



Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

M A Y 2 0 2 4

FRESH START

Devotionals



Host
**Rev. Sam
Oye** ◀





Dear friend, "Fresh start" devotional is a transformative resource designed to provide readers with daily inspiration and guidance as they start or continue in their walk with God. The devotional is specifically crafted to help individuals establish a personal connection with the Holy Spirit by providing fresh insights into well-known biblical passages. By actively engaging the devotional, readers will discover renewed hope and a revitalized perspective on their relationship with God.

The "Fresh Start" Bible Devotional focuses on fostering personal growth, maturity, and transformation in readers' life journey. It offers foundational teachings, character formation, personal and transformation growth. It encourages growth, and provides tools for goal setting and progress tracking. It also recommends additional resources for further study. Through this, readers will embark on a purposeful and intentional path of life development, equipping them to grow in their faith, live out biblical principles, and become transformed individuals who reflect the love and grace of God in their daily lives.

Get ready for an awesome moment of refreshing.



THE VALLEY OF PAISE

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On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berakah. [2 Chronicles 20:26](#)

Poet William Cowper struggled with depression much of his life. After a suicide attempt, he was committed to an asylum. But it was there through the care of a Christian physician that Cowper came to a warm, vital faith in Jesus. Soon afterwards, Cowper became acquainted with pastor and hymnwriter John Newton, who encouraged him to collaborate on a hymnal for their church. Among the hymns Cowper wrote was "God Moves in a Mysterious Way," which contains these words pressed from the crucible of experience: "You fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds you so much dread, are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head."

Like Cowper, the people of Judah also met God's kindness unexpectedly. As an alliance of armies invaded their nation, King Jehoshaphat gathered the people for prayer. As Judah's army marched out, men in the front ranks praised God (2 Chronicles 20:21). The invading armies turned on themselves, and "no one . . . escaped. . . There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it" (vv. 24-25).

On the fourth day, the very place where a hostile invading force gathered against God's people was dubbed the Valley of Berakah (v. 26)—literally, "the valley of praise" or "blessing." What a change! God's mercy can turn even our most difficult valleys into places of praise as we give them to Him.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

How have you seen God bring good out of difficulty in your life?

What can you thank Him for today?

I praise You, loving God, that no valley is deeper than Your love

Daily Bible Reading: Colossians 4



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GOD IS MY HELPER

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The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. [Hebrews 13:6](#)

My friend Raleigh is sprinting toward his eighty-fifth birthday! Since my first conversation with him more than thirty-five years ago, he's been a source of inspiration. When he recently mentioned that since retiring, he'd completed a book manuscript and started another ministry initiative—I was intrigued but not surprised.

At eighty-five, Caleb in the Bible wasn't ready to stop either. His faith and devotion to God had sustained him through decades of wilderness living and wars to secure the inheritance God had promised Israel. He said, "I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then" (Joshua 14:11). By what means would he conquer? Caleb declared that by "the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said" (v. 12).

Regardless of age, stage in life, or circumstances, God will help all who wholeheartedly trust Him. In Jesus our Savior who helps us, God was made visible. The Gospel books inspire faith in God through what we see in Christ. He demonstrated God's care and compassion for all who looked to Him for help. As the writer of Hebrews acknowledged, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid" (Hebrews 13:6). Young or old, weak or strong, bound or free, sprinting or limping—what's keeping us from asking for His help today?

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

Who has inspired your faith in God?

How do you see God as your source of help in all things?

Almighty God, please help me to see You as my source of help in all circumstances.

Daily Bible Reading: 1Thes. 1



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PRAY AND WATCH



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Pray in the Spirit on all occasions . . . be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. [Ephesians 6:18](#)

When fighting spiritual battles, believers in Jesus should take prayer seriously. A Florida woman found out how dangerous it can be, however, to practice it unwisely. When she prayed, she closed her eyes. But while driving one day and praying (with eyes shut!), she failed to stop at a stop sign, flew through an intersection, and went offroad into a homeowner's yard. She then tried unsuccessfully to back off the lawn. Though not injured, she was given a police citation for reckless driving and property damage. This prayer warrior missed a key part of Ephesians 6:18 - be alert.

As part of the whole armor of God in Ephesians 6, the apostle Paul includes two final pieces. First, we should fight spiritual battles with prayer. This means praying in the Spirit—relying on His power. Also, resting in His guidance and responding to His promptings—praying all kinds of prayers on all occasions (v. 18). Second, Paul encouraged us to "be alert." Spiritual alertness can aid us in being prepared for Jesus' return (Mark 13:33), gaining victory over temptation (14:38), and interceding for other believers (Ephesians 6:18).

As we fight spiritual battles daily, let's permeate our lives with a "pray and watch" approach—combating evil powers and piercing the darkness with the light of Christ.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

How can having a "pray and watch" mindset help you fight spiritual battles?
What does it mean for you to stay spiritually alert?

Dear God, please help me to watch and pray for myself and others.

Daily Bible Reading: 1Thes. 2



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EYES TO SEE


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... will make you to be a covenant for the people and ... to open eyes that are blind. [Isaiah 42:6-7](#)

Genevieve had to be the "eyes" for her three children, each born with congenital cataracts. Whenever she took them into their village in the Republic of Benin of Western Africa, she strapped the baby onto her back and held on to the arm and hand of her older two, always looking for danger. In a culture where blindness was thought to be caused by witchcraft, Genevieve despaired and cried out to God for help.

Then a man from her village told her about Mercy Ships, a ministry that provides vital surgeries to honor Jesus' model of bringing hope and healing to the poor. Uncertain if they could help, she approached them. When the children woke up after their surgeries, they could see!

God's story has always been about coming alongside those shrouded in darkness and bringing His light. The prophet Isaiah declared that God would be "a light for the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:6). He would "open eyes that are blind" (v. 7), restoring not only physical sight but spiritual vision as well. And He promised to "take hold" of His people's hand (v. 6). He restored sight to the blind and brought light to those living in the darkness.

If you feel overcome by darkness, cling to hope as you embrace the promises of our loving Father while asking for His light to bring illumination.

Have a blessed day!

 REFLECT & PRAY

How has God opened your eyes, physically or spiritually?
How can He remove the blinders you may have?

*Heavenly Father, You desire that no one would live in darkness.
 Release Your love on those who are blinded in any way, that they might see.*

Daily Bible Reading: 1Thes. 3



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SINGING MEADOWS

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The valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing. [Psalm 65:13](#)

I've often affectionately joked with my friend about his ability to talk to his dogs. He responds to their barks with loving understanding. Perhaps now he and dog owners everywhere will also listen for their canine pals to laugh. Scientists have discovered that many animals, including dogs, cows, foxes, seals, and parakeets, all have "vocal play signals"—otherwise known as laughter. Identifying these accompanying sounds helps distinguish an animal's play behaviors from what might otherwise look like fighting to a human observer.

That animals express laughter and joy, gives us a delightful glimmer of what it might look like for other parts of creation to praise God in their own way. As King David looked over his surroundings, it seemed to him "the hills [were] clothed with gladness" and the meadows and valleys were "[shouting] for joy" (Psalm 65:12-13). David recognized that God had cared for and enriched the land, providing both beauty and sustenance.

Even though our physical surroundings don't "sing" in a literal way, they bear witness to God's active work in His creation and, in turn, invite us to give praise to Him with our voices. May we—as part of the "whole earth"—be "filled with awe at [His] wonders" and respond to Him with "songs of joy" (v. 8). We can trust that He'll hear and understand them.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

How do your physical surroundings encourage you to praise God?
Where have you seen His handiwork elsewhere?

Thank You, God, for Your continued work in creation.

Daily Bible Reading: 1Thes. 4



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GOD'S AGENT OF PEACE

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The Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." [Acts 23:11](#)

Nora went to the peaceful protest because she felt strongly about the issue of justice. As planned, the demonstration was silent. The protestors walked in powerful quietness through the downtown area.

Then two buses pulled up. Agitators had arrived from out of town. A riot soon broke out. Heartbroken, Nora left. It seemed their good intentions were fruitless.

When the apostle Paul visited the temple at Jerusalem, people who opposed Paul saw him there. They were "from the province of Asia" (Acts 21:27) and viewed Jesus as a threat to their way of life. Shouting lies and rumors about Paul, they quickly stirred up trouble (vv. 28-29). A mob dragged Paul from the temple and beat him. Soldiers came running.

As he was being arrested, Paul asked the Roman commander if he could address the crowd (vv. 37-38). When permission was granted, he spoke to the crowd in their own language, surprising them and seizing their attention (v. 40). And just like that, Paul had turned a riot into an opportunity to share his story of rescue from dead religion (22:2-21).

Some people love violence and division. Don't lose heart. They will not win. God is looking for courageous believers to share His light and peace with our desperate world. What seems like a crisis might be your opportunity to show someone God's love.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

When have you been in a crisis that you couldn't make sense of?
How do you think the Holy Spirit might help you find the wisdom
for what to do in that moment?

*Father, my heart aches for our broken world. Help me realize Your Spirit's
presence is far more powerful than any attack the world can throw at me.*

Daily Bible Reading: 1Thes. 5



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THE GOD OF ORDER


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The earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. [Genesis 1:2NRSV](#)

Seth took all the medications he could find in the medicine cabinet. Raised in a family filled with brokenness and disorder, his life was a mess. His mom was regularly abused by his father until his dad took his own life. Now Seth wanted to "just end" his own. But then a thought came to mind, *where do I go when I die?* By God's grace, Seth didn't die that day. And in time, after studying the Bible with a friend, he received Jesus as his Savior. Part of what drew Seth to God was seeing the beauty and order in creation. He said, "I . . . see things that are just beautiful. Someone made all this."

In Genesis 1, we read of the God who indeed created all things. And although "the earth was in complete chaos" (v. 2 NRSV), He brought order out of disorder. He "separated the light from the darkness" (v. 4), placed land amid the seas (v. 10), and made plants and creatures according to their "kinds" (vv. 11-12, 21, 24-25). The One who "created the heavens and earth and put everything in place" (Isaiah 45:18 NLT) continues to, as Seth discovered, bring peace and order to lives surrendered to Christ.

Life can be chaotic and challenging. Praise God that He's not "a God of disorder but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Let's call out to Him today and ask Him to help us find the beauty and order He alone provides.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

What chaos are you experiencing in your life?
How can God help you bring order and peace to it?

*Creator God, thank You for the peace and order You alone provide.
In You, broken things become beautiful.*

Daily Bible Reading: 2Thes. 1



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GOD KNOWS OUR NEEDS



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Seek the Kingdom of God above all else. NLT

Lando, a *jeepney* (a form of public transport in the Philippines) driver in Manila, gulped down coffee at a roadside stall. Daily commuters were back again after the Covid-19 lockdowns. *And the sports event today means more passengers, he thought. I'll get back lost income. Finally, I can stop worrying.*

He was about to start driving when he spotted Ronnie on a bench nearby. The street sweeper looked troubled, like he needed to talk. *But every minute counts*, Lando thought. *The more passengers, the more income. I can't linger.* But he sensed that God wanted him to approach Ronnie, so he did.

Jesus understood how difficult it is not to worry (Matthew 6:25-27), so He assures us that our heavenly Father knows exactly what we need (v. 32). We're reminded not to be anxious, but to trust Him and devote ourselves to doing what He wants us to do (vv. 31-33). As we embrace and obey His purposes, we can have confidence that our Father who "clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire" will provide for us according to His will—just as He provides for all creation (v. 30).

Because of Lando's conversation with Ronnie, the street sweeper eventually prayed to become a believer in Christ. "And God still provided enough passengers that day," Lando shared. "He reminded me my needs were His concern, mine was simply to follow Him."

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

What anxieties weigh on your heart?

What steps can you take to surrender your cares to God?

Dear God, I don't need to worry because You've promised to care and provide for me.

Daily Bible Reading: 2Thes. 2



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AT HOME IN JESUS


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If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me. [John 14:3](#)

"There's no place like home," says Dorothy, clicking the heels of her ruby slippers. In *The Wizard of Oz*, that was all it took to magically transport Dorothy and Toto from Oz back to their home in Kansas.

Unfortunately, there aren't enough ruby slippers for everyone. Although many share Dorothy's longing for home, finding that home—a place to belong—is sometimes easier said than done.

One of the consequences of living in a highly mobile, transient world is a sense of detachment—wondering if we'll ever find a place where we truly belong. This feeling may also reflect a deeper reality, expressed by C. S. Lewis: "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

The night before the cross, Jesus assured His friends of that home, saying, "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you, I am going there to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:2). A home where we are welcomed and loved.

Yet we can be at home now too. We're part of a family—God's church, and we live in community with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Until the day Jesus takes us to the home our hearts long for, we can live in His peace and joy. We're always home with Him.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

What makes you feel at home and why?

How does knowing Jesus will take you to be with Him forever help you live here on earth?

God of love and grace, help me look forward to being at home with You, in Your presence, forever.

Daily Bible Reading: 2Thes. 3



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READY TO GO FOR GOD



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I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. [Ephesians 4:1](#)

The book *Hidden Figures* recounts preparations for John Glenn's flight into space. Computers were newfangled inventions in 1962, subject to glitches. Glenn didn't trust them and worried about calculations for the launch. He knew one brainy woman in the back room could run the numbers. He trusted her. "If she says the numbers are good," Glenn said, "I'm ready to go."

Katherine Johnson was a teacher and mother of three. She loved Jesus and served in her church. God had blessed Katherine with a remarkable mind. NASA tapped her in the late 1950s to help with the space program. She was Glenn's "brainy woman," one of the "human computers" they hired at the time.

We may not be called to be brilliant mathematicians, but God calls us to other things: "To each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (Ephesians 4:7). We're to "live a life worthy of the calling" we've received (v. 1). We're part of one body, in which "each part does its work" (v. 16).

Katherine Johnson's calculations confirmed the course trajectory. Glenn's launch into orbit was like "hitting a bull's-eye." But this was just one of Katherine's callings. Remember, she was called also to be a mother, teacher, and church worker. We might ask ourselves what God has called us to, whether big or small. Are we "ready to go," exercising the grace-gifts He's bestowed, living "a life worthy of [our] calling" (v. 1)?

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

What has God called you to do?
How has He gifted you?

Dear God, please help me embrace what You've given me and live a life worthy of Your calling.

Daily Bible Reading: 1Timothy 1



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CHOICES MATTERS

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There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death. [Proverbs 14:12](#)

Pastor Damian's schedule included hospital visits to two people nearing death who'd chosen two different life paths. In one hospital was a woman beloved by her family. Her selfless public service had endeared her to many. Other believers in Jesus had gathered around her, and worship, prayer, and hope filled the room. In another hospital, the relative of a member of Pastor Damian's church was also dying. His hardened heart had led to a hard life, and his disheveled family lived in the wake of his poor decisions and misdeeds. The differences in the two atmospheres reflected the contrasts in how each had lived.

Those who fail to consider where they're headed in life often find themselves stuck in uncomfortable, undesirable, and lonely places. Proverbs 14:12 notes that "there is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death." Young or old, sick or well, wealthy or impoverished—it's not too late to reexamine our path. Where will it lead? Does it honor God? Does it help or disrupt others? Is it the best path for a believer in Jesus?

Choices *do* matter. And the God of heaven will help us make the best choices as we turn to Him through His Son, Jesus, who said, "Come to me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

What about your path of life needs reexamination or correction?

What's keeping you from asking for God's help and courage to make corrections?

Dear Jesus, You're the source of life. Please give me the courage and strength to surrender my life to You and do what honors You.

Daily Bible Reading: 1Timothy 2



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GOD'S TENDER LOVE

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To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek. [Hosea 11:4](#)

A 2017 video of a dad comforting his two-month-old son while the baby received his routine vaccinations garnered international attention for the way it captured a dad's love for his child. After the nurse finished administering the vaccinations, the dad tenderly held his son close to his cheek, and the boy stopped sobbing within seconds. There's almost nothing more reassuring than the tender care of a loving parent.

In Scripture, there are many beautiful descriptions of God as a loving parent, images that invoke God's deep love for His children. Old Testament prophet Hosea was given a message to deliver to the Israelites living in the Northern Kingdom during the time of the divided kingdom. He called them to return to a relationship with God. Hosea reminded the Israelites of God's love for them as he pictured God as a gentle Father: "when Israel was a child, I loved him" (Hosea 11:1) and "to them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek" (v. 4).

This same reassuring promise of God's loving care is true for us. Whether we seek His tender care after a season where we've rejected His love or because of pain and suffering in our lives, He calls us His children (1 John 3:1) and His comforting arms are open to receive us (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

How have you experienced the love of God as a caring Father?
What concerns might you bring to Him today?

Heavenly Father, thank You that You call me Your child and provide tender care when I run to You.

Daily Bible Reading: 1Timothy 3



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FAMILY MATTERS

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Make every effort to live in peace with everyone. [Hebrews 12:14](#)

Dan, his brother, and his sister flew from their separate states to their uncle's funeral and stopped to see their ninety-year-old grandmother. She'd been paralyzed by a stroke, had lost the ability to speak, and had only the use of her right hand. As they stood around her bed, she reached out that hand and took each of their hands, placing one atop another over her heart and patted them in place. With this wordless gesture, their grandmother spoke into what had been their somewhat broken and distant sibling relationship. "Family matters."

In God's family, the church, we can grow apart as well. We might allow bitterness to separate us from each other. The writer of Hebrews references the bitterness that separated Esau from his brother (Hebrews 12:16) and challenges us as brothers and sisters to hold on to each other in God's family. "Make every effort to live in peace with everyone" (v. 14). Here the words *every effort* convey a deliberate and decisive investment in peacemaking with our brothers and sisters in God's family. Every such effort is then applied to everyone. Every. One.

Family matters. Both our earthly families and God's family of believers. Might we all invest the efforts needed to hold on to each other?

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

What would it mean for you to "make every effort to live in peace with everyone" in God's family?

Is there a particular person you might need to approach for reconciliation?

Dear God, thank You for drawing me to Yourself. Help me to make every effort to live at peace with everyone in Your family.

Daily Bible Reading: 1Timothy 4



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BITTERNESS OF STOLEN SWEETS


 Prophetic
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Food gained by fraud tastes sweet, but one ends up with a mouth full of gravel. [Proverbs 20:17](#)

Thieves in Germany stole a truck's refrigerated trailer filled with more than twenty tons of chocolate. The estimated worth of the stolen sweetness was \$80,000. Local police asked anyone who was offered large quantities of chocolate via unconventional channels to report it immediately. Surely those who stole the massive amount of sweets will be facing bitter and unsatisfying consequences if they're caught and prosecuted!

Proverbs confirms this principle: "Food gained by fraud tastes sweet, but one ends up with a mouth full of gravel" (20:17). Things we acquire deceptively or wrongfully may seem to be sweet at first—seasoned with excitement and temporary enjoyment. But the flavor will eventually wear off and our deception will lead to our being left wanting and in trouble. The bitter consequences of guilt, fear, and sin can end up ruining our lives and reputations. "Even small children are known by their actions, [if] their conduct [is] really pure and upright" (v. 11). May our words and actions reveal a pure heart for God—not the bitterness of selfish desires.

When we're tempted, let's ask God to strengthen us and help us remain faithful to Him. He can help us look behind the short-term "sweetness" of giving in to temptation and guide us to carefully consider the long-term consequences of our choices.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

When has temptation led to bitter consequences for you?
How can you remain faithful to God?

Dear God, I need Your strength to fight temptation and remain faithful to You.

Daily Bible Reading: 1Timothy 4



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COMMUNITY IN CHRIST

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A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. [Ecclesiastes 4:12](#)

"I knew that the only way to succeed was to forget about home and my wife, son, and daughter," said Jordon. "I've found I can't do that. They're woven into the fabric of my heart and soul." Alone in a remote area, Jordon was participating in a reality show where contestants are asked to survive outdoors with minimal supplies for as long as possible. What forced him to forfeit was not the grizzly bears, freezing temperatures, injury, or hunger, but an overwhelming loneliness and desire to be with his family.

We might have all the survival skills necessary for the wilderness, but separating ourselves from community is a sure way to fail. The wise author of Ecclesiastes said, "Two are better than one, because . . . one can help the other up" (4:9-10). Christ-honoring community, even with all its messiness, is essential to our thriving. We don't stand a chance against the trials of this world if we try to tackle them on our own. Someone who toils alone, toils in vain (v. 8). Without community, we're more susceptible to danger (vv. 11-12). Unlike a single thread, "a cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (v. 12). The gift of a loving, Christ-focused community is one that not only provides encouragement, but also gives us strength to thrive despite challenging situations. We need each other.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

How can you commit to spending time with the family of believers?
Who around you is isolated and in need?

Father, thank You for the gift of community! Open my heart to love and spend time with others today

Daily Bible Reading: 1Timothy 5



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JESUS THE TRUE PEACEMAKER



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I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. [John 16:33](#)

On December 30, 1862, the US Civil War raged. Union and Confederate troops camped seven hundred yards apart on opposing sides of Tennessee's Stones River. As they warmed themselves around campfires, Union soldiers picked up their fiddles and harmonicas and began playing "Yankee Doodle." In reply, the Confederate soldiers offered "Dixie." Remarkably, both sides joined for a finale, playing "Home, Sweet Home" in unison. Sworn enemies shared music in the dark night, glimmers of an unimagined peace. The melodic truce was short-lived, however. The next morning, they put down their fiddles and picked up their rifles, and 24,645 soldiers died.

Our human efforts to create peace inevitably wear thin. Hostilities cease in one place, only to ignite somewhere else. One relational dispute finds harmony, only to be embroiled in distress again months later. The Scriptures tell us that God is our only trustworthy peacemaker. Jesus said it plainly, "In me you . . . have peace" (John 16:33). We have peace *in Jesus*. While we participate in His peacemaking mission, it's God's reconciliation and renewal that make *real* peace possible.

Christ tells us we can't escape conflict. "In this world [we] will have trouble," Jesus says. Strife abounds. "But take heart!" He adds, "I have overcome the world" (v. 33). While our efforts often prove futile, our loving God (v. 27) makes peace in this fractious world.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

Where do you see humans working for peace?
How is God's peacemaking different?

Dear God, please show me the way of peace.

Daily Bible Reading: 1Timothy 6



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UNITED DIVERSITY IN CHRIST


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God has placed the parts in the body . . . just as he wanted them to be. [1 Corinthians 12:18](#)

In his essay "Service and the Spectrum," Professor Daniel Bowman Jr. writes of the difficulty of navigating decisions about how to serve his church as an autistic person. He explains, "Autistic people have to forge a new path forward every single time, a unique path that takes into account . . . mental, emotional, and physical energy . . . alone/recharging time; sensory inputs and comfort level . . . time of day; whether or not we're being valued for our strengths and accommodated for our needs rather than excluded for perceived deficits; and much more." For many people, Bowman writes, such decisions, "while reorienting people's time and energy, likely will not undo them. Those same decisions might well undo me."

Bowman believes that the vision of mutuality Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12 could be a healing solution. There, in verses 4-6, Paul describes God uniquely gifting each of His people for "the common good" (v. 7). Each is an "indispensable" member of Christ's body (v. 22). When churches come to understand each person's unique, God-given wiring and gifting, instead of pressuring everyone to help in the same way, they can support their members to serve in ways that fit their giftings.

In this way, each person can find flourishing and wholeness and be secure in their valued place in Christ's body (v. 26).

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

How have you been blessed by others' unique gifts?
How can churches encourage diverse ways to serve?

Dear God, thank You for creating us all uniquely. Please help me to value every member of Christ's body.

Daily Bible Reading: 2Timothy 1



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SERVING TOGETHER IN JESUS

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PRAYER
HOUR

You sent me aid more than once when I was in need. [Philippians 4:16](#)

Rescue workers cooperated to help three men stranded on an island in Micronesia. Teamwork was necessary because a widespread health crisis required them to limit their exposure to each other. The pilot who first spotted the castaways radioed a nearby Australian Navy ship. The ship sent two helicopters which provided food, water, and medical care. Later, the US Coast Guard arrived to check on the men and deliver a radio. Finally, a Micronesian patrol boat taxied them to their destination.

We can accomplish a lot when we work together. The Philippian believers pooled their efforts to support the Apostle Paul. Lydia and her family welcomed him into their home (Acts 16:13-15). Clement and even Euodia and Syntyche (who didn't get along) all worked directly with the apostle to spread the good news (Philippians 4:2-3). Later, when Paul was imprisoned in Rome, the church gathered essentials for a care package and delivered it via Epaphroditus (vv. 14-18). Perhaps most importantly, the Philippians prayed for him throughout his ministry (1:19).

The examples of believers serving together in this ancient church can inspire us today. Cooperating with fellow believers to pray and serve others as God leads and empowers us accomplishes much more than we could ever do on our own. It has been said, "Individually, we are one drop. Together we are an ocean."

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

When have you served well with other believers in Jesus?
What's the basis for the spiritual bond you share with them?

Dear God, please show me how to join with others who are serving You.

Daily Bible Reading: 2Timothy 2



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5:50am W.A.T
Rev Sam Oye

PULL THE WEEDS OF WORRY


 Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

[They hear] the word, but the worries of this life . . . choke the word. [Matthew 13:22](#)

After burying a few seeds in a planter in my backyard, I waited to see the results. Reading that the seeds would sprout within ten to fourteen days, I checked often as I watered the soil. Soon I saw a few green leaves pushing their way out of the soil. But my bubble burst quickly when my husband told me those were weeds. He encouraged me to pull them quickly so that they wouldn't choke the plants I was trying to grow.

Jesus also told of the importance of dealing with intruders that can impede our spiritual growth. He explained a portion of His parable this way: when a sower cast his seeds, some "fell among thorns . . . and choked the plants" (Matthew 13:7). Thorns, or weeds, will do just that to plants—stop their growth (v. 22). And worry will surely stunt our spiritual growth. Reading Scripture and praying are great ways to grow our faith, but I've found I need to watch out for the thorns of worry. They'll "choke" the good word that has been planted in me, making me focus on what could go wrong.

The fruit of the Spirit, found in Scripture, includes such things as love, joy, peace (Galatians 5:22). But in order for us to bear that fruit, in God's strength we need to pull any weeds of doubt or worry that may distract us and cause us to focus on anything other than Him.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

REFLECT & PRAY

How is God helping you grow the seeds He's planted within you?
How can you pull the weeds of worry?

Dear heavenly Father, please remind me to pull weeds often, discarding worry and deceitful thoughts so I may grow and bear fruit in You.

Daily Bible Reading: 2Timothy 3



Join Us Online On
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Rev Sam Oye

ANGEL COMPANIONS

Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way. [Exodus 23:20](#)

As medical test after medical test filled up Bev's schedule, she grew overwhelmed and weary. Doctors alarmed her when they told her they were looking for cancer somewhere in her body. Each day God faithfully encouraged her with the promises of His presence and an abiding peace when she turned to Him or read the Bible. She battled with the uncertainties and frequently learned to roll the "what ifs" onto God's shoulders. One morning, Bev came across a verse in Exodus 23 that popped out from the page to her heart before a serious surgery: "I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way" (v. 20).

Those words were spoken by God through Moses to His people, the Israelites. He was giving His laws for His people to follow and leading them to a new land (vv. 14-26). But in the middle of those instructions, He told them He would send an angel ahead of them "to guard [them] along the way" (v. 20). Even though this wasn't Bev's life's situation, she remembered that the care of angels is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture too. Psalm 91:11 says, "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways." And Hebrews 1:14 tells us God sends angels as "ministering spirits" to serve believers in Jesus.

If we know Christ, He's got an angel or angels near us to minister to us as well.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

What might God be doing for you through His angels?
How does this encourage you?

*I'm grateful, dear God, that You're always near, and You also have
Your angels watching over Your children.*

Daily Bible Reading: 2Timothy 4



Join Us Online On
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Rev Sam Oye

JOY IN THE CITY



Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices. [Proverbs 11:10](#)

When France and Argentina met in the 2022 World Cup final, it was an incredible contest that many dubbed the "greatest World Cup match in history." As the final seconds ticked off in extra time, the score was tied 3-3, sending the soccer teams to penalty kicks. After Argentina made the winning goal, the nation erupted in celebration. More than a million Argentineans overwhelmed downtown Buenos Aires. Drone footage spread across social media showing this raucous, happy scene. One BBC report described how the city quaked with "an explosion of joy."

Joy is always a wonderful gift. Proverbs, though, describes how a city, a people, can experience joy that goes even deeper and lasts far longer. "When the righteous prosper," Proverbs says, "the city rejoices" (11:10). When those who truly live by God's designs for humanity begin to influence a community, then this signals good news because it means God's justice is taking hold. Greed diminishes. The poor find support. The oppressed are protected. Whenever God's right way of living flourishes, then there's joy and "blessing" in the city (v. 11).

If we're genuinely living out God's ways, then the result will be good news for everyone. The way we live will make the community around us better and more whole. God invites us to be part of His work to heal the world. He invites us to bring joy to the city.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

Where do you see the need for joy in your city?

How can you bring God's joy there?

Dear God, please help me to join You in bringing joy to others.

Daily Bible Reading: Titus 1



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   Rev Sam Oye

FIVE GOOD THINGS

Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. [Psalm 107:1](#)

According to research, people who are intentionally grateful for what they have report better sleep, fewer symptoms of illness, and more happiness. Those are impressive benefits. Psychologists even suggest keeping a "gratitude journal" to improve our well-being, writing down five things we're grateful for each week.

Scripture has long promoted the practice of gratitude. From meals and marriage (1 Timothy 4:3-5) to the beauties of creation (Psalm 104), the Bible has called us to see such things as gifts and to thank the Giver for them. Psalm 107 lists five things Israel could be especially grateful for: their rescue from the desert (vv. 4-9), their release from captivity (vv. 10-16), healing from disease (vv. 18-22), safety at sea (vv. 23-32), and their flourishing in a barren land (vv. 33-42). "Give thanks to the Lord," the psalm repeats, for these are all signs of God's "unfailing love" (vv. 8, 15, 21, 31).

Do you have a notepad handy? Why not write down five good things you're grateful for now? It might be the meal you just enjoyed, your marriage or, like Israel, God's rescue points in your life to date. Give thanks for the birds singing outside, the smells from your kitchen, the comfort of your chair, the murmurs of loved ones. Each is a gift and a sign of God's unfailing love.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

Why do you think Scripture so often calls us to be thankful?
What five good things are you grateful for today?

*Father God, I'm grateful for every good thing You've brought into my life.
And most of all, I'm grateful for You.*

Daily Bible Reading: Titus 2



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5:50am W.A.T



Rev Sam Oye

OUR NATURE IN CHRIST


 Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

Put on your new nature, created to be like God. [Ephesians 4:24NLT](#)

Our blue spruce was dropping pinecones and needles. The tree doctor took one look at it and explained the problem. "It's just being a spruce," he said. I'd hoped for a better explanation. Or a remedy. But the tree man shrugged, saying again, "It's just being a spruce." By nature, the tree sheds needles. It can't change.

Thankfully, our spiritual lives aren't limited by unchangeable actions or attitudes. Paul stressed this liberating truth to the new believers at Ephesus. The gentiles were "darkened in their understanding," he said, their minds closed to God. They possessed hardened hearts containing "every kind of impurity," and sought only after pleasures and greed (Ephesians 4:18-19).

But "since you have heard about Jesus" and His truth, the apostle wrote, "throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life" (v. 22 NLT). Paul noted how our old nature "is corrupted by lust and deception." He said, "Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy" (vv. 22-24 NLT).

Then he listed new ways to live. Stop lying. Resist anger. Stop cursing. Quit stealing. "Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need" (v. 28 NLT). Our new self in Christ allows us to live a life worthy of our calling, yielded to our Savior's way.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

What does it mean to put on your "new self"?
How can you seek to walk the Savior's way?

Renew my nature today, dear Jesus, as I yield to become more like You.

Daily Bible Reading: Titus 3



Join Us Online On
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Rev Sam Oye

GOD'S PRESENCE

Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

[God] has . . . set eternity in the human heart. [Ecclesiastes 3:11](#)

Monique was struggling. She had friends who were believers in Jesus, and she respected how they handled life's struggles. She was even a bit jealous of them. But Monique didn't think she could live the way they did; she thought having faith in Christ was about following rules. Finally, a fellow college student helped her see that God wasn't out to spoil her life; instead, He wanted the best for her amidst her ups and downs. Once she understood this, Monique was ready to trust Jesus as her Savior and embrace the magnificent truth about God's love for her.

King Solomon could have given Monique similar advice. He acknowledged that this world does have its sorrows. Indeed, there's a "time for everything" (Ecclesiastes 3:1)—"a time to mourn and a time to dance" (v. 4). But there's more. God "has also set eternity in the human heart" (v. 11). An eternity meant to be lived in His presence.

Monique gained life "to the full," as Jesus said (John 10:10), when she trusted Him. But she gained so much more! Through faith, the "eternity in [her] heart" (Ecclesiastes 3:11) became the promise of a future when life's struggles will be forgotten (Isaiah 65:17) and God's glorious presence will be a reality.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

How have you experienced the fulfilling life Jesus offers?

What are some things about your life in Him that you're thankful for?

Dear Jesus, Solomon was right. Life is a rollercoaster. Thank You for making this life valuable and worth the effort. And thank You for the eternal joys that await.

Daily Bible Reading: Philemon 1



Join Us Online On
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Rev Sam Oye

IN GOD'S ARM


 Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

I will be with him in trouble. [Psalm 91:15](#)

The sound of the drill terrified five-year-old Sarah. She leaped out of the dentist's chair and refused to get back in. Nodding understandingly, the dentist told her father, "Daddy, get into the chair." Jason thought he was meant to show his daughter how easy it was. But then the dentist turned to the little girl and said, "Now, climb up and sit in Daddy's lap." With her father now cradling her in his reassuring arms, Sarah relaxed completely, and the dentist was able to continue.

That day, Jason learned a great lesson about the comfort of the presence of his heavenly Father. "Sometimes, God [chooses not to] take over what we have to go through," he said. "But God was showing me, 'I will be there with you.'"

Psalm 91 speaks of the comforting presence and power of God that gives us the strength to face our trials. Knowing that we can rest in His powerful arms gives us great assurance, as does His promise to those who love Him: "He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble" (v. 15).

There are many unavoidable challenges and trials in life, and we will inevitably have to go through pain and suffering. But with God's reassuring arms wrapped around us, we'll be able to bear our crises and circumstances, and let Him strengthen our faith as we grow through them.

Have a blessed day!

 REFLECT & PRAY

What trials are you going through now?

How can you remind yourself that God is always with you?

*Gracious Father, thank You for Your reassuring presence in my circumstances.
Please help me through them, knowing that You're always with me.*

Daily Bible Reading: Hebrews 1



Join Us Online On
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5:50am W.A.T



Rev Sam Oye

LOVE GOD BY LOVING OTHERS


 Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. [Matthew 25:40](#)

The Alba family experienced the rare occurrence of birthing two sets of identical twins just thirteen months apart. How did they juggle their parental responsibilities as well as their jobs? Their community of friends and family stepped in. Grandparents on both sides took a set of twins during the day so the parents could work and pay for health insurance. One company gave a year's supply of diapers. The couple's coworkers donated their personal sick days. "We couldn't have done it without our community," they agreed. In fact, during a live interview, the cohost removed her mic and ran after one renegade toddler, continuing the communal investment!

In Matthew 25:31–46, Jesus tells a parable to make the point that when we serve others, we serve God. After listing acts of service, including providing food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, lodging for the homeless, clothes for the naked, and healing for the sick (vv. 35–36), Jesus concludes, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (v. 40).

Imagining Jesus as the ultimate recipient of our kindness is true motivation to serve in our neighborhoods, families, churches, and world. When He prompts us to sacrificially invest in the needs of others, we serve Him. When we love others, we love God.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

How might you serve Jesus in your community today?
How can you love God by loving others in your path?

Loving God, please open my eyes to the needs of others around me so I can help meet them and love You better.

Daily Bible Reading: Hebrews 2



Join Us Online On
 MONDAYS - FRIDAYS
 5:50am W.A.T



Rev Sam Oye

EXTRAVAGANT LOVE

Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

Live such good lives . . . [that] they may see your good deeds and glorify God. [1 Peter 2:12](#)

My seatmate on the flight told me she was nonreligious and had immigrated to a town that was home to numerous Christians. When she mentioned that most of her neighbors went to church, I asked about her experience. She said she could never repay their generosity. When she brought her disabled father to her new country, her neighbors built a ramp to her house and donated a hospital bed and medical supplies. She said, "If being a Christian makes one so kind, everyone should be a Christian."

Exactly what Jesus hoped she'd say! He told His disciples, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Peter heard Christ's command and passed it on: "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God" (1 Peter 2:12).

Our neighbors who don't have faith in Jesus may not understand what we believe and why we believe it. Don't sweat it, as long as there's one more thing they can't understand: the extravagance of our love. My seatmate marveled that her Christian neighbors continue to care for her even though she isn't, in her words, "one of them." She knows she's loved, for Jesus' sake, and she gives thanks to God. She may not yet believe in Him, but she's grateful that others do.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

Who do you know who needs Jesus?
How can you love them for His sake?

Heavenly Father, let Your light shine through me.

Daily Bible Reading: Hebrews 3



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5:50am W.A.T



Rev Sam Oye

I HEAR YOU, GOD!

Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. [John 10:3](#)

Baby Graham fussed and wiggled as his mother held him in her lap while the doctors inserted his first hearing aid. Moments after the doctor turned on the device, Graham stopped crying. His eyes widened. He grinned. He could *hear* his mother's voice comforting him, encouraging him, and calling his name.

Baby Graham heard his mother speaking, but he needed help learning how to recognize her voice and understand the meaning of her words. Jesus invites people into a similar learning process. Once we accept Christ as our Savior, we become the sheep He knows intimately and guides personally (John 10:3). We can grow to trust and obey Him as we practice hearing and heeding His voice (v. 4).

In the Old Testament, God spoke through the prophets. In the New Testament, Jesus—God in the flesh—spoke directly to people. Today, believers in Jesus have access to the power of the Holy Spirit, who helps us understand and obey God's words which He inspired and preserved in the Bible. We can communicate directly with Jesus through our prayers as He speaks to us through Scripture and through His people. As we come to recognize God's voice, which is always in alignment with His words in the Bible, we can cry out with grateful praise, "I hear You, God!"

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

How has God used the Scriptures to reveal Himself to you this week?

How can you speak His wisdom to others who need comfort or encouragement today?

I hear You, God! Please help me receive and share the truth and love You reveal to me as I read the Bible.

Daily Bible Reading: Hebrews 4



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5:50am W.A.T



Rev Sam Oye

PSALM 72 LEADERS


 Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

May he be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth. [Psalm 72:6](#)

In July 2022, Britain's prime minister was forced to step down after what many felt were lapses in integrity (the newly appointed prime minister stepped down just months later!). The event was triggered when the country's health minister attended an annual parliamentary prayer breakfast, felt convicted about the need for integrity in public life, and resigned. When other ministers resigned too, the prime minister realized he had to leave. It was a remarkable moment, originating from a peaceful prayer meeting.

Believers in Jesus are called to pray for their political leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2), and Psalm 72 is a good guide for doing so, being both a ruler's job description and a prayer to help them achieve it. It describes the ideal leader as a person of justice and integrity (vv. 1-2), who defends the vulnerable (v. 4), serves the needy (vv. 12-13), and stands against oppression (v. 14). Their time in office is so refreshing, it's like "showers watering the earth" (v. 6), bringing prosperity to the land (vv. 3, 7, 16). While only the Messiah can perfectly fulfill such a role (v. 11), what better standard of leadership could be aimed for?

The health of a country is governed by the integrity of its office-bearers. Let's seek "Psalm 72 leaders" for our nations and help them to embody the qualities found in this psalm by praying it for them.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

What qualities do you look for in a leader?

How can you pray more often for your local and national leaders?

Father, please empower our leaders to be people of justice, integrity, and goodness.

Daily Bible Reading: Hebrews 5



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Rev Sam Oye

MISSING THE BASICS




You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. [Matthew 22:29](#)

For decades, McDonald's ruled fast food with their Quarter Pounder burger. In the 1980s, a rival chain cooked up an idea to dethrone the company with the golden arches. A&W offered the Third Pound Burger—larger than McDonald's—and sold it for the same price. Even more, A&W's burger won numerous blind taste tests. But the burger bombed. Nobody bought it. Eventually, they dropped it from the menu. Research revealed that consumers misunderstood the math and thought the Third Pound Burger was smaller than the Quarter Pounder. A grand idea failed because people missed the basics.

Jesus warned of how easy it is to miss the basics. Religious leaders, scheming to trap and discredit Him during the week He was crucified, posed a strange, hypothetical scenario about a woman who was widowed seven times (Matthew 22:23–28). Jesus responded, insisting that this knotty dilemma wasn't a problem at all. Rather, their problem was how they didn't "know the Scriptures or the power of God" (v. 29). The Scriptures, Jesus insisted, aren't first intended to answer logical or philosophical puzzles. Rather, their primary aim is to lead us to know and love Jesus and to "have eternal life" in Him (John 5:39). These are the basics the leaders missed.

We often miss the basics too. The Bible's main aim is an encounter with the living Jesus. It would be heartbreaking to miss it.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

How do you miss Scripture's basics?

How can you return to the basics ... to Jesus?

Dear God, sometimes I get lost even amid good things. Please help me.

Daily Bible Reading: Hebrews 6



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5:50am W.A.T



Rev Sam Oye

GOD OUR REFUGE

Prophetic
PRAYER
HOUR

The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. [Proverbs 18:10](#)

The remarkable 2019 movie *Little Women*, sent me back to my worn copy of the novel, especially the comforting words of Marmee, the wise and gentle mother. I'm drawn to the novel's depiction of her steadfast faith, which underlies many of her words of encouragement to her daughters. One that stood out to me was this: "Troubles and temptations . . . may be many, but you can overcome and outlive them all if you learn to feel the strength and tenderness of your heavenly Father."

Marmee's words echo the truth found in Proverbs that "the name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe" (18:10). Towers were built in ancient cities to be a place of safety during danger, perhaps because of an enemy attack. In the same way, it's through running to God that believers in Jesus can experience peace in the care of the One who's "our refuge and strength" (Psalm 46:1).

Proverbs 18:10 tells us protection comes from God's "name"—which refers to all of who He is. Scripture describes God as "the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness" (Exodus 34:6). God's protection comes from His mighty strength, as well as His tenderness and love, which causes Him to long to provide refuge to the hurting. For all who are struggling, our heavenly Father offers a place of refuge in His strength and tenderness.

Have a blessed day!

REFLECT & PRAY

Daily Bible Reading: Hebrews 7

How have you experienced God's strength in times of trouble?
Where have you seen His comforting care?

Heavenly Father, please help me to run to You in both good times and times of struggle.



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Prophetic **PRAYER HOUR**

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