

RE > FOCUS

21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

I invite you to join me on a 21 day journey of prayer and fasting. The purpose is to intentionally seek the face of the Lord.ⁱ God is always with His children because of His covenant commitment through Jesus. He promises to always stand by us, work for us, love us, and cause everything to work for good for us. Yet, the Bible tell us repeatedly to seek the presence of God. If God is always with us, why are we told to seek His presence.

Even though God is "with us" we must intentionally seek Him. I can be with my wife, but not necessarily pursuing her. I can be in her presence, but not actively serving, loving, engaging, or seeking after her. The same is true of our relationship with God. In Christ, His presence is with us, but we are called to continually seek after Him.

There are also seasons when we all become neglectful of God and spend little or no time thinking on and meditating upon his glory, greatness, and beauty.

John Piper writes about the believer seeking the presence of God, "His face-the brightness of his personal character-is hidden behind the curtain of our carnal desires. This condition is always ready to overtake us. That is why we are told to 'seek his presence continually.' God calls us to enjoy continual consciousness of his supreme greatness and beauty and worth."

I pray these 21 days will be days of profound spiritual enrichment as we pursue the "face of God."

I encourage you to purposefully pray for our country and FBCZ during these 21 days:

This election has significance beyond what we can imagine. Anti-Christian and anti-Bible agendas rage around us. Let us pray for God's great mercy and that "justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,"ⁱⁱ and that Christians will prayerfully utilize their right to vote.

Let us pray for Biblical renewal and revival among the people of God called FBCZ. Pray with me that God would exalt his great name,ⁱⁱⁱ He would extend His kingdom in the world,^{iv} the gospel would speed ahead and be honored,^v that our greatest joy would be in God,^{vi} for boldness in proclaiming the gospel,^{vii} and our hearts would be satisfied with God and not the world.^{viii} May God move in His church for His glory.

I encourage you during these three weeks of intentionally seeking the Lord to prayerfully consider fasting for one day per week. Acts 13:1-3 tells us the 1st century church at Antioch fasted and prayed together. Fasting in a Biblical discipline that God has given the believer. For more information on fasting please click on this link.

Finally, I am indebted to David McKinley, pastor of Warren Baptist Church in Augusta S.C. and his prayer ministry for allowing us to utilize their devotionals.

Join me as we seek the face of God,



Pastor Paul

ⁱ Psalm 63:1; Hebrews 11:6; Psalm 42:1-2; ⁱⁱ Amos 5:24; ⁱⁱⁱ Matthew 6:9; ^{iv} Matthew 6:10; ^v 2 Thessalonians 3:1; ^{vi} Matthew 13:44; Psalm 16:11;
^{vii} Acts 4:29; ^{viii} Psalm 90:14

Day 1: October 11, 2020

Read: *One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.* – Psalm 27:4

Respond: Lord, I desire to dwell with You. You are the One my heart seeks after. You are my strong shelter in times of trouble, danger and stress. You are a Rock of Refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I trust. You save. You deliver. You protect and defend.

Read: *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."* – Psalm 91:1-2

Respond: God Most High, You are my hiding place, my shelter, and my fortress, the One I come to for everything. My heart rests in You. You are my Provider. I rest beneath the shadow of Your wings. Anxiety melts away as I lean back into Your loving arms and depend on You. Most High God, I trust You because You are trustworthy and true.

Read: *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.* – Psalm 23:1-3

Respond: You are the Good Shepherd who guides and protects. You uphold and defend. You restore my soul and lead me down right paths. I want for nothing. You are more than enough. As You Shepherd me through this day my heart rejoices, and my soul is at peace. Your name and renown is the desire of my heart. You are my safe place in the morning as I wake and at night as I sleep.

Read: *The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.* – Zephaniah 3:17

Respond: You are present here with me today. Your Spirit is within me. You are mighty to save. I rest in Your love. The fact that You delight in me and rejoice over me with singing and shouts of joy, secures my heart. All wise, all-knowing, loving God, I worship You this day. In Jesus' name, amen.

Rejoice in the God who loves you today! Praise Him throughout your day for His protection, shelter, and guidance, His wisdom, His kindness and His goodness. Most of all praise Him for His love.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Psalm 16:5-6

Psalm 71: 3

Psalm 103:8

Psalm 107:9

Psalm 138:8

Matthew 6:25-26

Day 2: October 12, 2020

Read: For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. – Hebrews 4:12

Respond: Thank You for Your Word, Lord, that pierces through my sinful thoughts and intentions and turns me back to Truth. Thank You for the wisdom of Your Word. Thank You for Jesus, the Living Word. I praise You that He proclaimed the truth, that truth which is the foundation of our faith and true godly living. Thank You that He delighted to do your will and that as I read Your Word, Your law is written on my heart.

Read: So, Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. – John 5:19

Respond: I praise You that the Lord Jesus lived His life without sin, that He was in total oneness with You, Father. There was nothing false or deceitful in Him. He was perfect and His intentions were always righteous and holy. Thank You that Jesus gave me an example of dependence upon you by withdrawing for a time alone in Your presence. Thank You that He was attentive to Your voice and sensitive to Your working. Thank You that He lived in complete dependence on You and that His heart was always to glorify His Father in Heaven. Thank You that He demonstrated how I am to live and serve, completely depending on Him.

Read: I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. – John 15:5

Respond: Abiding in Jesus' presence, focusing on Him daily and beholding His glory gives me life. Thank You that as I focus on Your Son, His Spirit, working in me, transforms me into His image and this pleases You. Jesus, full of grace and truth, pleased You in every way and glorified You in all that He did. He is the perfect example of how to live. The more I come to know Jesus the more I am strengthened and the more I desire to be like Him. Thank You for the work of transformation in my life as I cling to and yield to Your Son, in whose name I pray, amen.

Abide in the presence of the Almighty today. Make it your aim to glorify Him in all things as Jesus glorified the Father.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

- Psalm 40:8
- Mark 1:35
- John 1:14
- John 6:57
- 2 Corinthians 3:18
- Hebrews 13:21

Day 3: October 13, 2020

Read: *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* – 1 John 4:10

Respond: I love you Father, because You first loved me and sent Your Son as an atonement for my sins. You are to be praised. You pursued me and drew me to Yourself, and I am grateful. Thank You for your unconditional, forgiving, steadfast love that never ends. Thank You for placing a love and desire for You in my heart so that by faith I would find righteousness in You through the death of Your Son, Jesus on the day of my salvation.

Read: *Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.*
– Philippians 2:8-9

Respond: I stand amazed that Jesus, who was equal with You, O Lord, did not choose to be equal, but instead emptied Himself and served the world by coming to earth, humbling himself and dying for the sins of mankind. That kind of love humbles me and causes me to praise the name of Jesus. Thank You for the example of complete obedience and selflessness. Jesus is worthy of all praise, honor and glory. He is exalted above all and deserves my love, my attention, my complete obedience, and my gratitude now and always.

Read: *That he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church.* – Ephesians 1:20-22

Respond: Words do not adequately express the praise Jesus deserves, for death could not hold Him, as Your power over the grave was too great. Thank You for raising Jesus from the dead and for making me righteous in Your sight. Thank You that He is seated at Your right hand and that all things are under His feet by Your authority, power, and sovereignty. Thank You that He is the head of the Church. Jesus Your name is above every name in heaven and on earth. All dominion, power, and authority belong to You. Great High priest, I praise You that You save completely and that You pray for me. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

Praise God today for His power, might, and authority over your life. Let praise continually flow from your lips.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Isa 53:3-12

Acts 2:24

2Cor 5:21

Rev 1:17

Rev 5:12

Day 4: October 14, 2020

Read: *On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.* – Psalm 145:5-6

Respond. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, his greatness is unsearchable." I magnify You, O Lord, I exalt Your name, for You are great and Highly to be praise. I praise You for the glorious splendor of Your majesty and for Your power that is unmatched. You are able to do exceedingly, abundantly more than I could ever ask or imagine. Nothing is too hard for You. There is nobody like You, Lord. Holy, majestic, awesome and praiseworthy, that is You, Lord.

Read: *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.* – Hebrews 1:3

Respond: Thank You, Father, for Your glory and the glory of Your Son. Thank You that You are making me more and more like Your Son day by day, as I look to You and learn from You. I praise You and thank You for purifying me from sin and unrighteousness. Thank You that You will never leave me or forsake me. You are constant. You have always been and always will be present in my life. "There is none like you, O Lord; you are great, and your name is great in might."

Read: *But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation.* – Jeremiah 10:10

Respond: One True God, I praise You. Living God I worship You. Everlasting King, You are exalted. Thank You for Your sovereignty over both the broad events of my life, and the details of my life. With You, nothing is by accident, nothing by chance. Nothing in my life is wasted—no experience, no failure or frailty. You use all things to shape and mold Your people. Every trial that You allow to happen is a platform on which You reveal Yourself, showing Your love and power, both to me and to others around me. You hold the future. You know the plans and purposes of my life. I love You, Lord.

As you go through this day, remind yourself of God's purposeful activity in your life. Thank Him often for His work in the details of your day.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Psalm 14:3

Ephesians 3:20

Jeremiah 32:17

Exodus 15:11

Isaiah 45:4

Hebrews 13:5

Day 5: October 15, 2020

Read: Let them praise your great and awesome name! Holy is he! – Psalm 99:3

Respond: I praise your great and awesome name, Lord. You are holy. All of your works are right, and all your ways are just. Those who walk in pride You humble, and vengeance is Yours, Sovereign Savior. You are the Rock to which I continually turn. In times of suffering and injustice or in times of peace and plenty, Your ways are the best ways. I praise You that Your fairness is intertwined with everything You do and that when the time is right You will end all sin and injustice, all corruption, and all immorality. You will right every wrong and reward those who have served and suffered for your sake.

Read: For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. – 1 Thessalonians 4:16

Respond: One day you will descend from heaven and carry Your people to heaven with You. I praise You for the loving-kindness which brought Your Son, Jesus, to this earth as a sacrifice for my sins. Thank You for making a way for me to approach You, Father, and for providing a place for me to live with You in eternity. I thank You that Jesus will return from heaven with a shout of triumph, and the dead in Christ will be raised imperishable. What a glorious sight and sound this will be, what inexplicable joy will unfold at His appearing. I praise You Righteous Father and Redeeming Savior. It is my joy to follow You and surrender my all to You.

Read: Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is consuming fire. – Hebrews 12:28-29

Respond: To the One who carries the world on His shoulders, who speaks justice and love, who rules and reigns, Jesus, You are to be praised. Thank You that You and Your kingdom cannot be shaken. Thank You that Your kingdom is from everlasting to everlasting. You will never be voted out; no coup will ever dethrone You. You are to be praised for Your glory and majesty and power. For all eternity You are the King of kings and Lord of lords. To You be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen!

Today remember that God is carrying your load. Praise and thank Him when you are struggling in the midst of your day. Call on Him for help.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Deuteronomy 32:4

Isaiah 2:10-12

Isaiah 9:6-7

Daniel 4:34

Romans 12:19

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Revelation 19:6

Day 6: October 16, 2020

Read: *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.* – Psalm 139:13-14

Respond: Creator God, You formed, fashioned, and made me. You know me from the inside out. Because You are perfect in all of Your ways, my soul can rest in how You made me. I am fearfully and wonderfully made by Almighty God. Your Creations are purposeful, so I praise and thank You for giving me a purpose in Your Kingdom. Thank You for teaching and training me to do the work that You created me to do. Thank You that as I give You credit for the successes in my life, You are glorified. It is Your name and renown that is the desire of my heart, Lord. All that I am and all that I have comes from You; it is all sustained by You, and I want it all to glorify You! "Not to me, O Lord, not to me, but to Your name be the glory."

Read: *Your hands have made and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn your commandments.* – Psalm 119:73

Respond: Thank You for teaching me through Your Word and for guiding me through Your Holy Spirit. Without Your Word and the Helper to show me the way, I am lost. I praise You for being the One who enlightens, establishes, and engages my heart and mind as I read and pray. Your Word is living and active and applicable to my daily life. Your Word is the final say in my life. I praise You that as I surrender my plans, my mind, and my heart to You that You establish my steps and guide me.

Read: *It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.* – Psalm 119:71

Respond: Thank You that You don't waste anything in my life. Good and bad, You use the circumstances of my life to teach and grow me. Thank You that when _____ happened, You helped me to learn _____.

Continually thank the Lord for teaching and guiding You throughout the day. Give Him praise for steering you in the direction He wants you to go according to His will for your life.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

- Psalm 95:6
- Psalm 119:67
- Psalm 139:13-16
- Romans 12:3-6

Day 7: October 17, 2020

Read: John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

– John 3:27

Respond: You give good gifts, Father. Every one of them is from You. Thank You for the specific strengths and abilities and desirable traits You have given me, and for the ways You have gifted me spiritually. I am nothing without You. It gives me joy to serve and honor You. Thank You for allowing me to help grow Your Kingdom and be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Read: As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

– 1 Peter 4:10

Respond: I praise You for providing opportunities for me to serve You at church and in my daily life. Thank You for impressing upon my heart the desire to love and help bring others into the Kingdom. Your grace is sufficient to cover all of my insecurities, inadequacies, and inabilitys. You equip when You call, and I am so thankful for that truth. Thank You for using others in my life as an example of servant leadership.

Read: Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness! – Psalm 115:1

Respond: Not for my glory but for Your glory, Father, that is my mantra. Praise to You for Your wondrous works, Your knowledge, Your strength, Your leading, Your sustaining. I would be lost without You. Your steadfast love and faithfulness bring me assurance and delight. Thank You for the reality of Your faithful love. A love that paid a high price for my salvation, security, and satisfaction. When Jesus completed His work on the Cross, I received an inheritance that is far above any other. I am forever grateful for your gifts and grace in my life.

Today, thank God for giving you opportunities to serve in your church. Praise Him for your place in ministry here.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Matthew 20:28

Luke 6:38

Romans 12:3-6

1 Corinthians 4:7

Philippians 2:1-11

Day 8: October 18, 2020

Read: But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. – 2 Corinthians 12:9

Respond: I choose to thank You for my weakness and my inadequacies. I often fall short of what the world views as ideal. I often feel inferior, helpless, and distressed. But Your grace covers me—it is sufficient. My weaknesses show Your great power. I will boast in You and give You the credit for what You accomplish in and through me. I promise to be content with my weaknesses, with insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities. These are opportunities for me to trust You in greater ways and this brings You much glory. Thank You strong Creator. Your grace is more than enough for me.

Read: And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. – Romans 8:28-29

Respond: The gracious hand of You, O God makes all things work together for the good of the Kingdom. You use the circumstances of my life to teach and train me in righteousness and holiness. You have set me apart for Your Kingdom and promised to conform me into the likeness of Your Son, Jesus. To Him be the glory!

Read: As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thoughts of me. – Psalm 40:17

Respond: Though I am poor and needy I praise You, for you have thoughts of me. I am on Your mind. This brings me joy, yet causes me to humbly fall at Your feet in honor of You. I am grateful for my deficiencies, as they teach me of Your goodness and grace, Your mercy and kindness, Your sovereignty and foreknowledge. Thank You that You know what I need to be made holy. I praise You for Your Omniscience and Your Infinite wisdom. Thank You, Lord!

As you go about your day, remind yourself to trust God and rest in His sufficiency in all things. Thank Him for His grace that escorts you through your day no matter what comes your way.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Psalm 34:17-20

Psalm 73:256

Philippians 4:19

Hebrews 4:14-16

Day 9: October 19, 2020

Read: Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. – Isaiah 53:4

Respond: I praise You Father for Jesus, the One who bore all my sins and sorrows on the Cross. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter even though He was guiltless. I was the one who put Him there. My sins caused His suffering and pain. Thank You, Jesus, that You took the agony that was mine and in love gave Yourself for me. You were afflicted so that I didn't have to be. You made a way when there was no way. You paved a way for me to approach a holy and righteous God. Glory to the Lamb that was slain. Blessing and honor and power belong to You. I worship You today.

Read: So, we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. – 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Respond: Thank You for the unseen blessings that I get a glimpse of every time I go through hardship or trial. That You for the renewal that comes day by day as I trust You with my afflictions and difficulties. Your glory and the glory of heaven stored up for me is unfathomable. It is beyond comparison. I praise You for the eternal perspective that You are teaching me to have. I thank You for the lessons I have learned and am learning in the deep waters of difficulty and even despair. They are priceless lessons that are taught out of Your unfailing love for me. Blessed be the name of the Lord, who was and is and is to come. You are worthy, Lord.

Take time today to pray and reflect on what the Lord is teaching you in the difficulties of life. Praise and thank Him for this opportunity to build your faith.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Genesis 50:17-20

Psalm 66:6-12

Isaiah 46:9-10

Isaiah 63:9

Day 10: October 20, 2020

Read: *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
– Galatians 2:20

Respond: Christ Jesus, I praise You for Your crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Because of Your sacrifice for me, I am free. I am no longer dead in my sins. I am alive with You. I celebrate the fact I have been crucified with Christ, and that I no longer but, but You live in me. I thank You that through my new birth I died out of my old life, and that You resurrected me to a living relationship with You. This means I am dead to sin and alive to You!

Read: *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* – Romans 8:38-39

Respond: I praise You that nothing can separate us. Nothing. No amount of time, space, sin or suffering can tear me apart from the love of God in Christ Jesus my Lord. I praise You that I am more than a conqueror because of Christ's great love for me displayed on the Cross. Your grace paved the way for me to enjoy the abundant life You have planned for me. I praise You that Christ is not a weak person outside me, but a tremendous power inside me ... that through Him I am competent to cope with life, to do Your will, to love with Your love, to be more than a conqueror.

Read: *We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.* – Romans 6:9-11

Respond: I praise You that Christ conquered death. Death has no dominion over Him. What a glorious thought. What peace and comfort I receive from this truth. Jesus died once for all, not many times. Once was all it took. The power worked in Him to raise Him from the dead and make Him alive again, is the same power at work within me through the Holy Spirit. I praise You for this power. I praise You for the fact that Jesus' work on the Cross was sufficient. There is no chance that death will ever defeat Him again. I thank You that I am dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. This is abundant living. This is freedom and joy. What a marvelous hope we have in Jesus.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Romans 8:31-39

Day 11: October 21, 2020

Read: How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. – Psalm 36:7-8

Respond: Your love is precious to me, Lord. The kindness and comfort that comes from Your affections for me are priceless. My soul delights to hide in the secret of Your presence, to take refuge in the shadow of Your wings, to eat at Your table, and to drink my fill of the river of Your delights. Even when my life is out of sorts, when I feel as though everything is against me, I can rest in the fact that, though the enemy may have meant my circumstances for evil, You use it for good so that Your purposes prevail. That is love—that You waste nothing and that You grow me up and mature me no matter what. Because You love me too much to allow me to remain the same proves Your steadfast love for me. Hallelujah!

Read: For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. – Psalm 27:5

Respond: Thank You for hiding me in Your shelter, Father. Your shelter is safe and secure. Thank You for concealing and protecting me. I am grateful that You lift me high on a rock above the fray and frivolity that surrounds me. You are my Refuge, my Shelter, my Fortress, and my Deliverer. You are the God in whom I trust and rely.

Read: I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. – John 15:5

Respond: Clinging to You as a vine entwines itself to a branch is the only way to live a life of peace and joy. Thank You for teaching me to cling to You. Thank You for Your abiding presence in my life. Thank You for bearing fruit in me as I worship and serve You. I am nothing and can do nothing without You, Lord. I am dependent upon You, Your grace, Your mercy, and Your steadfast love all the days of my life.

Cling to and abide in Jesus today. Tell Him often that you need His help, that you are fully dependent on Him.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Psalm 105:16-20

Genesis 50:20

Psalm 65:3

Psalm 23:6

Isaiah 46:9

Day 12: October 22, 2020

Read: *In this, you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

– 1 Peter 1:6-7

Respond: Father, I'm so delighted that You are both loving and sovereign. I thank You for each disturbing or humbling situation in my life, for each breaking or cleansing process You are allowing, for each problem or hindrance, and for each thing that triggers in my anxiety, anger, or pain. I thank You in advance for each disappointment, each demanding duty, each pressure, and each interruption that may arise in the coming hours and days. I can rejoice in God my Savior in the midst of these trials despite these interruptions, knowing that the testing of my faith will result in praise, glory, and honor to You.

Read: *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* – James 1:2-4

Respond: Where do I find joy? Where does peace reside? Where is the abundant life in the midst of trials and suffering? Joy, peace, and abundant life are found in You, Father. I can count it all joy because my Maker, my Defender, my Redeemer, and my Sovereign Savior is never absent. You are always present with me, producing steadfastness, completeness, and freedom.

Read: *You, O Lord, will keep them; you will guard us from this generation forever. On every side the wicked prowl, as vileness is exalted among the children of man.* – Psalm 12:7-8

Respond: You are a guard about me, my Shield and Defense. You are on every side of me, so when the wicked prowl, they cannot escape Your wrath and judgment. I am confident in Your presence and participation in my life. And I am sure of Your ability to handle the enemy at any time and any place. You are exalted above all. You are to be honored above all. You are to be praised.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Deuteronomy 3:3

John 12:27-28

James 1

Day 13: October 23, 2020

Read: *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. – Philippians 1:3*

Respond: Thank You, Lord, for the people who are a blessing to me. I thank You for my family, friends, and neighbors. I thank You for brothers and sisters in Christ, for colleagues and leaders, for pastors and teachers. I thank You for doctors and nurses, first responders, and government officials. Thank You for the many ways You use these people to meet my needs, brighten my path, and lighten my load. Thank You for bringing people into my life who steer me to know You more, who teach me of Your goodness, who show me what grace looks like every day.

I thank You especially for:

Read: *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. –1 John 4:18-19*

Respond: Your perfect love compels me to love others, forgive others, see the best in others. Thank You for teaching me to give grace, show mercy, and scatter goodness all around me. I praise You for teaching me to think the best of others before assuming the worst. There is no fear in love, and I am grateful that You perfect Your love in me. Thank You for loving me first so that I could love You.

Remember to love today as Christ loved You and gave Himself totally for You as a sacrifice for the glory of the Father.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Matthew 22:36-40

Ephesians 4:11-16

1 John 4:7-21

Day 14: October 24, 2020

Read: When my spirit faints within me, you know my way! In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul I cry to you, O Lord; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." – Psalm 142:3-5

Respond: I praise You that nothing surprises You because You know all things. You even know the difficulties that are coming my way before they come, and You plan and prepare me for those days of hardship. Thank You for teaching me in the difficult places, for You make me depend more fully on You. I am often independent spirited, but Your desire is complete dependence because You want to run the show. When I'm in those difficult places, You help me say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."

Read: In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
– 1 Peter 1:6-7

Respond: Father, I thank You for the people in my life who seem to bring more pain than joy, for I believe You have let our paths cross for important reasons. Thank You for the good things You want to do in my life through the things that bother me. The irritating habits of others cultivate patience. Moodiness creates compassion; unloving ways show me how to love the way You love. Thank You for doing whatever it takes to mold me into the likeness of Christ. I praise His glorious name today.

Read: Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
– Ephesians 4:31

Respond: I praise You that I need not fret about what people say or do, that I don't have to be bitter or rude to others when I am offended by their words or actions. I don't have to mull over angry thoughts to prove I'm right. Thank You that just as you show grace and give forgiveness to me when I'm wrong, I can show grace and forgiveness to others because of Your power at work in my life. Thank you that you take me just as I am, warts and wrinkles, hangups and all. Praise You that I can choose not to judge others, but rather forgive them and cancel any debts I feel they owe me—any apologies, or obligations. Because of Your grace within me, I can choose to wipe clean any slate of grievances I have within me. I praise You that I can be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving. That, Lord, is You at work in my life, maturing me and making me a better servant of God Most High.

Praise God for what He's working on in you to mature and grow you—even the difficult things.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Psalm 37:1-7

Matthew 6:5-15

Matthew 7:1-6

Philippians 1:3-11

Day 15: October 25, 2020

Read: Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. – James 1:2-4

Respond: Thank You for trials and hardships. You complete me, perfect me, and make me abound with Jesus Christ in me. I lack nothing because of Your tireless efforts to grow and shape me. Steadfast Father, I praise You for Your faithfulness and certainty. You are a firm foundation, a solid rock, a sure and steady hope. I lack nothing in You. Praise You, Father.

Read: But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me. – Psalm 13:5-6

Respond: You have been so good to me. Even when things get messed up, when trials and hardships come, when people who don't know the real me accuse or find fault with me, You constantly remind me of the importance of following hard after You and of looking at You and Your unfailing love rather than other people or other things. These are merely distractions—background noise and static. I am learning to not be distracted by nay-sayers, instead, I choose to trust You. What a blessing You are to me, O Lord.

Read: I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. – Psalm 27:13-14

Respond: I praise You that I will see, I do see Your goodness daily. My confidence is found in You alone. Thank You for teaching me to wait for You rather than jumping ahead. I am so impatient at times, but You are long-suffering. You don't rush or fret, or get frustrated. I am grateful for Your strength. I praise You for Your heart of love and justice. I can't imagine life without You, Lord. You are my everything. In Jesus' name.

Rest confidently in Jesus today. Thank Him for helping you wait patiently for Him.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Psalm 13

Psalm 27

Day 16: October 26, 2020

Read: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. – 1 John 1:9

Respond: I come to You today, Lord, confessing my need for You and Your forgiveness. You are Holy, righteous, and perfect. You operate with all-wisdom and knowledge and understanding. I don't have full knowledge, nor do I have the power to forgive my own sins, but I am grateful that You forgive. I am forever, thankful for the sacrifice Jesus made on my behalf so that I might be holy, blameless, and righteous in Your sight. I do not take this gift of grace for granted. In Your faithfulness and justice, You forgive and cleanse. I praise You this day, Lord, for Your cleansing power.

Read: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. – Proverbs 3:5-6

Respond: I trust You, Lord. You are trustworthy and true. You are not capable of anything false or phony. Your understanding is infinite, mine is finite so when I try to make decisions or choices, I am flawed. But You, Oh Lord, give me wisdom and understanding. As I acknowledge You, I am led by Your Spirit. I thank You that You lead me on straight and level paths, that You are not a mystery in so far as the way I can approach You and hear from You. At times I confess I don't always know what You are telling me, but I praise You that even in those times, I am safe and secure as I yield to Your loving, sovereign authority over my life. I can rest in the fact that even when I don't know what to do or even when I don't understand where You are leading, I can rely on You, Your faithfulness is a shield and a buckler.

Read: Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. – Psalm 37:5

Respond: I Praise You, my God and King! For You alone are worthy to receive glory and honor. You are working behind the scenes, orchestrating the details of my life. I commit my way to You, Lord, this day. With gratitude in my heart, I trust You to act on my behalf.

Tell the Lord You trust Him to act in the areas of Your life in which you are struggling today.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Proverbs 3
Psalm 37
1 John 1:5-10

Day 17: October 27, 2020

Read: So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. Then the word of the Lord came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. – Jeremiah 18:3-6

Respond: Loving potter, I am Your clay. I praise You for molding and shaping me according to Your plan and purpose for my life. You are to be praised for the time You take to craft and create my life with Your mighty hands. Thank You for not throwing this vessel away. Thank You, instead, for loving me enough to continue shifting and shaping Your vessel into something that can be used for Your glory. I bow before You, humbled by Your majesty, kindness, and goodness.

Read: For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite. – Isaiah 57:15

Respond: Thank You for showing me in Your Word what You desire and for giving me a perfect example of what it means to be contrite and lowly in spirit. I praise You that You dwell with those who are contrite and humble. Jesus was the perfect example and my desire is to be like Him. Thank You that when I come to You lowly and contrite, that You revive my weary soul. You are the lifter of my head. You are the One who tells me who I am. No one else has that power. No one else knows me like You know me. You know the real me. You know my heart, Lord. Even when I don't let others in to see the real me, You see me. Praise You, Father, for Your loving kindness and tender mercy.

Read: But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." – James 4:6

Respond: I know You oppose the proud and give grace to the humble. I also know that at times I am haughty, self-seeking, and prideful. This is not of You. Thank You for showing me my weaknesses, for exposing my fleshly tendencies, and for getting me back on the path of humble servanthood for Your name's sake. Your grace upon grace is what I need. You are to be praised for Your abundant grace—grace that flows from the Cross of Calvary, that flows from the sacrifice of Jesus and His precious blood.

Thank God for His grace often today.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Psalm 103

2 Corinthians 4:7-12

Day 18: October 28, 2020

Read: But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. – Ephesians 2:4-6

Respond: Rich in mercy, grace-filled, raised and seated at the right hand of the Father, Jesus You are to be praised and honored. Thank You for the rich mercy You have given me. Thank You for Your great love that loved me even when I was dead in sin. Thank You for making me alive with You, Jesus. It is by Your grace, not my own merit that I am redeemed, raised and seated in the heavenlies. Glory to You, Lord Jesus.

Read: He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.
– Colossians 2:15

Respond: All-powerful ruler, King, God Most High, I praise You for triumphing over death, over rulers and authorities in the spiritual realm. I praise You for putting them to shame and making them powerless. You have all authority in heaven and on earth. Darkness has no dominion over You. Death has no dominion over You. You are light and love. Kindness and compassion. Justice and mercy. Your wrath is unmatched against Your enemies. I am thankful that You redeemed me, and that I am on Your side. Nothing touches me outside of Your sovereign and just hand.

Read: Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. – 1 John 4:4-6

Respond: "Greater is he who is in me than he who is in the world." The enemy has no chance against You, Father. You have overcome the enemy. Death was defeated when Jesus died on the Cross and was raised in power. I praise You that I know You and have ears to hear Your voice over the voice of the enemy. Thank You for speaking to me through the Spirit of Truth that lives in me. Hallelujah!

Contemplate the power of God working in your life today. Thank and praise Him for it often.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Ephesians 6:10-20

Colossians 2:13-20

Day 19: October 29, 2020

Read: *For nothing will be impossible with God.*" – Luke 1:37

Respond: You are the God of impossibilities. You take that which man cannot do and by Your power and might You act. "Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." You make a way when there is no way. You forge a path when I can't even see. Thank You for exercising Your power and great influence over the details of my life and the life of those I love. Thank You for working miracles all around me every day.

Read: *Then 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 of hosts.* –Zechariah 4:6

Respond: Lord of Hosts, great battler, thank You for sending Your army to wage war and defend the weak. Thank You that the power of Your Spirit works and moves in lives today. I praise You for Your might and power. I praise You for your steadfastness. I praise You for Your Spirit at work within me to help me do the impossible. I know that it is You in me doing those things. I have no power outside of You. I am completely dependent on You, Lord. Thank You for teaching me dependence on You.

Read: *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.* – Ephesians 3:20-21

Respond: Abundantly more—that is You, Lord. You always exceed expectations. Even when I don't see Your presence in a situation, I can be sure that You are there, carrying out the details, working in power for Your Glory. Thank You for doing more than I could ever ask or think. Thank You for surprising me by what You do. Thank You for showing me what abundance looks like in a world that is always chasing after more, You have shown me that the "more" is You. What an extraordinary truth. You are more.

Praise God today for His abundance—His lavish love, grace upon grace, and continued work in Your life.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Psalm 20

Psalm 66

Ephesians 3:14-21

Day 20: October 30, 2020

Read: For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. – 2 Corinthians 4:6

Respond: Jesus, Light of the World, I praise You. You shine in the darkness, giving me light to see that which is around me. You shine Your light on my sin and shame so that by coming to You, I may be healed from my unrighteousness. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is on You, Jesus, and because of You, that light is on my face as well. Your Word says, "those who look to him are radiant and their faces shall never be put to shame. Praise You for the radiance of Your glory.

Read: For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.
– Ephesians 2:18-20

Respond: You are a sure and firm foundation, Father. I am grateful that I have access to You through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. I am thankful that I am a fellow citizen with the saints and members of the household of God. I praise You that Your Kingdom is built on the strong foundation of Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone.

Read: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." – Acts 1:8

Respond: You are to be praised, O God, for You have given me a share in bringing others to You. Through the power of the Holy Spirit working in me, I can be a witness about Your Son, Jesus, to a lost and dying world. I promise to never take this privilege for granted. Your love and Spirit within me compels me to go and tell others about You. Thank You for allowing me the honor of serving You by telling others about Jesus.

Take every opportunity the Lord gives you to tell others about Him, and thank Him for using You to advance His Kingdom.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

- Psalm 34
- Matthew 28:16-20
- Romans 12

Day 21: October 31, 2020

Read: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. – Hebrews 13:8

Respond: Eternal God, You are from everlasting to everlasting. You are Immutable—You do not change.

Jesus is unchanging. It isn't possible for You or Your Son to change. To alter Your attributes would contradict Your character. Your attitude toward me and all those who know and love You do not change either. Even though my attitudes change frequently, Yours does not. I'm so glad that Your persistent tenderness binds my heart to You forever.

Read: And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. – Philippians 1:6

Respond: Thank You that what You start, You complete. In fact, You don't ever stop working in the lives of those You love until the day of Christ Jesus when we will all bow before You in heaven and worship You. Even when I see the flaws in my life, the sin, the weakness, the brokenness, I know You are working in and through my life to heal me from my frailties because You have said in Your Word that You will bring me to completion. Thank You, Father.

Read: Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. – Jude 24-25

Respond: Bless You, Father, for keeping me from stumbling. Thank You that through Jesus I can be presented as blameless before You. This gives me great joy. All praise, glory, majesty, dominion, and authority are Yours, Lord Jesus now and forever. Amen.

Talk to God today about the work He is doing in your life to bring you to full completion in Jesus.

Further Scripture Reading Today:

Psalm 102

Philippians 1:1-11

ⁱ Psalm 63:1, Hebrews 11:6, Psalm 42:1-2;

ⁱⁱ Amos 5:24

ⁱⁱⁱ Matthew 6:9

^{iv} Matthew 6:10

^v 2 Thessalonians 3:1

^{vi} Matthew 13:44, Psalm 16:11

^{vii} Acts 4:29

^{viii} Psalm 90:14