Daily God Walk Promises

Volume Two

Daily God Walk

Promises
Volume 2

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV). All other translations used will be credited using these abbreviations:
(KJV) – King James Version
(NKJV) – New King James Version
(TLB) – The Living Bible
(TM) – The Message

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Daily God Walk - Promises Series

In this series of the Daily God Walk devotional we are looking at the promises in the word of God and the hope they give us in our daily walk. There are 12 books of devotions in this series. A book a month.

When we look at the world around us we can easily see hopelessness on the rise. In the county where I live there is high unemployment and 21 percent of the people are addicted to drugs, alcohol, or both.

There have been so many empty promises given by politicians that people no longer believe in them. The economy is in the tank. With the divorce rate hovering around 50 percent people have lost confidence in even the oldest institution mankind has known.

What does all of this mean? It means that if we don't find something to hope in mankind is doomed to a desperate existence living lonely, confused and hopeless lives.

That is why we are looking at the hope contained in the promises of God during this year. It is our hope that you will find something to live for and that you will discover God's plan for your life.

In Jeremiah 29:11 God says, "I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

We pray that the devotions for this year will reveal God's faithfulness and give you hope for the future.

Have you considered hosting a Small Group Bible Study?

The Daily God Walk is written with a dual purpose. First it is a devotional tool that helps the reader grow in their walk of faith. But, a second purpose, is to be a tool to be used in leading a small group. For that purpose we offer a Study Guide Edition.

In the Study Guide Edition each devotion has a second page which has a dual purpose. It helps the reader deepen his faith walk and it gives material suitable for use in small groups Bible Studies.

The second page of each devotion in the Study Guide Edition

✓ There is a section that focuses on the message brought out in the devotion. This section is an excellent tool for beginning a discussion about the devotion.

✓ The message section is followed by an affirmation. The affirmation is good to be used in prayer and meditation. When we personalize the principle by affirming it in prayer it becomes a part of us.

✓ The reflection section provides some very good material for discussion. This section usually gets to the heart of what is being taught in the devotion and contains statements or questions which help stimulate discussion.

✓ Finally, there is a section where the reader can share their thoughts on the devotion. This section is a very good tool to help the reader begin to journal on a regular basis. It is also good for a person to record their comments and questions about the devotion so they can bring them out during the small group discussion time.

For more information on how to use the Daily God Walk in the small group setting visit the website below: www.dailygodwalk.org

Day One

Hope When Troubles Hit Your Life

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. –Hebrews 10:35-36

We can all remember the day when the stuff of life was piling up around us and it seemed that there was trouble on every hand. We didn't know how we were going to make it – then we remember the one who said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

The writer of Hebrews knew the God of troubling times. He knew the God who saw our trials, our weaknesses and our tears. And in the midst of all this it is our hope in him that carries us through.

Without our hope in a future and his blessing we would surely be overrun by the stuff of life; but we do have hope and because of that, in the midst of it all. we have confidence.

I am troubled, but not distressed; I am perplexed, but not in despair; I am persecuted, but not forsaken; I am cast down, but not destroyed.

I agree with the song writer, Andre Crouch, "I've got confidence, my Lord's gonna see me through." Do not look to the circumstances around you but look up to the one who will take you through.

Prayer: Lord, there are times when it seems that I can't make it. Bills pile up. Temptations are overwhelming and people just don't understand. In those times I need your presence and guidance. I know you will see me through as long as I look to You. Amen.

Hope When Troubles Hit Your Life

Message: I am troubled, but not distressed; I am perplexed, but not in despair; I am persecuted, but not forsaken; I am cast down, but not destroyed = because I hope in Jesus Christ.

Affirmation: It is my faith in Christ which gives me hope through the circumstances of life.

Reflection: Give some thought to the hope we have in Christ. Our hope is for eternity, but not just for eternity. Our hope is in Christ for the circumstances we face in this life. How have you seen the hand of God at work in your life guiding you through troubled waters?

My Thoughts:

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Day Two

Sow to Please the Spirit

The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

– Galatians 6:8

The Bible uses a couple of words for it. "sinful nature" is one phrase it uses, "the flesh" is another. Both of these terms mean the same. They are talking about our natural way of thinking.

Paul is telling us here that if we follow the way of our sinful nature, our natural way of thinking, then we can only produce what natural thinking can produce. But, if we think like the Spirit thinks we will produce a bountiful harvest of eternal rewards.

There is a passage in the Proverbs that says there is a way that seems right to man but it leads to death. That is what Paul calls reaping corruption – a crop that spoils on us and leads to destruction.

If we pursue the Spirit of God, however, and follow in his path, we will sow seeds that will produce life, health and prosperity. Jesus told us that the evil one comes to rob, kill and destroy, but He is come to bring abundant living.

The formula for living a successful life in Christ is real simple: Sow spiritual seed and you will reap a bountiful eternal harvest. You don't need a degree in horticulture to figure it out – just sow good seed and reap a good harvest.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, I don't want to waste my life by letting the destroyer deceive me into a path of destruction. Grant me the grace to sow generously the seeds of Your Spirit so that my harvest will be eternal rewards. Amen.

Sow to Please the Spirit

Message: The formula for living a successful life in Christ is real simple: Sow spiritual seed and you will reap a bountiful eternal harvest. You don't need a degree in horticulture to figure it out – just sow good seed and reap a good harvest.

Affirmation: I will sow spiritual seed and I will reap a harvest of righteousness.

Reflection: Apostle Paul gives two examples of sowing seeds and the harvest each produces. How does sowing to please our natural person affect our harvest? How does sowing spiritual seed affect our life?

My Thoughts:

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Day Three

Holy Spirit is Our Spiritual Counselor

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. – John 14:16-17

Jesus was explaining to his disciples that it was time for him to leave them. They were sad and did not yet understand what God was doing. Jesus gave them this promise as he was trying to comfort them: "He will give you another Counselor."

The precious Spirit of the Mighty God that had been the source of all that Christ had been was now being promised to his followers. God himself was promising to dwell within believers. Could this be what Jesus meant when he told Nicodemus, "You must be born again?"

Holy Spirit would be a Counselor and, as Jesus went on to explain, Holy Spirit would lead them into all truth. Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of Truth but he is the guide to lead us to truth and counselor to help us understand truth.

Comforter, guide, Spirit of Truth; what an opportunity. Just imagine it; the hope of all that God has done from creation until now is given to mankind in the form of the Holy Spirit. Now, God's hope rests with us, the believers in whom he has vested himself.

Trust our "Spirit" guide (Holy Spirit). He will lead you through this life into our eternal life with God.

Prayer: Thank you Father your precious Spirit that you have given us to be our guide and comforter. I ask you for the grace to surrender myself to His control in me that I might become all that you have intended. In Jesus Name. Amen.

Holy Spirit is Our Spiritual Counselor

Message: Comforter, guide, Spirit of Truth; what an opportunity. Just imagine it; the hope of all that God has done from creation until now is given to mankind in the form of the Holy Spirit. Trust our "Spirit" guide (Holy Spirit). He will lead you through this life into our eternal life with God.

Affirmation: Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and He is my comforter and guide. I will trust him.

Reflection: Think about what is meant by Holy Spirit being our comforter and our guide. How does he do that? and what is meant by he is the Spirit of Truth?

My Thoughts:

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Day Four

The Spirit of the Lord is Liberty

Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. – 2 Corinthians 3:17

Matthew Henry, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, once said in a sermon, "Give me liberty, or give me death." That is the cry of every heart that is held in servitude to an unjust system.

Matthew Henry was crying out against an unjust political system, but there are many kinds of servitude. There are governments which enslave. There are societies which endorse slave labor. And, there is a personal slavery to undesirable behaviors.

Even after slavery was ended in the United States the attitude of mainstream America about the freed slaves kept in servitude those who should have been free. Then Martin Luther King Jr. came with a dream. His dream was that all men would be free.

All men and women dream of being free, but freedom doesn't come easy. Some have been mastered by undesirable behaviors that have become patterned into their lives. They would give anything to be free, but they are in bondage to a master of their own design.

Then comes Jesus, the one sent by God to set the captives free and to "set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18). There is power in the name of Jesus to set you free. He is that Spirit – and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.

Prayer: Lord, it is time to be free from the behaviors that have kept me in bondage. I ask you for the grace of freedom from habits and liberty to walk in your grace. In Jesus Name, amen.

The Spirit of the Lord is Liberty

Message: Jesus was sent by God to set the captives free and to "set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18). There is power in the name of Jesus to set you free. He is that Spirit – and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.

Affirmation: When I found Jesus I found freedom that only he can give because he is the Spirit of freedom.

Reflection: How many kinds of slavery, or being in bondage can you name? How does the Lord, being the Spirit of freedom, affect those kinds of slavery? How does one find the kind of freedom that is being addressed in this passage?

My Thoughts:

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Day Five

God's Word Judges our Heart

The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. – Hebrews 4:12

The writer is trying to tell us that God's word will go straight to our heart and read it to us. Have you ever been reading a passage of Scripture and all at once you become aware that you are coming under conviction for something in your life? Or maybe the preacher is speaking to an entire congregation, but you feel like he is talking just to you.

That is the Word of God reading your heart and speaking to you about what he finds there. God's Word can search the hidden areas of our heart and discern things that we didn't even know were there. That's why we are instructed to search the Scripture to make sure that we understand their meaning, and not just what we would like them to say.

We need to keep our heart open as we look into the Word of God so that he clean out anything that doesn't belong and put in everything that we need to live the way he desires us to live.

A sure way to keep our heart right with God is to do as David tells us in Psalm 119:11, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Hiding the Word of God in our hearts does not come easy and it will require discipline but it will keep us from sin and will continue to give us faith for the journey.

Prayer: Lord, you know my heart even better than I do. I ask that you open my heart to hear what your word would say to me. Give me the grace of a heart that is hungry for you. Reveal to me the very intent of my heart. Amen.

God's Word Judges our Heart

Message: God's Word can search the hidden areas of our heart and discern things that we didn't even know were there. That's why we are instructed to search the Scripture to make sure that we understand their meaning, and not just what we would like them to say.

Affirmation: I consciously hide God's word in my heart so he can search my heart and keep me following close to him.

Reflection: If God's word is so sharp and powerful, why is it that so many believers are still in bondage to behaviors they want to be freed from? In Psalm 119:11 David says he has hidden God's word in his heart and it keeps him from sinning. How do we hide Gods' word in our heart?

My Thoughts:

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Day Six

Trust Those God Places Over You

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. – Hebrews 13:17

Some days it just seems like all of those who are over me are out to get me. My boss at work, my pastor, and everyone else who feels like they can tell me what to do.

Have you ever felt that way? I think we all have at times. What causes us to feel that way? It usually comes from feeling unfulfilled and maybe even unappreciated. When we feel that way it often comes from the need we have to be noticed, accepted and appreciated.

When we do feel that way we must take another look at those whose responsibility it is to lead us, whether in matters of work, spirituality, or relationships. If we can just get a picture of the responsibility they feel toward us we might be able to better understand some of the things they do that affect us.

In spiritual matters it is important to remember that our leaders are thinking in terms of the eternal effect of our actions. As the writer says, they watch over you as men who must give an account.

It would be good to ask yourself if you have been a burden or a joy to those whose responsibility it is to lead you in righteousness. Trust God to work through your spiritual leaders to fulfill his purposes for your life.

Prayer: Father, today I need your assurance that those who are leading me have my best interest at heart. Grant me the grace to submit to your order and allow those you have ordained to lead me into your righteousness. In Christ's name I ask. Amen.

Trust Those God Places Over You

Message: In spiritual matters it is important to remember that our leaders are thinking in terms of the eternal effect of our actions. As the writer says, they watch over you as men who must give an account.

Affirmation: I am committed to following those God has placed in my life to lead me in the paths of righteousness.

Reflection: There is a line of distinction in spiritual leadership which divides those who inspire others to follow them and those who demand to be followed. Also, there are those who follow because they are submitted to spiritual leadership and those who follow as long as their agenda is being met. Give some thought to those ideas.

My Thoughts:

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Day Seven

Guard Against a Root of Bitterness

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

– Hebrews 12:14=15

I have noticed that when someone begins to lose their passion for God one of the first signs is that they begin to find fault with the church. "There is too much singing," "There isn't enough singing;" "The people at church are not friendly;" "The people at church try to be too friendly – they are always trying to get into my business."

Unfortunately, when this happens it doesn't just affect one person, this attitude begins to infect others and the next thing you know there is a whole group of disgruntled people. And it all started when one person began to lose their passion for God.

Remedy this situation before it becomes a problem. When you notice an attitude of being critical is creeping in realize its cause and begin the process of renewing your passion for God and for his righteousness.

Jesus told us that if we hungered and thirsted for righteousness we would be filled. The key to guarding against developing an attitude about others is to develop a hunger for His righteousness by seeking him in prayer.

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy. See to it that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Prayer: OK God, I do realize the problem is not others but me. I need to have a revival in my spirit. Fill me again with your love and grace. Grant me the ability to look past others and to see you. In Christ's name. Amen.

Guard Against a Root of Bitterness

Message: Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Affirmation: I make every effort to be at peace with others and to keep my heart free of bitterness so that I might be holy before the Lord.

Reflection: Think about some of the people who have fallen away from the faith. What were some of the signs they were losing interest? How can we guard against that happening to us?

My Thoughts:

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Day Eight

Waiting on the Lord Renews our Strength

But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

– Isaiah 40:31

The Hebrew word, *kaw-vaw*, translated "wait" is an interesting word. The primary meaning is "to bind to," as in twisting the strands of a rope together. The strands of the rope are bound together by the twisting. There is also an aspect of expecting in this word. In fact the NIV translates *kaw-vaw* in this verse as "hope."

So, what does this mean to us? It seems to mean that when our hope is bound to the will of God like the strands of a rope then we are given great strength. The difficult becomes the ordinary and the impossible becomes the expectation.

Something happens when our mind and spirit are bound to the truth of the promises that are in God's word. We become filled with hope and expectation, our hopes soar as eagles and our spiritual strength becomes like that of a young person.

I challenge you to not just sit and wait, but to find the promises of God in His Word and meditate upon them until you become bound to them. Being bound to the word of God and its promises gives us great faith.

Want spiritual strength? Bind yourself to His Word.

Prayer: Lord, I accept the challenge to bind my mind and spirit to your word. Now, grant me the grace to follow through on this challenge. In Christ's name I ask. Amen.

Waiting on the Lord Renews our Strength

Message: Something happens when our mind and spirit are bound to the truth of the promises that are in God's word. We become filled with hope and expectation, our hopes soar as eagles and our spiritual strength becomes like that of a young person.

Affirmation: My mind and spirit are bound to the word of God and my hope is secure in him. Now I can fly with the eagles and run with the young person.

Reflection: How does a person bind himself to God's word? Give some careful thought to how you can become so influenced by the Word of God that it affects every area of your life.

My Thoughts:

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Day Nine

To Know Him is to Obey Him

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.

– John 14:21

There are a couple of prerequisites to showing you truly love God. First, we have to know his commands; "He who has my commands." Next, we must keep his commands; "and keeps them."

Many people claim to love the Lord because they have gotten the "warm and fuzzies" when they prayed or went to church. Yet, they have never looked into the Bible to see how God expects those to live who claim to love him. They "love" the Lord, but they don't know him.

Some people are in love with religion, or the good feeling they get when they go to church, but they do not love the God who expects accountability and responsibility.

I am not saying that God's favor is performance based, not at all. What I am saying is that it is presumptuous to assume that we can go about our life in any way we choose and claim to love God. I've heard many people whose lifestyle reflected anything but godliness say, "I know God loves me and he understands." What God does understand is that you don't really love him; you love your present lifestyle. That doesn't appropriate God's favor.

Do you love Him? Obey His commands.

Prayer: Lord, I need to know you better so I can know your will for my life. Grant me the grace of committing to follow your commands. In Your name, amen.

To Know Him is to Obey Him

Message: It is presumptuous to assume that we can go about our life in any way we choose and claim to love God. Some people are in love with religion, or the good feeling they get when they go to church, but they do not love the God who expects accountability and responsibility.

Affirmation: I have received the commands of Christ concerning how I should live and I am committed to living as he called me to live.

Reflection: Much is said about the tension between grace and works. Are we saved by grace to do good works, or do our good works release God's grace upon us? Jesus gave a clear description of those who love him. It is those who obey his commands. It's just that simple.

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Day Ten

Take Responsibility for Your Family

If it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day who you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

– Joshua 24:15

Parents have the responsibility to train their children in the ways of the Lord. If the parents don't teach them, others in their life will. It is sad that often it is the teachers at school, or the friends in their peer group, that have the most influence in developing a value system in a child.

In our scripture verse Joshua addresses the issue of who is going to do the forming of a value system in the children. He speaks of gods from Egypt, and the gods of the Amorites. Today we would reference other influence groups. Then Joshua commits himself, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

Joshua was making more than just a public statement; he was defining a lifestyle. He was committing that everything his children observed in him and the family would be a reflection of the laws, statutes and commands of God. Joshua's goal for his family was to train them in the ways of the Lord.

God is calling us to the same commitment today. Ask yourself if you are willing to make this commitment: As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Are you ready to be accountable to God for your family?

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace of strength and purpose to make my life a reflection of your will and that I will train my family likewise. Amen.

Take Responsibility for Your Family

Message: Are willing to make this commitment: As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Are you ready to be accountable to God for your family?

Affirmation: As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Reflection: The scripture passage today references the gods of Egypt and the gods of the Amorites. Israel was not to give homage to those gods. What can you see in the world today that can become gods to people? Here are a few to consider: Ambition; sports; entertainment. Can you think of other things that might take the place of the Lord God in a persons life?

My Thoughts:

Day Eleven

Is Faith Measured by Humility?

I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. – Romans 12:3

The Apostle Paul gives us an interesting perspective on faith in this passage. We tend to think of faith in terms of releasing God's glorious blessings through our confidence in his promises. Paul is making a little different application in this passage.

Paul is addressing the concept of having a faith that makes us secure enough to stay in our place and not try to step beyond our gifting. The kind of faith he is speaking of is the kind that gives us the grace to allow others to abound beyond what our own gifting and calling allows for us.

What does it mean to think more highly of ourselves than we ought? One application may be that we should wait for others to recognize our talents and abilities rather than feeling that we need to convince them of how good we are.

Another application is that we would prefer others above ourselves. That means when we make a sober assessment of who is best qualified it may mean that someone else fits the need much better than us and we should recognize that.

This is the kind of faith that causes us to humbly submit to God's plan for our life. It is also the kind of faith that knows whatever blessing, task or achievement he leads us into He will perform through us, just as he has promised.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the humility to accept your gifting in others as well as your gifting in myself and to soberly submit to your will. In Christ's name I ask, amen.

Is Faith Measured by Humility?

Message: We are called to have a faith which makes us secure enough to stay in our place and not try to step beyond our gifting. That is the kind of faith which gives us the grace to allow others to abound beyond what our own gifting and calling allows for us.

Affirmation: By faith I will follow as far as God leads and by faith I will accept the place he has for me.

Reflection: This devotion asks the question, "What does it mean to think more highly of ourselves than we ought?" Give that question some careful thought as you consider how you can rejoice in the gifting of others while you are content with your own gifting.

My Thoughts:

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Day Twelve

God is Our Peace in the Midst of Grief

For the Lord has comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted. – Isaiah 49:13

Grief comes on the occasion of many kinds of loss, but it takes on one primary form. When we grieve we lose our inner peace and we have no inner comfort. Grief comes at the loss of a loved one, but it can also come at the loss of something we treasure; our marriage or our employment.

Whatever the cause of our grief it is very real to us. Even when others don't think we should feel so deeply about a particular loss, God doesn't feel that way. He feels our pain and grief whatever the cause.

Isaiah encourages us that when we are grieving the Lord will extend comfort to us. In another place Isaiah tells us that Jesus is our comfort and our Prince of Peace. Share your hurt, even your anger over the loss, with Him and he will comfort you and grant you mercy.

It is not always easy to trust God in the time of loss, or in times of difficulty, particularly when we haven't trusted him in the good times as well. There is a tendency to take the credit ourselves when times are good and to neglect our commitments to God, then, when we face difficulty we turn quickly to Him and ask, "Why?"

We must remember to trust Him in the good times and give Him the glory when things go well. Then, when things are not going so well it is easier to trust His grace.

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted," and in the same passage blesses the meek, the poor, the merciful and those who hunger for righteousness. We must trust him in the good times and the difficult times.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you have given us hope that in the middle of our grief you will be our comfort. I ask you, Prince of Peace, stand by my side and comfort my troubled heart. Amen.

God is Our Peace in the Midst of Grief

Message: We must remember to trust God in the good times and give Him the glory when things go well. Then, when things are not going so well it is easier to trust His grace. Remember, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:4).

Affirmation: I am trusting God when he is blessing, and I am trusting God when things are not going so well. "I will bless the Lord at all times" (Psalm 34:1).

Reflection: Think about the connection between rejoicing in the Lord during the good times and in the difficult times. What are the key factors which allow that to happen?

My Thoughts:

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Day Thirteen

Jesus Is Your Friend

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known to you. – John 15:15

We usually have many people around us that we call friends, but in reality few of them are true friends. I have heard it said that in your lifetime, you will probably be able to count all of your true friends on one hand.

How would you describe a friend? A friend is someone who understands and accepts you. They are there for you when the road is rough. A friend will still be there when everyone else has walked off. A friend will not count the score between you.

What did Jesus mean when he called his followers friends? He was speaking of a new and deeper relationship. Jesus was telling them that he wasn't going to be treating them as servants, just ordering them around, but that he would reveal the Father's will to them.

Jesus was offering them the opportunity to be in intimate relationship with the Father through him. And, as a friend of God, all of heaven is made available to us. In verse 16 of this passage he says, "Whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

A friend will stand up for a friend and defend him from attacks and accusations. Scripture teaches us that Jesus is before the Father making intercession and opposing the accusations of our great enemy the devil.

Jesus is a true friend and he will always be there for us.

Prayer: Lord, it is an awesome blessing to be called your friend and have ready access to heaven. Grant me the grace to live worthy of your friendship. In Jesus Name. Amen.

Jesus Is Your Friend

Message: A friend will stand up for a friend and defend him from attacks and accusations. Scripture teaches us that Jesus is before the Father making intercession and opposing the accusations of our great enemy the devil.

Affirmation: I have found Jesus to be a friend who will stand up for me when I am accused and pick me up when I fall.

Reflection: There are many levels of "friend." I sometimes call someone I just met friend, but I really mean acquaintance. I have called some friend who have then turned against me. And then I have had friends who have been faithful. Think about the kind of friend Jesus has promised to be.

My Thoughts:

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Day Fourteen

The Truth Will Set You Free

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

– John 8:31-32

Jesus was not just saying that truth will set you free, he was saying that *The Truth* will set you free. Jesus himself is *The Truth*. In another place he said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

When we know him who is the truth then we indeed live in the freedom that only he can provide. Those who heard him speak of freedom declared that they were sons of Abraham and had never been in bondage to any man; how could they be set free when they had never been bound?

Jesus told them, "Whoever commits sin is the servant of sin" (verse 34). Then he said, "If the Son (The Truth) therefore shall make you free, you shall be free in deed." Only Jesus, The Christ, The Word, The Truth can set us free from the bondage of sin – and when he has set us free we are indeed free.

There are many belief systems which have a measure of truth in them and if one follows their proscribed formulas for success and life one will find a certain measure of freedom. But, true freedom from the world and sin comes only through being born into the Christ family through faith in Jesus, the Christ of redemption.

Thank God I'm free because *The Truth* has made me free! He who the son has made free is free indeed.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for freeing me from being a servant to my sinful cravings. Thank you for allowing me to know The Way, The Truth, and The Life – and in knowing to be set free. Thankfully, in Your name. Amen.

The Truth Will Set You Free

Message: Only Jesus, The Christ, The Word, The Truth can set us free from the bondage of sin – and when he has set us free we are indeed free. True freedom from the world and sin comes only through being born into the Christ family through faith in Jesus, the Christ of redemption.

Affirmation: I have been born into the family of Christ and I am now free from sin and the influences of this world.

Reflection: What makes Christianity unique in offering freedom when all major religions offer some level of freedom? How can we take that message to the rest of the world?

My Thoughts:

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Day Fifteen

There is Mercy at the Throne of Grace

We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. – Hebrews 4:15-16

We've heard the phrase, "Don't do as I do, do as I say." Jesus is saying, "Do as I do." He was tempted in every way, yet he did not sin. Can we do as he did?

Indeed we can, but we must follow his pattern. We are told in this passage to, "come boldly to the throne of grace." Coming boldly indicates that we have great confidence in our relationship with him. The throne of grace indicates that God's favor is extended to us through Christ and that should give us the confidence to approach Him boldly.

What happens when we approach the throne boldly? We obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. That's it. Not in our ability to resist, but in his ability to extend grace, mercy and help in every temptation and trial.

One of the purposes for God becoming flesh and dwelling among us was to be an example of what we, who are flesh, yet do not live after the flesh, can do. Jesus, the Christ, is our great example of a life surrendered to the will of God.

We need to consistently go to the throne of grace to gain strength in times of temptation instead of turning to our own abilities. Just like the old song says, "I am weak but he is strong, Jesus keep me from all wrong."

Prayer: Lord, grant me the good sense to surrender my weaknesses to you and approach the throne of grace knowing that favor, mercy and help is there. In Jesus name, amen.

There is Mercy at the Throne of Grace

Message: The throne of grace indicates that God's favor is extended to us through Christ and that should give us the confidence to approach Him boldly. We need to consistently go to the throne of grace to gain strength.

Affirmation: God's grace is all sufficient and when I come before him with my need I can have the confidence that he will give me an audience.

Reflection: There is a "therefore" in our Scripture reading. What is that referring to and what does it mean to us? Is Christ an example we can expect to emulate?

My Thoughts:

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Day Sixteen

Morning is the Hope of a Fearful Night

His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. –Psalm 30:5

How often do we go to bed with the feeling that all is not well? There are times when we feel defeated, or at least failing to complete what should have been done. Then there are times when we just don't know what is wrong but the night seems to hold such foreboding for us.

I don't know what it is about the night but far too often it brings a gloom that seems to say, "You aren't going to make it." We become fearful of things that we don't even think about during the day.

David tells us that we should not be overly concerned in the night because the morning brings an entirely new outlook. We may have wept in the night, but the morning brings a smile. The worries we had in the night seem to have been dissolved by the coming of day. We may have wept in the night, but now we are rejoicing in the light of a brand new day.

Have the worries of life been keeping you from a restful night of sleep? I would encourage you to remember that Jesus is the burden bearer and he is saying, "Go to bed, get some rest; don't worry. I'll take care of it.

We can choose to start the day by carrying over the concerns of the night and cry out, "Good Lord, it's morning." Or we can start by rejoicing and crying out, "Good morning Lord." It is our choice.

Though by night we weep the morning brings a smile.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for the morning. Grant me the faith to look at today as brand new opportunity to receive and express your love and Grace. In Christ's name. Amen.

Morning is the Hope of a Fearful Night

Message: Have the worries of life been keeping you from a restful night of sleep? I would encourage you to remember that Jesus is the burden bearer and he is saying, "Go to bed, get some rest; don't worry. I'll take care of it.

Affirmation: I know that the night often unleashes fears, and many of them unrealistic, but I also know that joy comes in the morning. My hope is in the morning.

Reflection: What is your response when the night comes and you feel overwhelmed by the circumstances of life? We are promised that joy comes in the morning. How can you prepare yourself for the night?

My Thoughts:

Day Seventeen

Remember; The Lord Delights in You

You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; For the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. –Isaiah 62:4

In this prophecy God's people had been going through a long period of rejection by the other nations of the region. And, it seemed that God himself had rejected them.

Have you ever been there? When it seems that everyone has turned against you, or at least they have chosen to ignore you. You feel alone and abandoned. That's where Israel was when Isaiah told them that they would be Hephzibah.

This word means, "He delights in her." God said, "I will call you Hephzibah because I delight in you."

What a hope. When everything is falling down around us and our friends are deserting us God said, "I take delight in you." I believe that one thing he is trying to tell us in this passage is to not look around at who is and who isn't accepting or rejecting us – but we are to look to the one who delights in us and who said, "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Have you felt alone or rejected? Do you feel that no one appreciates you and certainly no one takes delight in you. Take heart. God not only accepts you but he delights in you and he has a wonderful plan for your life. You are the one he calls "Hephzibah."

Prayer: Lord, there are times I feel so alone and I need your affirmation. I ask you to grant me a special grace and allow me to feel the comfort of knowing that you delight in me. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

Remember; The Lord Delights in You

Message: When everything is falling down around us and our friends are deserting us God said, "I take delight in you." One thing he is trying to tell us in this passage is to not look around at who is and who isn't accepting or rejecting us – but we are to look to the one who delights in us and who said, "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Affirmation: It matters little what others think of me as long as I know the one who matters delights in me.

Reflection: Most of us have felt forsaken and alone at some point in our life. Think about when you were in that place. How did you feel about yourself? What do you think the Lord meant when he said he delights in us?

My Thoughts:

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Day Eighteen

By His Grace We Do Not Lose Heart

All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. – 2 Corinthians 4:15-17

This entire chapter in 2 Corinthians is dealing with enduring hardship for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In verse 8 he writes, "We are troubled on every side" and in verse 11, "We who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus sake." If we had this alone we would certainly be left in hopeless despair, but he didn't stop there.

He gives us verse 15 where he speaks of the abundant grace of God that abounds to the glory of God. In verse 16 he tells us that this grace, God's favor, renews our inner man day by day and in verse 17, "Our light afflictions, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Finally, in verse 18 he encourages us that our reward is not in what we see around us because these things are temporal, but our reward is in the things we cannot see now for they are eternal. God's abundant grace is preparing for us an eternal home that is not affected by this temporal world. Thank God for his glorious grace.

This world is not my home, I'm just passing through.

Prayer: Lord, we are committed to allowing your grace to give us the faith and courage to face every obstacle as we continue our journey of faith. We know that hoping in you secures our eternal home. Thank you. In Jesus name. Amen.

By His Grace We Do Not Lose Heart

Message: Our reward is not in what we see around us because these things are temporal, but our reward is in the things we cannot see now for they are eternal. God's abundant grace is preparing for us an eternal home that is not affected by this temporal world.

Affirmation: My hope is in things with eternal value and I know God is achieving for me an eternal glory that far outweighs my trials.

Reflection: In this devotion we look at the way we are affected by the circumstances around us and the trials of life. What do these verses from 2 Corinthians 4 teach us about how we are to look at the trials of this life?

My Thoughts:

Day Nineteen

God Is Concerned About the Unbeliever

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. – 2 Peter3:9

We see them everywhere. They are our neighbors, our friends, our co-workers, and even our own family. They are the unbelievers – those who have yet to place their faith in Jesus as their Lord.

The scriptures declare their fate, yet it seems that God has forgotten his own word. Where is his judgment, where is his justice? When will he take vengeance upon the unrighteous? Has God gone slack concerning judgment?

If we believe that we don't know God. What then is going on? The very purpose of his waiting to execute judgment upon the disobedient is this; "He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul writes, "for this reason we try to persuade men."

That's it then – God is waiting for men and women to come to repentance – and it is our job to lead them to Christ. God has given us this treasure of redemption and it is our responsibility to share it with the world.

As he was about to ascend to heaven Jesus told the disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit and they would be powerful witness of Him. We are called to be power witnesses to the glory of God through Christ.

Prayer: Lord, give me compassion for people so I won't just breathe out threatening of judgment but that I will offer Christ as the antidote to sin and shame. Give me a heart to pursue men to share the grace of God with them. I ask in Jesus name. Amen.

God Is Concerned About the Unbeliever

Message: The very purpose for God waiting to execute judgment upon the disobedient is this; "He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul writes, “for this reason we try to persuade men.”

Affirmation: I am committed to responding to God's desire that none should perish by trying to persuade others to follow him.

Reflection: God is withholding judgment to give those who do not believe to become believers and be redeemed from judgment. What do you see as your responsibility in persuading others to follow Christ?

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty

Jesus Is Your Guardian

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. – Isaiah 43:2

We are not promised protection from the trials, but we are promised protection through the trials. There are times when life's circumstances come upon us like a flood and we feel that we will be swept away by the tide of troubles before us. In those times we turn Him who is master of the storm and who will protect us from the ravishes of life.

In times of trial it is passages like this one in Isaiah which give us courage to stand with boldness to enter the thrown room of heaven and declare to Him, "You said that when we walk through the fire that we would not be burned and the flame would not scorch us – I am in the fire and I need your protection."

Have you been feeling like life is more battle than victory? Are your mountains too high and your valleys too low? Remember his promise. Whatever we face he faces it with us. Sincere faith and faithfulness to Him will bring the reward of his protection in the darkest of trials.

If you are feeling overwhelmed I would encourage you take a moment and pray this passage back to the One who gave the promise. Tell Him what you are facing and remind Him (when you remind Him you are actually reminding yourself) what He has promised.

Prayer: Father God, You said you would bring us through when it seemed there would be no way so I am trusting you today to be my guardian in the storms I am facing. In Jesus name. Amen.

Jesus Is Your Guardian

Message: Are your mountains too high and your valleys too low? Remember his promise. Whatever we face he faces it with us. Sincere faith and faithfulness to Him will bring the reward of his protection in the darkest of trials.

Affirmation: I trust you, Lord, to take me through the trials I face and I know you will not allow me to be overwhelmed by them.

Reflection: We sometimes pray for "breakthrough" when God wants to give us "brought-through." An interesting thought: he didn't promise to keep us from the flood but he promised to keep us through the flood; He didn't promise to keep us from the fire but he promised to bring us through the fire. Think about it.

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty One

The Bible Is Food For The Soul

He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

– Deuteronomy 8:3

This is an interesting passage. Moses seems to be saying that God caused the Israelite people to be hungry so that he could show his ability to provide for them. And, that the provision was not the important thing, but the important thing was the Word of God because it was the word of God that made the provision available.

Just like Israel, we tend to focus on the provision and accuse God when the provision doesn't come like we expected. But we must remember that the availability of the provision depends on our response to the Word of God. When God speaks and we respond he opens the storehouse of heaven and we are able to partake of the promised provision.

When we look only to the provision we miss the impact of the Word which leads us to get off track and miss the greater thing that God has planned for us. The purpose of temporal provision is to lead us to faith for his eternal provision.

God's Word is food for our soul – eat it regularly.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to look at you as the magic provider, but to see you as the one who is himself the provision. Grant me the grace of faith to believe in every Word that proceeds from you and submit myself to it. In Christ's name. Amen.

The Bible Is Food For The Soul

Message: Just like Israel, we tend to focus on the provision and accuse God when the provision doesn't come like we expected. But we must remember that the availability of the provision depends on our response to the Word of God.

Affirmation: I know that God will provide and all I have to do is follow his lead and trust him.

Reflection: Read the first two verses of Deuteronomy 8 and think about how God humbled Israel. Do you think God might humble us by bringing us into a difficult situation so that we will have to trust him day by day to make provision for us? God has made provision for our every need, but what is the key which unlocks the storehouse of his abundance?

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Two

What to do when you feel Worried

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. – Psalm 4:8

How often have we gone to bed carrying a burden of worry about things over which we had absolutely no control? We've all done it more times than we care to remember.

Why do we do that? Why do we allow our peace to be taken by circumstances that are beyond our ability to affect? I think it may be that we forget the source of our peace. We tend to forget that our hope is not in the temporal things around us but in the eternal hope which lives within us.

There is a story of a backslidden preacher who had been walking in the woods and didn't see a cliff in front of him. Over the edge he went with arms and legs flailing. After falling just a bit he grabbed the bottom limb of a 100 foot tall pine. He was still 50 feet from the ground.

Hanging there he prayed, "Lord, If you get me down from here I'll do anything for you." "You'll do anything?" the Lord answered. The man replied, "Anything." The Lord said, "Alright then, turn loose of that branch." Sometimes the things that worry us most are the hardest to turn loose.

God will be our peace, but we must be willing to release our worries and concerns to him. Not all of our issues are as radical as that preacher faced, but we do face issues fairly regularly which challenge our faith. In those tough times our faith is tested and proven.

Prayer: Lord, I got myself into this predicament, but I need your help to get me out. Help me to see that only by trusting you can I be free. Grant me the faith to trust you, whatever you ask me to do. In Jesus name. Amen.

What to do when you feel Worried

Message: We tend to forget that our hope is not in the temporal things around us but in the eternal hope which lives within us. Sometimes the things that worry us most are the hardest to turn loose. Our faith is tested and proven when we are able to "let go and let God."

Affirmation: When times are tough I continue to trust God. Tough times produce tough faith.

Reflection: Can you think of a time when you, like the preacher, were in a difficult situation and great faith was required to be rescued? How did you handle it and how did God deliver you?

My Thoughts:

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Twenty Three

God's Promise When You Need Of Courage

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. – Isaiah 41:10

Most of us parents have had the occasion when we were shopping with our child beside us when something caught their attention and they wandered off. They gave no thought to being alone or lost, they were just following the object of their attention.

Then, all at once, they look around and there is no parent in sight. Fear grips them, they start crying and running frantically to find the parent who is their security.

We've all been there as parents, and we have all been there as adults too. We were just moving through life following the thing that had gotten our attention when all at once we realize that we are in a dangerous place and we are alone with no help in sight.

But there is help and protection. The Lord has said, "Do not fear, I am with you." We must remember to look for him because he is there, wherever "there" is for you. Alone there is little we can do, but with God all things are possible.

Of course, not all of the dangers we face are the result of our own mistakes, but often danger comes to us from unexpected places and in unexpected times. It is in those times particularly that we must remember that God is with us and he will uphold us with his righteous hand.

In every circumstance of life we must remember to hold to the hand of the one who is never changing.

***Prayer*:** Father, so often I am in difficult situations that leave me feeling alone and helpless. I need you to remind me that you are there, that you are with me. Help to remember that. In Your name I ask. Amen.

God's Promise When You Need Of Courage

Message: Often danger comes to us from unexpected places and in unexpected times. It is in those times particularly that we must remember that God is with us and he will uphold us with his righteous hand.

Affirmation: I will not fear any danger because I know the Lord is with me and that He will reach out His hand to me.

Reflection: Since you became a believer, have you ever been wandering through life and all at once realized that you had strayed from God's protective hand? What did you do? What happened when you turned to God for his help to get you back on track?

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Four

Sometimes We Need To Re-Prioritize

If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands... The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

– Deuteronomy 28:1-8

The promise of blessing in this passage begins with the caution, "If you fully obey the Lord your God." We all want God's blessing, but we are not as anxious to follow his commands.

It is popular today for preachers to talk about sowing seeds (into their ministry of course) to reap a bountiful harvest. It is not popular to preach that these blessings are promised only to those who live in obedience of God's will.

Not every time we are in a financial strait is it related to obedience, but it does happen often enough that we should pay attention to our lifestyle. If we find ourselves unable to make the monthly payments on our two cars, boat, sports club, big screen TV and assorted other toys, we may need to re-evaluate our priorities.

On the other hand there is the promise of prosperity and continued blessing to those who follow the Lord whole heartedly.

Our challenge is to serve without expecting a reward and receive his blessing without feeling a sense of entitlement.

Prayer: Lord, I didn't think I was being less than committed to your will, but if I have had my priorities mixed up, grant me the will to surrender all of these things to you and trust you for the outcome. I will trust you as I serve you. In the Name of Jesus I ask. Amen.

Sometimes We Need To Re-Prioritize

Message: The promise of blessing in our Scripture for today begins with the caution, “If you fully obey the Lord your God.” We all want God’s blessing, but we are not as anxious to follow his commands. Our challenge is to serve without expecting a reward and receive his blessing without feeling a sense of entitlement.

Affirmation: I am carefully to follow all of God's commands and am receiving the blessing which comes with obedience.

Reflection: God has promised blessing, but he does put conditions on his blessing. Think carefully on this statement, "Our challenge is to serve without expecting a reward and receive his blessing without feeling a sense of entitlement. What does that mean to you?

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Day Twenty Five

Blessing Abraham's Offspring

The promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring – not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

–Romans 4:16-17

Throughout his writings Paul teaches that we, who through the grace of God serve him in faith, though we were not born into the physical family of Abraham, have been born into the promises of God concerning his offspring.

It was God's intention that through the offspring of Abraham He would open heaven to give many blessings to mankind. In fact, in Genesis God promises, "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (12:3).

Life, health, prosperity and many blessings are promised to Abraham's offspring – and by virtue of the grace of God that has been extended to us through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, he has extended those same blessings to the church.

Remember who you are in Christ and the heritage you have been born into through faith in Him. It is time to begin thinking of yourself as a child of promise and step up to the Father's table.

We no longer have to take a back seat to anyone else. God is offering the best of heaven to us.

Prayer: Lord, there are times that I forget just who you have called me to be and what you have made available to me. Grant me the faith to step out into your promises and declare them to be your will for my life. In Jesus name. Amen.

Blessing Abraham's Offspring

Message: Remember who you are in Christ and the heritage you have been born into through faith in Him. It is time to begin thinking of yourself as a child of promise and step up to the Father's table.

Affirmation: Through faith in Christ I have been born into the blessing of Abraham and as a Christ Follower I have access to the best God has.

Reflection: God promised to bless all families of the earth through Abraham's lineage. How do you see that blessing coming to you? What makes a person eligible to receive the blessing of Abraham's seed?

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Day Twenty Six

Fellowship Strengthens the Body

Speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. – Ephesians 5:19-20

There is a lot of instruction in the Bible about our interaction with each other. We are told to regard others in higher esteem than ourselves, to submit to one another, to forgive one another and to bear one another's burdens. This passage is about having spiritual fellowship with one another.

Can you remember a time when you might have been feeling just a little down and either a friend came over, or you went over to the friends place, and you began to have fellowship. Maybe someone brought up a scripture that encouraged them and someone else will lead out in a song that has been on their mind.

It's at those times that we realize the value of believing friends who can share with us how God is working in their lives and thereby bringing us encouragement and hope.

Shortly after the birth of the church Acts records, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). Fellowship was crucial in the early days of the church and it is crucial today. Call a friend today and offer a thanksgiving to the Lord for He is worthy of our praise.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to try and "go through it alone," because I don't want to burden others with what is going on with me – but I need others in my life to lift me up. Give me the desire to reach out for others and to others. In Jesus name. Amen.

Fellowship Strengthens the Body

Message: Fellowship was crucial in the early days of the church and it is crucial today. Speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Affirmation: I gain strength and my faith is deepened through fellowship with other believers. I will continue join with others in sharing God's word, prayer, worship and fellowship.

Reflection: There seems to be a trend away from intimacy in spiritual fellowship. Why do you feel churches and ministries are not emphasizing the fellowship aspect of the faith as much as they used to?

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Day Twenty Seven

Jesus Is the True Vine

I am the true Vine, and my Father is the gardener... Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. – John 15:1-4

So many of us feel so self sufficient that we believe we can make it through the day without anyone else giving us support. So, we start the day with all kinds of good intentions; then, bit by bit our good intentions begin to unravel.

Anger jumps up unexpectedly. Desire for things that we know would not be good for us begin to rise up. And, out of the blue, someone turns up from our old life and begins to talk about the "good old days." We begin to feel ourselves being drawn away from the vine, the source of our strength.

Does that scenario sound familiar? I think we have all fallen into that trap a few times, but we don't have to. Jesus said, "remain in me." What does it mean to "remain" in him?

Each day we must make a purpose to yield ourselves to him. We renew our commitment to follow where he leads and to deny our own tendency toward things that would not be good for us.

It takes effort to stay in the vine, but the rewards of being "in Christ" far outweigh the cost of the effort.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to begin feeling confident enough to make it on my own, and each time I try it I fall short. I truly do need your strength. Grant me a strong desire to stay in the vine and to do what I must to do so. In Jesus name. Amen.

Jesus Is the True Vine

Message: Each day we must make a purpose to yield ourselves to Him. We renew our commitment to follow where he leads and to deny our own tendency toward things that would not be good for us. It takes effort to stay in the vine, but the rewards of being "in Christ" far outweigh the cost of the effort

Affirmation: I regularly strengthen my commitment to remain in the True Vine through prayer, reading God's Word and fellowshipping with other believers.

Reflection: Give some thought to the similarities between being in Christ (the True Vine) and the function of a vine in the natural realm.

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Eight

Scripture is The End of Your Search For Life

Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me.

– John 5:39

Remember that thing that came in a box that said, "Some assembly required?" When you opened the box it was full of pieces that needed to be put together and there was an instruction booklet there to help you put it together.

I've done that before, except I thought I was smart enough to figure it out on my own. Just give me the pieces and I'll figure out how to make it work. I usually wind up with something that does ok – but it doesn't work quite right and I always wonder what would have happened if I had followed the instructions and used all of the parts instead of just sticking the left over parts in a drawer somewhere.

Then the thing breaks down; and I complain about the company that produces a lousy product that doesn't work like it is supposed to and breaks down too often.

Wake Up – we're the box of pieces and our ego is the one trying to put us together without following the instructions. God has given us a wonderful book of instruction on how to gain eternal, abundant, life. Let's just follow the instruction.

I have talked to many people whose lives are being controlled by addictions and as a result they are living in abject poverty. Yet, when I talk with them they claim to be walking with God. The saddest part of that is they could be living the abundant blessed life if they would only search the scripture to see what it says and follow it.

Prayer: OK Lord. I think I finally get it. Today I will follow the instructions in the book. Grant me the grace of faith to trust you. In Your name I ask. Amen.

Scripture is The End of Your Search For Life

Message: God has given us a wonderful book of instruction on how to gain eternal, abundant, life. Let's just follow the instruction. Don't be like those who claim to follow Christ, but actually follow their own path. They could have God's abundance but they settle for the crumbs.

Affirmation: I will follow closely the instructions God gave me so that I may live his abundant life.

Reflection: How do we know the way to appropriate God's best for ourselves? By studying the Scripture. Do some research to find Scriptures which explain God's plan for your life and how to release you into His plan.

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Nine

What to do when you feel ... Lonely

Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.

– Deuteronomy 31:6

Have you ever heard anyone say that the times they feel most vulnerable to temptation is when they feel lonely? It's like they have a need for comfort from someone or something that is familiar.

It is at those times that most of us just naturally turn to behaviors that are not good for us. For some of us that is comfort foods, for others it is alcohol or drugs. Some just go into a depression or another unhealthy emotional state.

When our hope is in Him, and our trust is in Him, and His Word is our strength and comfort we can go to him in these lonely times and find the strength and comfort we need. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. He is faithful and His word is true – trust him it works.

I have also found that when I'm struggling with an issue, or just feel alone, if I go to a trusted friend and share just where I am emotionally that friend can give me encouragement and remind me that God, and my friend, will walk beside me all the way.

Some folks are lonely even around friends because they have not learned how to open up and be a friend. Here is an antidote for loneliness: Trust God to be your friend then be a friend to someone else. Try it – it works.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, I thank you for being there for me. I am grateful that I never have to worry about whether you will leave me alone. Now, grant me the faith to believe what I know. I ask in Jesus name. Amen.

What to do when you feel ... Lonely

Message: When our hope is in Him, and our trust is in Him, and His Word is our strength and comfort we can go to him in these lonely times and find the strength and comfort we need. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us.

Affirmation: I know He accompanies me through my darkest time because he promised that he would not leave or forsake me.

Reflection: It is sometimes hard to trust Him when we are in difficult times. What can be done to insure that we will be able to trust him when times are tough?

My Thoughts:

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Day Thirty

A Deposit Guaranteeing Our Inheritance

You also were included in Christ when you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance unto the redemption of those who are God's possession.

– Ephesians 1:13-14

The term, "Old Testament" was given to the Word of God which gave us the Law of Moses, and history of Israel. The term, "New Testament" was given to the Law of Grace revealed through Christ.

First there was the "will" (or testament to his intentions) of God for Abraham and his descendants, Israel. He expresses in many places, beginning with Genesis 12, His intention to bless the world through the seed of Abraham.

Then He further revealed his will in the birth of Christ and the subsequent revelation of His purpose in being born. This is the New Testament, or, a new era of revealing His will.

This New Testament is very simple; God has sent Christ to secure for us the eternal gift of salvation. To seal the deal, so to speak, He gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who believed. This indwelling presence of God has become the deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.

We who have believed in Christ have received an eternal inheritance. The indwelling Holy Spirit is our assurance which guarantees our inheritance.

Prayer: Thank you Father for Christ and what He accomplished. I also give thanks for the Holy Spirit which has become the seal of my inheritance. Truly, your grace is sufficient. Amen.

A Deposit Guaranteeing Our Inheritance

Message: We who have believed in Christ have received an eternal inheritance. The indwelling Holy Spirit is our assurance which guarantees our inheritance

Affirmation: I know that God has prepared an eternal inheritance for me because His word tells me so and the Holy Spirit has been given me as a deposit, or assurance guaranteeing my inheritance.

Reflection: If the Old Testament was given as the "will" of God for Israel, then what was the purpose of the New Testament? How does the New Testament relate to the Old Testament?

My Thoughts:

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Have You Heard of the Take A Knee Challenge?

The idea was inspired by watching coaches of sports teams tell their players to "Take a Knee" when they have something important or inspirational to share with them. You will also notice that many of the professional sports teams will take a knee after a game to offer thanks.

This is a 30 day challenge for followers of Christ to do two things:

First, is the challenge simply to make a purpose to "Take A Knee" every day at least once a day. We are simply challenging believers to bend their knee before the Lord every day for a short time to give thanks, ask for guidance for the day, wisdom to act appropriately in every situation and the power of Holy Spirit to be an effective witness for Christ.

Second is the challenge to invite 5 of your friends to accept the challenge. We all have at least 5 friends who would be willing to accept this challenge.

Everyone who accepts the challenge gets a free book of devotions. You will get a book of 30 devotions on prayer when you join the challenge and each of your friends who join the challenge will also get the book.

Our goal is to enlist 1000 Prayer Warriors who will pray daily for:

1. Renewal and Revival in the Body of Christ
2. A Spiritual awakening in our local communities
3. Another Great Awakening in America

For more information go to:

http://www.take-a-knee.org