Reflection Question:** What's one thing you can do while waiting for God to do what you can't do?

**Prayer:** Father God, at this moment I have no idea what to do. But my eyes are on You! I trust that You are able to do exceedingly and abundantly more than I can ever think ask or imagine, so I'm asking for a complete breakthrough in Jesus name! Holy Spirit help me to hear Your still small voice and empower me to continue to push forward in my walk with You ! In Jesus Name, Amen!

### **Day 9: The Peace of God**

7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.-Php 4:7 (NIV)

When I was in my first year of pastoral ministry, my wife and I were asked by our senior Pastor to go and visit an elderly woman who was terminally ill. Pat had faithfully served Jesus in our local church for many years, and now she was unable to physically attend.

I grabbed my bible, some anointing oil, and some elements for communion and we drove to her house. We were greeted by her husband who brought us into the family room where a hospital bed was set up for his wife. Knowing that we would be visiting for at least an hour, he asked if we would mind if he ran some errands while we were there, since he didn't like to leave her alone. We said of course.

I have to admit that I was a little nervous about our conversation. This was the first time that I was asked to speak to someone who was dying, and I wasn't sure how to start off the conversation. I kept praying "Lord, help me say the right things." As we sat down next to her bed, she immediately popped up and started talking to us.

She asked us about our family, and about our calling into full-time ministry. She asked us how we were adjusting to the church, and how she could pray for us.

Cyndie and I went there to pray for and encourage her, but she ended up praying for and encouraging us! That's the first time that I saw the peace of God at work in

someone's life. It was guarding her heart and her mind. This woman was dying, yet apart from her physical condition you would never know it!

I was reminded of a verse in Isaiah 26:3 *"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!"-Is 26:3 (NLT)*

We can only experience the peace of God if we first experience peace with God.

This wonderful woman of God had surrendered her life to Jesus years before. At some point she recognized her own sin and accepted God's gift of salvation through Jesus. The very moment we do that, we experience peace with God. Our sins are freely forgiven! Now that we're saved, we can experience the peace of God.

It's a perfect peace that holds us during the different storms of life. Have you ever met a person whose life was falling apart around them, but they weren't? That's the crazy peace of God!

It's a peace that isn't based on our circumstances but on our Savior. He is the Prince of Peace...And He holds us in perfect peace.

God never promises us a storm free life...but what His word does tell us is that we can have his peace in the storm. His peace stands at the door of our heart and mind like a soldier guarding them from fear, doubt or worry.

Cyndie and I enjoyed our hour or so with Pat, and a couple of months later, Pat went home to be with Jesus. The peace that held her day by day escorted her into eternity. Do you need the peace of God today?

**Reflection Question:** Do I have peace with God? If not, take a moment and ask Jesus to save you. You can't experience the peace of God until you have peace with God. Is there an area of your life that needs the peace of God? Ask Him to guard your heart with His peace!

**Prayer:** Father God, I thank You for the gift of Jesus. Jesus brings me peace with You so that I can experience the crazy peace that comes from You! Holy Spirit, help me to walk in the peace of God today! In Jesus Name! Amen!

**Day 10: Power In Weakness**



8 Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. 9 Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 10 That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. -2 Co 12:8-10 (NLT)

My oldest daughter has a rare blood disorder that causes the immune cells in her body to overreact. One of the frustrating things about this disorder is that she can eat a certain food one day and then her body would go into anaphylactic shock the next time she eats it. I can't tell you how many times we prayed and asked God to heal her body, and yet her disorder seemed like it was getting worse not better. Still we never gave up hope that God would heal her body.

Determined not to allow this to keep her from the things she felt God was calling her to, she pressed on, eventually earning her masters degree in social work and going on to become a fulltime therapist helping people heal emotionally. Like Paul, Mecaila is a strong person...it takes strength to push on, but she was only strong because she knew her weakness and looked for God's grace to give her strength.

I remember tearing up as I listened to Mecaila give her testimony during a women's gathering. She shared how dealing with this affliction actually brought her closer to the Lord. Although she was tempted at times to give up, She learned how to lean on God harder and how to trust Him deeper! Mecaila became strong because she was weak!

**Reflection Question:** Where are you weak today? Allow the grace of God to strengthen you. If you're feeling empty, ask the Holy Spirit to fill you up. God has the power you need to get through this!

**Prayer:** Father, today I give You my weaknesses and ask for Your strength. Thank You for Your grace in my life. I believe Your grace is enough for me! In Jesus name Amen!

**Day 11: Wait for the Lord**

14 Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord-Ps 27:14 (NLT)

Usually when I get around day 11 of my 21 days of prayer the enemy starts to mess with my mind especially if I'm believing God for a specific answer to prayer. In the words of the great "theologian" Tom Petty "The waiting is the hardest part."

Maybe you're waiting on an answer from the Lord. The psalmist tells us that patience is the key. God will answer, and His answer is always right. Pastor and Author Skip Heitzig says this about how God answers our prayers... "If the request isn't right, God says "no". If the timing isn't right, God says "slow". If you're not right, God says "grow." But if the request is right, the timing is right and you're right, God says "go". Whether it's a no, slow or grow, we know that God is working things out for our good and His glory!

So what should you do while you're patiently waiting on God? I like what Pastor and Author Craig Groeschel says. "A waiter serves, so worship while you wait!" While you're waiting, keep showing up to the prayer meeting, keep reading His Word, continue to attend church and use your gifts and talents to further the Kingdom of God!

Worship while you wait for God's answer and then worship Him with the same passion whether the answer is no, slow or go! Worship while you wait!

**Reflection Question:** Are you still waiting for God to answer a specific prayer? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you wait patiently. Has God already answered your prayer? No matter the outcome worship Him knowing that He knows what's best for you in this time!

**Prayer:** Father, I thank You that You always hear my prayer. I trust that You not only know what is best for me, You want what is best for me! Holy Spirit, help me to worship no matter what the answer is! In Jesus name!

**Day 12: Anchored in the Word**

61 Evil people try to drag me into sin, but I am firmly anchored to your instructions.  
Ps 119:61 (NLT)

The world is filled with all kinds of beliefs and ideologies that are contrary to God and His Word. The enemy uses these lies to confuse and tempt us ultimately dragging us away from God and into sin. James tells us that *“14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.” Jas 1:14–15 (NLT)*

As believers, it's vital that we stay centered in the Word of God. The psalmist describes God's Word as an anchor.

When my brother and I were younger we loved to go fishing. One time we went fishing on Lake Ontario. We were on a dock casting out into the lake, but nothing was really biting. We noticed that a few guys in a boat were catching fish. Feeling a bit discouraged, we were about to try another location, when my brother noticed that the bait shop nearby also rented row boats.

We pooled our money together and rented the boat! We were finally going to be able to get out to where the fish were biting. As we rowed out into the channel, we noticed that the current was getting stronger. Arriving at a spot that we thought looked good, we stopped but there was one small problem. No anchor! We tried to fish, but because the current was strong we kept drifting back towards the shore. We needed an anchor to keep the boat steady.

The Bible is our anchor...It keeps us steady when the storms of life hit us. It's strong enough to keep us steady when waves of temptation try to knock us over. It's powerful enough to withstand the currents of doubt and unbelief that try to pull us away from God's purpose and plan for us! God's word doesn't just secure us, it also guides us along the narrow path we're called to walk. Verse 105 tells us that God's Word is a "lamp to our feet and a light for our path". It anchors us in the storm, and it shows us which way we need to go! What a powerful gift we have in God's Word!

**Reflection Question:** Are you consistently reading God's Word? Start today by reading Mark Chapter 1!

**Prayer:** Father, Thank You for speaking to me through Your Word. Holy Spirit help me to understand and apply the Bible to my everyday life and use it to renew my mind and refresh my soul! In Jesus name Amen!

**Day 13: Keep Praying**

17 pray continually,-1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NIV)

Pray continually? The first time I read this scripture, I felt so defeated. At that time my prayers varied from thanking God for my food, to asking Him to help me find a good parking spot. I can recall many moments where I would try to pray before I drifted off to sleep. I would start off well, "Heavenly Father, thank You for this day..." But within minutes I would be fast asleep. How would I ever get to a place where I was "praying continually"...like all day long?

Maybe you're kind of asking the same questions. What I came to realize is that I need those quiet alone times with the Lord. (We all do). Jesus said... *6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*-Matthew 6:6 (NLT)

So you've got to find the place and time that works best for you and your schedule so you can have that uninterrupted alone time with the Lord. But hey, let's face it, you've got to get up and go to work or school, you've got a busy life to live, so how do you pray continually?

See, I was thinking that I could only pray a certain way...alone, no distractions, kneeling or pacing...but praying continually isn't about the "posture" of prayer... it's about the "practice" of prayer. Remember, prayer is having a conversation with God. I can do that at any time and in any place!

If you can't talk out loud...you can pray in your head (1 Thess 5:17; Philippians 4:6)  
If you're not sure what to pray...you can pray in the Spirit (1 Cor 14:4,14)  
You can listen to worship music and sing your prayers to God (1 Cor 14:15)

The point is that you can start to put into practice having small conversations with God throughout your day! The more we talk to God, the more we depend upon Him, trust Him, and obey Him!

**Reflection Question:** How often do you talk with God throughout your day? Set aside at least three times today where you talk with God while working or at school!

**Prayer:** Father, thank You that I can come to You in prayer at any time or place! Holy Spirit, help me to pray throughout my day today! In Jesus name Amen!

**Day 14: Can I get an Amen?**



20 For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means "Yes") ascends to God for his glory.  
-2 Co 1:20 (NLT)

I love hearing my grandchildren pray. The other day my 4 year old grandson Ezekiel was praying and asking Jesus to take away my wife's knee pain. He placed his hand on her knee and prayed "Jesus please heal my LaLa's leg amen!" The "amen" is the favorite part of his prayer, and like an oldschool evangelist he draws out the word AAAAAmenn!

The word "amen" literally means "so be it", or "let it be true" and it's found in both the Old and the New Testaments. Fun fact for you...because it was translated from Hebrew to Greek and then from Latin to English it's become a universal word and is considered to be the best known word in human speech!

(<https://studylight.org/lexicons/eng/greek/281.html>)

Theologian William Barclay writes... *(amen) "is the word that expresses our confidence that we can offer our prayers with every confidence to God and can appropriate with confidence all his great promises, because Jesus is the guarantee that our prayers will be heard and that all the great promises are true"*

Every time we say "amen" we're exercising faith in our Great Promise Keeping God! When our prayer is according to God's will, we can confidently stand upon His promises, and boldly ask God to "let it be so"! (1 John 5:14) Can I get an amen?

**Reflection Question:** What's one promise found in Scripture that you can pray and ask God to apply to your life today?

**Prayer:** Lord, today I stand on Your promises. Holy Spirit, help me to pray according to God's will and Word! In Jesus name AMEN!

## Week 3: Eyes Fixed on Jesus

## **Day 15: God is my Refuge & Strength**

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.-Ps 46:1 (ESV)

When I was teaching Bible at a large Christian school in Long Island City, Queens, my commute from the Bronx was about an hour and change (on a good day). In order to be on time, I would have to leave about thirty minutes early to catch the bus that would bring me to the train. One morning I woke up late (don't judge me) and rushed out the door without checking the weather...You know where this is going right? The commute to work was fine, but as the day went along the sky was getting darker. By the time I was leaving school, it was a torrential downpour.

It was one of those NYC rains that come at you from every angle, you know the kind that flips your umbrella inside out as soon as you step outside, only I didn't even have my umbrella that day. Soaked to the bone and freezing, there was nothing I could do except try to run those 4 or 5 blocks to the train station and find shelter.

We face spiritual and physical storms in this life. Sometimes they seem to come out of nowhere, creating a sense of insecurity and instability within our hearts. The Psalmist reminds us that in these times, God is our refuge. He is our shelter from the storm. He's our safe place to run to. But He's not just our shelter, He's our strength. He enables us to overcome the storm by His Spirit! This makes God "our very present help in trouble." God is not only available to us, but He wants us to run to Him at any time! So the next time that a storm comes out of "nowhere", know and understand that God is "now here", He meets us right in the middle, and He will see us through!

**Reflection Question:** When a storm seems to come from nowhere, how fast do you run to God? Remember that although the storm can shake us, it can't remove us from His presence!

**Prayer:** Lord, thank You that You are my refuge and strength! Thank You that You are always available for me to run to. Holy Spirit please give me the power I need to get through this day. In Jesus name. Amen!

## **Day 16: Fix your eyes on Jesus**

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.-Heb 12:1–2 (NIV)

The race we run as Christians isn't a sprint it's a marathon. Theologian Stanley Horton writes... "This race is the lifelong test of faith in this world, it must be run with perseverance, with patience and endurance. The way of victory is the same as that of the saints in chapter 11-pressing on to the finish line"

As a runner in a race fixes their eyes on the finish line, we need to fix our eyes on Jesus. If you don't fix your eyes on the target you're eventually going to go off course. When I was in high school, I was recruited for the track team. My coach wanted me to run the 400 meter hurdles. One time during practice, I was about half way through my race when I noticed some friends sitting on the bleachers. The next thing I knew I was crashing into one of the hurdles. I had only taken my eyes off the finish line for a split second, but that's all it took to wipe out. As you can imagine all of my friends had a good laugh at my expense! In order to fix our eyes on Jesus, we must constantly look away from things that will distract us.

Jesus is our ultimate example of what it means to persevere with patience and endurance. He completely trusted the Father and was submitted to His will. He prayed in all situations, overcoming temptations and suffering and completed everything that He was called to do. Our life of faith requires focus. The good news is that because Jesus was victorious we already have the victory! The Apostle Paul says it like this...6 And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.-Phillipians 1:6 (NLT)

God is going to help us finish the race...We need only keep our eyes fixed on Him!

**Reflection Question:** What things are distracting me from running with Jesus?

**Prayer:** Lord, today I'm fixing my eyes on You! Forgive me for allowing these distractions to slow me down. Holy Spirit, help me to focus on Jesus today. In Jesus name Amen!

**Day 17: Wait on the Lord**

31 but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.-Is 40:31 (NIV)

The Hebrew word for hope is *qâvâh* (kaw-vaw') It means to wait, to look for, to hope or to expect. Former Missionary to Brazil and author Donald C. Stamps wrote *"To hope in the Lord is to trust him fully with our lives; it involves looking to him as our source of help and grace in time of need"*

Although the context is a promise for Israel while they were in captivity, the promise is for all who hope in the Lord. Let's break it down

**Our strength will be renewed.** In other words, as we grow weary during times of trial or suffering, God will supernaturally give us fresh strength as we need it! Remember when God raised up Gideon to save His people from the Midianites? He said "go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand" (see Judges 6:14) in other words God gave Gideon the strength he needed, Gideon needed to trust God.

**We will soar like eagles.** This means that because our hope is in the Lord, He will give us the ability to rise above our difficulties and circumstances. Remember when Babylon invaded Judah & Jerusalem? Among those brought into captivity were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Although these young men were given pagan names and forced to learn the religion of Babylon, their hope remained in the Lord. As a result, God gave them favor and promoted them, using them to influence an entire nation. When they refused to eat the King's food, or bow down to idols, God was with them and they soared above those trials!

**We will walk and not tire, run and not faint.** What is Isaiah saying? He's saying that when we hope in the Lord, God will give us the spiritual strength we need to keep running the race, to keep walking with the Lord. We need to keep trusting in Him, knowing that He will provide whatever we need for the journey. Isaiah writes in the very next chapter... *10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Is 41:10 (NIV)* Putting your hope in the Lord doesn't just bring us stability, it strengthens us everyday and in every way!

**Reflection Question:** Are you feeling weak or weary? Ask the Lord for strength

**Prayer:** Lord, thank You for your supernatural strength. Holy Spirit, help me to walk in Your strength today! In Jesus name! Amen!

**Day 18: Joy in His presence**

11 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 (ESV)

In January of 2007 I traveled with a small missions team to Congo Africa. The missionaries we were working with had built a large ministry that included a local church, feeding programs and a Bible school to train up future pastors and leaders. They also started a mission that rescued women out of a life of prostitution, gave them a place to live, and free education. When our team arrived, our main objective was to put the finishing touches on the newly built women's dormitory. I could write page after page about that experience, but one of the things that struck me the most was the joy of the Lord that was flowing from each person that I met.

There's a big difference between being happy and having joy. Happiness is a feeling that is based upon our circumstances. Joy is a reality based in our relationship with Jesus. As I walked around that campus I noticed a lot of things that were not "happy" things. I met men and women whose families were destroyed from years of war. I met wives who were widowed, and children who were orphaned. I met women who were forced into drug addiction and then forced to sell their bodies on the street. Yet you wouldn't know that they were living through such hard circumstances.

They had joy because they had Jesus. Holocaust survivor Corrie Ten-Boom wrote *"You may never know that JESUS is all you need, until JESUS is all you have."*

King David lets us in on a little secret about joy. Because joy is found in Jesus, we can choose to have it now in this life, in any circumstance, because God is with us and will never leave us. But wait there's more! We also get to experience joy for all eternity! We can have joy now and joy forever more because of Jesus!

You may not feel "happy" today, but you can choose to have joy. My kids used to sing "I've got that joy, joy, joy, down in my heart, down in my heart, down in my heart to stay! And I'm so happy, so very happy, I've got the love of Jesus down in my heart"

Your circumstances may not make you happy, but fix your eyes on Jesus, and He'll give you joy!

**Reflection Question:** Are you chasing after happiness or choosing to have joy?

**Prayer:** Lord, Your Word reminds me that because I have You, I can choose to have joy. Holy Spirit, make me aware of Your presence today! In Jesus name. Amen!

**Day 19: God's working it all out**

28 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.-Ro 8:28 (NIV)

Many people think that this scripture means that life will always be good. You only have to live life for a little while to know that's just not true. Sometimes life hits hard. 2014 was one of those years. It started out good. We officially launched Newsong Church in March and saw instant "success." In May I was ordained with the Assemblies of God, and in June our son Michael graduated from high school.

At the same time there were things going on that weren't good. My younger brother David was losing his battle with cancer. The surgery that he so desperately needed was not going to work, unfortunately the cancer was spreading. I remember feeling the roller coaster of emotions as we saw people coming to Jesus every Sunday! It was awesome...life was good!

But then on Monday life wasn't good. We would cry and worry as we traveled up to Syracuse NY to see my brother. This went on for about a month, life was good and not good at the same time, and then on July 24th 2014 my little brother passed away.

All things aren't good in life, but God works all things out for the good. As I reflect back on that season of life, I see how God was at work through it all. The cancer diagnosis was bad but because of it, my brother accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. That's good!

Although we prayed and asked Jesus to heal his body, David's body died. That's not good for us, but it was awesome for David. Right now at this very moment he is in heaven, no more tears or pain, he's healed and whole, that's very good!

Before David's illness, my family was a hot mess, most of my siblings were estranged from one another, that's not good. But during that time, God was at work and God used his illness to bring our family back together, that's good! Before David's illness, most of my family wasn't saved. They each had their "own beliefs" and didn't want to talk about the way of salvation. That's not good. But during David's battle, they began to see the subtle changes in him as the Holy Spirit was working in his life. They saw the joy he had, they saw how his faith was growing, and the peace that only comes from knowing Jesus. As a result, many of them accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior! That's very good!

This is just one example of how God was working things out for the good...I have hundreds, and if you know Jesus as Lord and Savior so do you!

I'm not sure what season you're going through right now, like that particular season I was in, it may be up and down. But know this...God is working it out for your good and His glory! May that be an encouragement to you today!

**Reflection Question:** Stop and make a quick list of how many times God has worked something out for your good and His glory! Spend some time thanking Him!

**Prayer:** Father, thank You for working things out for the good even when I don't understand it at the moment. Holy Spirit, help me trust that the Lord is working things out in every season. In Jesus name. Amen!

### **Day 20: Be on your guard**

13 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.-1 Co 16:13 (NIV)

Quite a few years back there was a series of pranks going on in our upstate NY neighborhood. Teens were not only playing "ding, dong, ditch" at 1 or 2am but they were also keying cars, and egging houses among other things.

One night around 3am they rang our doorbell. Not only did Cyndie and I jump out of bed...all of our kids were startled awake. By the time I got to the door the pranksters were gone. It happened again the next night, only this time just after midnight. Determined not to let it happen again, I decided the next night to stay up. I sat in front of our bay window watching and waiting. As the night progressed I could feel my eyes getting heavy, but I stood guard wanting to ensure that my family was going to be safe. Lucky for them, the pranksters never returned, and our home was peaceful (or as peaceful as it can be with 5 children) again.

The enemy of our soul wants to catch us while we're asleep. Pastor and author Greg Laurie writes "*The devil is never too busy to rock the cradle of a sleeping saint.*" He wants to lull us to sleep. When we're spiritually sleepy is when he can do the most damage.

All through the Bible we're commanded to "stay awake." We need to guard hearts and minds from the wicked schemes of the enemy. In order for us to stand firm, we need to hold on to God's Word and continually apply it to our lives! We need to stay connected to God through prayer, and connected to one another in our church community. This is how we fight our battles!

**Reflection Question:** Is there an area of your spiritual life where you're starting to get sleepy?

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to stand firm in my faith and to guard my heart and mind in any and every situation. Holy Spirit, remind me that I have everything I need to live this life to the fullest, and help me to put on my armor everyday! In Jesus name. Amen!

### **Day 21: Victory in Jesus**

15 He said, "Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid! Don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God's-2 Ch 20:15 (NLT)

You did it! It's been 21 days of fixing your eyes on Jesus! So what do we do for tomorrow and the next day, and the next? When King Jehoshaphat prayed that he didn't know what to do, Jesus said "don't be afraid, don't be discouraged, the battle is not yours but Gods". The same message is true for you and I today! Jesus has the victory...and we don't have to face our battles in our own strength but with God's power. That should be an encouragement to us and help us face tomorrow!

Do you know what King Jehoshaphat did after he received Jesus' message? He bowed down and worshiped. The very next day he followed the Lord's direction and assembled his army against the enemy. And then they worshiped again! *21 After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the Lord and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang: "Give thanks to the Lord; his faithful love endures forever!"-2 Ch 20:21 (NLT)*

In the same way we have to face each day with a heart of worship. We need to praise Jesus through each storm that comes our way and know that He already has the victory! So that's what I want you to do!

You may still be in a battle...keep worshiping. *"Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power" (Eph 6:10 (NIV)* When we have our eyes fixed on Jesus we can face tomorrow with confidence, knowing that the battle is His!

**Reflection Question:** What have you learned during these 21 days?

**Prayer:** Lord, thank You that battle is Yours! Holy Spirit, help me to keep my eyes on Jesus, and help me to face tomorrow with confidence knowing that in You I am victorious! In Jesus name! Amen!



