

Week 2: 21 Days of Prayer

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*Day 8: What are you **hungering** for?*

Scripture: Psalm 63:1

“O God, you are my God. I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water.”

Hear the cry of Jesus’ heart when He tells a lost and weary crowd to come to him in the midst of their brokenness: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Have you ever felt a weariness that was so painfully present in your life? I once heard that trials are blessings in disguise.

Being in a place where the only place to turn is Jesus is one of the most blessed places that I have found there to be. In fact, Jesus says during his sermon on the mount, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Are we seeing the theme throughout the Bible of God’s character? Our weakness inevitably drives us to yearn for the one who holds all power; but also all comfort.

What better place to run to than The One who sees you, delights in you and loves you more than anyone ever could? So again I pose the question, what are you hungering for? Because truly, nothing in this world will ever satisfy your hunger except for the Living God Himself.

Verses for further study and encouragement: Matthew 11:28, Jeremiah 2:13, Psalm 73

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

You are El Roi, the God who sees me. God, I thank you for the gift of weakness in my life that drives me closer to you. Help me to seek you in every moment and to lay all of my burdens down at Your feet, knowing that You are the one who satisfies all of my needs. God, protect me from fleeting pleasures that try to capture my attention and lure me into worldly pursuits. But like the psalmist says in chapter 73, “whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides You.” God let that be the cry of my heart everyday. Let your Spirit fill my every

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need and help me to share that light with those you place in my path everyday. God I am so grateful for you, and I praise you for all that you are and all that you have done.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Day 9: For it is not by might, nor by power...

Scripture: Zechariah 4:6

*“So he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by **my Spirit**,’ says the LORD Almighty.”*

One of the most liberating and humbling factors in the Christian walk, is that God is the one who empowers us.. it is not of our own accord. When Moses was called by the Lord through his encounter with God at the burning bush, he had been in a place of weakness, along with feelings of unworthiness.

Amidst Moses running from his mistakes and hiding from his past, God came to him 40 years later with an assignment that did not match what he perceived as possible for him to accomplish. And in that sense, he was right. Moses could not accomplish the task of freeing the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt, but GOD could.

Countless times that I have felt so weak and broken beyond the ability to be used by God, he has come through, displaying His power through my weakness. If the feelings of incapability resonate with you, I have good news; you are in good company today. Just take a look at the Hall of Faith in Hebrews!

Those who realize the weakness of their humanness, and that without divine strength they cannot accomplish God’s purposes, are the ones whom God LOVES to display His power through.

Verses for further study and encouragement: Ephesians 3:20, John 15:5, Hebrews Chapter 11

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you. Thank you that you don’t need me, yet you choose to include me in your plans and purposes. God forgive me for trying to accomplish things on my own strength when your word so clearly states throughout scripture that only through abiding in you I am able to accomplish your purposes. Help me to cling to you in everything I do, and to lean into your presence and your Spirit throughout my day. God I thank you for your mighty power inside me, that is able to accomplish infinitely more than I could ask, think, or even imagine. What an awesome and majestic God that I get to be in communion with!

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In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Day 10: The God of New Beginnings

Scripture: Isaiah 43:16

“I am the LORD, who opened a way through the waters, making a dry path through the sea.”

Some seasons in our lives can make us wonder, “When will this end? Will there ever be a way out? Does God see me and really hear my cries?” The Israelites were quite literally oppressed and in bondage, with no way out. They cried out to the Lord for deliverance, and He **heard** them.

What a wonder and an awe, to be heard by God. But I want to point something out in scripture that really stuck out to me when reading about their deliverance. After stating that the Israelites were groaning for help and that God heard them, verse 25 states that God “looked down on the people of Israel and knew it **was time to act**”.

God knows exactly when the right time is in our own personal stories to act and to make a way where there seems to be no way out. And like we see in verse 19, “For I am about to do something new, See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.”

I understand the pain of wanting a certain time in my life to hurry to the next chapter, but to trust in the Lord’s timing and ability to move in my life in a way that I never could have on my own, is worth the wait. So I encourage you to keep hoping in the God of not only new beginnings, but perfect timing.

Verses for further study and encouragement: Isaiah 60:22, Exodus 2:24-25

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

You are the Lord of Hosts, the one who has full authority and power. How amazing it is that I get to encounter you daily, because of the unfathomable sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus. Thank you for going through such long lengths to save and rescue me. God you have already done enough by sending your son to rescue me from the dry wasteland of separation from you. Yet, you desire to continually make new pathways in my life. At the right time, **You** will make it happen. Lord let your praise never leave my lips. You are so worthy, now and forever.

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Day 11: As far as the East is to the West

Scripture: Psalm 103:12

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

Our human nature tends to cling to actions as a means of righteousness. It is hard to fathom such a love that Christ displayed for us on the cross, and He did this without receiving our “yes” first. What kind of grace, what kind of God? A God who loves his people unto sacrificial death. If you’re anything like me, when you read the verse that states as far as the east is to the west, does your mind go to “well where does that stop? There has to be an end point to that distance.”

East and West are opposite directions that never meet, representing an immeasurable, endless expanse, making the removal of sin absolute. This verse implies that our sins have been removed **completely**. When we ask God for forgiveness, he doesn’t keep it in his mind. Like we see in Hebrews 8:12, “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”

One of the most common tactics of the enemy is to keep reminding us of our sins and downfalls. But God does not want his children to live in shame. This type of love from an Almighty and Holy God is something that will always amaze me. And as a result of this, we are drawn to the kindness of God.

Like it says, God’s **kindness** leads us to repentance. Through knowing this love, we are able to walk in accordance to His will, which isn’t burdensome. Because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts, we are able to turn from our sins and walk righteously, knowing he has cast our sins as far as the East is to the West through our Savior Jesus Christ.

Verses for further study and encouragement: Romans 2:4, 1 John 5:3, 1 John 1:9, Romans 5:5

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I surrender to you. I thank you for the gift of your unfathomable grace. Father please protect me from slipping into earthly mindsets, thinking anything I can do will get you to accept me more than You already do. Let me move in tune with your Holy Spirit, and continually abide in Your

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love. God, I pray that you would give me strength to stand against the enemy's lies, and to live out my life from a place of Jesus' victory over my sins.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 12: Do you have an Even If Faith?

Scripture: Daniel 3:18

“But even if he does not, we want you to know, your majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is one of my favorites for so many reasons. The dedication of these three Hebrew men to the Lord to the point of a potential horrific death, displays the purity of their faith and **love** for God.

King Nebuchadnezzar had commanded them to be thrown into the blazing furnace, because they refused to worship any other god than the one true God. Even though they did not know the outcome, if God was actually going to rescue them, they stood firm and unwavering in their faith because they had a deep love for God. It wasn't transactional.

Many times in our walk with the Lord, our faith will be tested. Do we love God because of what He can give us, or do we just simply love him because of who He **is**? God is after your **heart**, and He is too good of a God to allow us to think anything other than Him will satisfy us.

I love that the use of fire is displayed in this story because it is a literal reflection of how our faith is **refined**. Like we see in 1 Peter 1:7, “These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.”

So I encourage you to take heart; the trials in your life can be the fingerprints of a loving Father's hand, refining your faith to become a true and pure, **even if** faith.

Verses for further study and encouragement: Isaiah 43:2, Hebrews 12:5-11

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, you are the only one worthy of my praise. Lord forgive me for when I have turned to anything other than you for my comfort. Thank you for being so kind and loving towards me, and for your constant pursuit of my heart. God, let my faith be purified to a true and authentic **even if** faith. God, I pray that you would open my eyes to see how you are working in my life and strengthening my faith.

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Day 13: The antidote to worry

Scripture: Proverbs 20:24

“The Lord directs our steps, so why try to understand everything along the way?”

It’s almost impossible to not breathe a sigh of relief after reading this verse. Countless times the Lord has brought me back to this verse, urging me to relinquish control and trust the outcome into his hands.

As finite humans, we were not created to understand every single thing that happens in our lives and what lies ahead of us. God created us in such a way that we would be dependent on him for every step. Like we see in Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path” God gives us just enough light to see the next step in front of us. He does this because he knows our human nature, and he knows we will try to get ahead of Him. When we are walking in full dependance on God, we are looking to him to help us take each step into his perfect will.

This is especially difficult for those like me, who struggle with perfectionism and the tendency to overthink. We want to know exactly what is happening and why. But what if I told you that you truly don’t need to know? Because God *knows*. And God can be *trusted*. That is exactly why Proverbs 3:5-6 tell us plainly to not lean on our own understanding, and that as long as we acknowledge him, he *will* direct our steps.

I once heard a quote from Tony Evans that has stuck with me since: “Nothing slips through God’s fingers.” What a beautiful and simple analogy. We can trust that whatever is happening in our life, it has already been sifted through God’s fingers. What He allows is part of his ultimate plan. It may not make sense now, but we can trust that God is in the middle of weaving together something beautiful. So I urge you to not *worry*, because God already has the outcome in his hands. We must simply trust His character.

Verses for further study and encouragement: James 4:15, Proverbs 16:33, Romans 8:28, Job 42:2

Prayer:

Dear mighty and sovereign God, I first and foremost just want to praise you for who You are. Thank you for the gift of reconciliation to you through your son Jesus. God help me not to worry,

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and to remember daily that you are in ultimate control. God I know that no purpose of yours can be thwarted, help me to live in that truth confidently. When worries arise, Holy Spirit guide me in what your word says. God I pray for an unshakable faith, and I thank you that you are always working in my life for your glory. I look forward to seeing Your plan unfold.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 14: God's Sovereignty over our Suffering

Scripture: Genesis 50:20

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

The sovereignty of God is not to be taken lightly. It is to be savored and meditated on, and should draw us to an even deeper wonder and awe of our Creator.

The sovereignty of God has gotten me through some of my most challenging seasons, because I know that there is purpose in it. Like we read in yesterday's devotional, nothing slips past God's fingers. If he is not removing our suffering, it means he is using it for good; to accomplish something greater than we could imagine.

Joseph suffered for 13 years before he ever saw why God allowed it. But in the end, he was able to confidently declare that God intended it all for an even greater purpose; the saving of many lives. God used Joseph's hardship to bring about good to not only himself but to many others. He knew that Joseph had to be placed in Egypt at that very moment in order to work through him and save others from perishing due to a widespread famine. Who could have possibly known that other than God?

A way I like to visualize God's sovereignty is like being able to see a parade from beginning to end, having an overhead view of the entire event. We can not see the beginning to the end, we only see what is right in front of us. But God sees the entirety of it; so he is able to act accordingly. That is why we cannot possibly understand what God is up to by just seeing our current circumstance. That is why the Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians, "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

And we can stand confidently on God's promise in Romans 8:28, that He works *everything* for the good of those who love Him, and are called according to His purpose. So I exhort you, believer, to trust fully in the Lord. Your hope will not be disappointed.

Verses for further study and encouragement: Isaiah 54:17, Habakkuk 2:3, Isaiah 60:22, Isaiah 55:8-9

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Dear Heavenly Father,

You are always good and your purposes are unshakable. I thank you that I have the privilege of trusting You, and knowing that the author of my story is working and is on my side. God help me to stand firm against feelings of doubt and insecurity. Let me live a life fully surrendered to your will, trusting that You alone have the best outcome in your hands. God I pray that you would develop and grow a sense of awe in me over your sovereignty, and that I would constantly meditate on you throughout my days.

In Jesus' name, Amen.