

21

# DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

NEWPORT MESA CHURCH  
21 DAYS DEVOTIONAL

JANUARY 5-26, 2020

# DAY 1 JANUARY 5, 2020

GENESIS 11:1-13:4

MATTHEW 5:1-26

PSALMS 5:1-12


PROVERBS 1:24-28

## PSALMS 5:1-3 (KJV)

V. 1 GIVE EAR TO MY WORDS, O LORD. CONSIDER MY MEDITATION.

V. 2 HEARKEN UNTO THE VOICE OF MY CRY, MY KING, AND MY GOD.  
FOR UNTO THEE WILL I PRAY.

V. 3 MY VOICE SHALT THOU HEAR IN THE MORNING. O LORD, IN THE  
MORNING, WILL I DIRECT MY PRAYER. UNTO THEE, I WILL LOOK UP.



What are the first things you do when you get up and going in the morning? There are so many possibilities! Showering, brushing the teeth, getting dressed, getting a cup of coffee or juice, maybe making a smoothie or energy drink, having breakfast, checking in on your phone for the latest emails and messages... Psalm 5 is a great reminder that we need to include quality time with the Lord every morning as part of how we begin our day. Like King David, there are times in my life when I have struggled to maintain that priority consistently.

I first heard Psalm 5:1-3 set to music, back around 1980, and it really struck a chord in my heart. It was a time when Donna and I were hurting, a time of uncertainty in our lives, a time of having to truly “wait upon the Lord”. I decided to make this passage, this song, my morning anthem.

Each morning I would softly sing it and begin letting my heart out to God. I would read and meditate on a portion of His Word. I would direct my questions and concerns to Him (Phil. 4:6), then listen for His gentle replies in my spirit. What a difference this model from King David has made in my life throughout the years! You can listen to the original music that inspired me at the link listed above.

Written by Tom Watt

# DAY 2 JANUARY 6, 2020

GENESIS 13:5-15:21

MATTHEW 5:27-48

PSALMS 6:1-10

PROVERBS 1:29-33

## PSALM 6:6-9 (NIV)

V. 6 I AM WORN OUT FROM MY GROANING. ALL NIGHT LONG I FLOOD  
MY BED WITH WEeping AND DRENCH MY COUCH WITH TEARS.

V. 7 MY EYES GROW WEAK WITH SORROW; THEY FAIL BECAUSE OF ALL MY FOES.

V. 8 AWAY FROM ME, ALL YOU WHO DO EVIL, FOR THE LORD HAS HEARD MY WEeping.

V. 9 THE LORD HAS HEARD MY CRY FOR MERCY. THE LORD ACCEPTS MY PRAYER.



Wouldn't it be wonderful if our lives had a delete key? When an overwhelming event happens we could simply click "delete" and the problem would be gone. "Away from me!" and a physical injury, difficult situation, or words spoken in anger would completely disappear as if it never really happened.

Like the Psalmist David, we all face adversity here on earth. Because we tend to relive the devastation over and over in our minds, we groan, weep, and cannot see past the agony.

In addition, our "sorrow because of all our foes" causes us to fail to see clearly.

In verses 1-7, David laments and agonizes over his situation. Is God going to answer him before he dies? In verse 8, there is a transition. God has truly heard his weeping and cries for mercy.

"Are you in soul trouble? Follow David's example. Talk with the Lord all the way through the night hours. It will not always be like this. Because of Jesus you know more about God than David did. You have an intercessor in your heart, the Holy Spirit. Take heart today, God has an answer." George O. Wood

Written by Donna Watt

# DAY 3 JANUARY 7, 2020

GENESIS 16:1-18:15

MATTHEW 6:1-24


PSALMS 7:1-17

PROVERBS 2:1-6

## PROVERBS 2:1-6 (NASB)

V. 1 MY SON, IF YOU WILL RECEIVE MY WORDS AND TREASURE MY COMMANDMENTS WITHIN YOU,  
 V. 2 MAKE YOUR EAR ATTENTIVE TO WISDOM, AND INCLINE YOUR HEART TO UNDERSTANDING;  
 V. 3 FOR IF YOU CRY FOR DISCERNMENT, LIFT YOUR VOICE FOR UNDERSTANDING;  
 V. 4 IF YOU SEEK HER AS SILVER AND SEARCH FOR HER AS FOR HIDDEN TREASURES;  
 V. 5 THEN YOU WILL DISCERN THE FEAR OF THE LORD AND DISCOVER THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.  
 V. 6 FOR THE LORD GIVES WISDOM; FROM HIS MOUTH COME KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.

### *Knowledge... Wisdom... Understanding*



Psalm 119 and Proverbs 2:1-3:26 implore us to seek these three and treasure them in our hearts. In fact, one might go so far as to say that along with our personal relationship to Him through Christ, the Lord considers these as the most treasured things we can discover and acquire on our earthly journey. So, how does this look in everyday life?

First, we have to humble ourselves and take a seeker's position. We'll never gain much new knowledge if we think we've already 'arrived'. Being a teacher for the past 45 years, I can attest to this truth, "The best teachers are lifelong learners." That's what I love most about teaching, I'm learning new things every day. Likewise, as God's children, we should be seeking to learn new things from the Him every day.

Once we have received new knowledge, we need to follow up and seek God's guidance (wisdom) as to how it should be applied in our lives. Many times knowledge comes with an 'application challenge', so we can also ask God to strengthen our faith and courage as we step out and apply the knowledge with the wisdom He's graciously given us.

Finally, upon implementing the Lord's wisdom, a deeper understanding will surely follow. We will have learned through our interaction and experience with His Word. What an awesome formula for growth and success in life! Knowledge + Wisdom + Understanding = Great Treasure!

Written by Tom Watt

# DAY 4 JANUARY 8, 2020

GENESIS 13:5-15:21

MATTHEW 6:25-7:14

PSALMS 8:1-9

PROVERBS 2:7-15

## PSALMS 8:3-5 (NASB)

V. 3 WHEN I CONSIDER YOUR HEAVENS, THE WORK OF YOUR HANDS,  
THE MOON AND THE STARS, WHICH YOU HAVE ORDAINED;

V. 4 WHAT IS MAN THAT YOU TAKE THOUGHT OF HIM, AND T  
HE SON OF MAN THAT YOU CARE FOR HIM?

V. 5 YET YOU HAVE MADE HIM A LITTLE LOWER THAN GOD,  
AND YOU CROWN HIM WITH GLORY AND MAJESTY!



This is thought to be the first Psalm that David wrote as a young shepherd. So imagine this scene... It is midnight. David is all alone in the fields watching his flock at night constantly on the lookout for predators. The campfire burns. The sky is bright with stars. While looking into the massive night sky, he is awed by the greatness of God and how small we all are... really just a speck. Then he bursts into song.

What is mankind that God is mindful of us? Matt 6:26-27 says, “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

Are you not much more valuable than they?” Matthew 6:29 continues, “Yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as these (intricate flowers).”

Wow !!! It lifts us up and humbles us at the same time. As we stop and see how personal and intimate God is in our lives, I pray that it will draw us into a deeper love and worship towards our Heavenly Father.

Matthew 7: 8 declares, “Everyone who asks will receive. The one who searches will find. The door will be opened to the one who knocks.” No matter what you are going through in your life, God loves you above all else. He created mankind in His image and is always mindful of you.

Written by Donna Watt

# DAY 5 JANUARY 9, 2020

GENESIS 11:1-13:4

MAT. 5:1-26

PSALMS 5:1-12

PROV 1:24-28

## GENESIS 20-22

V. 1 GIVE EAR TO MY WORDS, O LORD. CONSIDER MY MEDITATION.

V. 2 HEARKEN UNTO THE VOICE OF MY CRY, MY KING, AND MY GOD.  
FOR UNTO THEE WILL I PRAY.

V. 3 MY VOICE SHALT THOU HEAR IN THE MORNING. O LORD, IN THE  
MORNING, WILL I DIRECT MY PRAYER. UNTO THEE, I WILL LOOK UP.

## THANK GOD...

Abraham certainly faced storms in his life. The passage for today is full of struggles, but it starts with a wonderful moment of calm in the midst of these storms. "The Lord was gracious to Sarah and did for Sarah what He had promised" (21:1). Like us, they had to wait a long time, but eventually God's promise was fulfilled. If you're like me, I dislike the waiting stage. And the challenge is to keep on trusting God no matter what. Abraham was about to face the biggest storm of his life: 'God tested Abraham' (22:1).

**God sometimes allows us to be tested.** Personally, I don't think God ever intended for a moment that Abraham would actually sacrifice his son Isaac. But, he wanted to check on Abraham's priorities. The New Testament reminds us that this test came after God's promise to Abraham about Isaac (Hebrews 11:17-19). So it was really a test of Abraham's faith and his priorities.

This was a test of faith, because it challenged him to trust that God would fulfill his promises about Isaac, even if Abraham was willing to sacrifice him. Abraham had to trust that no matter what happened... Isaac would be restored to him (v.19).

Yet it was also a test of Abraham's priorities. **Our relationship with God is meant to be the number one priority of our life – above all other loves, the vision God has given you for your life and even above your closest relationships.** Abraham was willing to obey God whatever the cost. His greatest strength was that he loved God more than anything or anyone.

Thankfully, God provided the sacrifice that was necessary (Genesis 22:8). As you think about how Abraham must have felt at the thought of sacrificing his son, you catch a glimpse of what it cost God to give His one and only Son for you and me (John 3:16).

Jesus is 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (John 1:29). If God provided the ultimate sacrifice to meet your greatest need, will He not also provide for all your other needs? May you never lose sight of that truth, because it is His character...

God is our provider. So often, I have found this to be true in my own life and in our community. God is true to his promise. As the apostle Paul put it, 'My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 4:19).

As you pursue Him, remember that He is always your provider. God, give me the strength to trust you and to not be afraid. May you be the number one priority in my life.

Written by Pete Campbell

# DAY 6 JANUARY 10, 2020

GEN. 23:1-24:51

MTT. 8:1-17

PSALMS 9:13-20

PROVERBS 3:1-6

PROVERBS 3:5-6 (NASB)

**V. 5 TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART,  
AND DO NOT LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING.**

**V. 6 IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM,  
AND HE WILL MAKE STRAIGHT YOUR PATHS.**



“Why am I fasting? Why did I give up Thai? Isn’t food and relaxing a good thing?” About one week into a fast I find myself asking myself this question, as if I can use Scripture to talk myself out of the rest of the fasting period or justify stopping my fast. My flesh is dying and screaming at me. It wants what it wants. “I know Jesus did these things and I want to be like Jesus so I try to incorporate the disciplines He would do.... But did I really hear God right?”

Have you ever been there? You felt like you heard from God, but now in the midst of having to commit to the decision you are wondering, “Did God really say....” (echoing those words of the crafty serpent in Genesis 3:1). Maybe you are forgetting WHY you are fasting and doubting your decision, like I did. You may wonder how withstanding from things like social media, food, etc.. is going to benefit your relationship with God and make you more like Jesus. Or maybe you made some special life resolutions for this year, but trials are already coming up making it feel impossible to keep this up another day or week, let alone for the whole year!

There are so many areas we can lack clarity and when motivation runs out we are left wondering why we ever agreed to take these steps of trusting the Lord. We start doubting ourselves. But Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us that sometimes trusting God may not make sense in our own understanding. It is a step of faith, and an invitation to lean on God rather than yourself. When we take time to acknowledge God and invite him into our journey, He will make our paths straight. What a comfort!

Wherever you are at with your fast, the beginning of the year or life in general, remember to Trust in God and Acknowledge Him. Invite Him in. Then He will make your paths straight. Our understanding is fickle and when we fast or make decisions for the sake of our relationship and life with Christ, we are stepping into a Holy Invitation.... an invitation to lean on the wisdom and ways of God rather than our own.... trusting the One who sees all of eternity right in front of Him.

Written by Brittany Dalafu

# DAY 7 JANUARY 11, 2020

GENESIS 24:52-26:16


MTT. 8:18-34

PSALMS 10:1-15

PROVERBS 3:7-8

## MATTHEW 9:10-13 (NASB)

- 10 THEN IT HAPPENED THAT AS JESUS WAS RECLINING AT THE TABLE IN THE HOUSE, BEHOLD, MANY TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS CAME AND WERE DINING WITH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES.
- 11 WHEN THE PHARISEES SAW THIS, THEY SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, "WHY IS YOUR TEACHER EATING WITH THE TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS?"
- 12 BUT WHEN JESUS HEARD THIS, HE SAID, "IT IS NOT THOSE WHO ARE HEALTHY WHO NEED A PHYSICIAN, BUT THOSE WHO ARE SICK.
- 13 "BUT GO AND LEARN WHAT THIS MEANS: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' FOR I DID NOT COME TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS."



I'm a sinner... I'm sick... I'm a tax collector. I think Web MD is an interesting concept.

In a search bar you can give some basic information, give your symptoms, and almost instantly you have a potential list of what could be wrong with you, ranging from things like "you're dehydrated" to "you're probably going to die in 1 minute." While this is an obvious exaggeration, the idea of an impersonal doctor doesn't mean much to me. If my doctor refused to see me because I wasn't feeling well, I would be pretty mad. That's their job right? They took that position to help the sick, even if it meant being exposed to what they had, and not diagnose you from afar.

Thankfully Jesus is the doctor that is willing to work in close proximity to those who are "sick". Jesus spent His time with those who needed Him, not those who were 'perfect' and healthy. One of His close disciples was a tax collector, and another was the one who would eventually betray Him. Yet He chose to walk through life with them. In my "good" days and "bad" days I find comfort in knowing that God is here for me, because I am sick, not because I am perfectly healthy. The reality is, He is walking through life with you, even if you are a tax collector, sick, or a sinner.

Written by Alex Esperanza



# DAY 8 JANUARY 12, 2020

GEN. 24:52-26:16

MTT. 8:18-34

PSALMS 10:1-15

PROVERBS 3:7-8

## PROVERBS 3:7,8 (NLT)

**V. 7 DON'T BE IMPRESSED WITH YOUR OWN WISDOM. INSTEAD, FEAR THE LORD AND  
TURN AWAY FROM EVIL.**

**V. 8 THEN YOU WILL HAVE HEALING FOR YOUR BODY AND STRENGTH FOR YOUR BONES.**



There was a rhyme that made its way through the playgrounds of America when I was a kid. I mostly heard it from older cousins who liked having the psychological upper hand. It goes like this:

"I'm the boss applesauce. Understand rubber-band. Don't get wise bubble-eyes, or I'll knock you down to peanut-size."

I didn't understand all the name calling, but I did get the gist of the poetic point – I am not the boss here. I am not in control.

Anyone who has tried to get, gain or maintain control knows how this works. Maybe it's the same with our own wisdom. Sure, I have picked up a few tricks to fix things, given punny comebacks to awkward situations, and over-simplified colloquialisms to try to provide answers when people need help. All of them feel like knowledge-based solutions.

If wisdom is applied knowledge, then how do we get it? When an idea works for us once? When we've failed a hundred times? When we have come through pain, suffering or depression and have empathy? Do I allow God the freedom and access to lead me as He gives opportunities to gain wisdom? What if God uses experiences to teach us His ways, His will. Maybe wisdom is a process where we find out we are not in control, but He is and He is better at it.

One of the over-arching prayers among those who have gone through a 12-Step or rehab program is this:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.

Lord, may I release control and find healing and strength in my body.

Written by Glenn Garvin

# DAY 9 JANUARY 13, 2020

GENESIS 28:1-29:35

MTT. 9:18-38

PSALMS 11:1-17

PROVERBS 3:11-12

MATTHEW 9:23-25 (NIV)

V. 23-24 WHEN JESUS CAME INTO THE RULER'S HOUSE,  
AND SAW THE FLUTE PLAYERS AND THE  
NOISY CROWD WAILING, HE SAID TO THEM, "MAKE ROOM, FOR THE GIRL IS  
NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPING." AND THEY RIDICULED HIM.  
V. 25 BUT WHEN THE CROWD WAS PUT OUTSIDE, HE WENT IN AND TOOK  
HER BY THE HAND, AND THE GIRL AROSE.



## *Looking for a job?*

"Wanted...Professional Mourner. Must be able to travel and make a scene on demand. Authenticity not required."

Grief is a mandatory companion of loss. In Christ's time people were quick to seize the opportunity and generate a display. Jesus was ushered into just such a scene, deep in grief and fresh with loss. But oddly he did not join in. Even worse, Jesus' interpretation, calling death "sleep," turned mourners into irate mockers. You see, Jesus had a much bigger plan. He often does.

Has Jesus' response to your pain left you wanting more?  
Has he failed to add to the noise?

When Glenn and I experienced a loss and were frustrated that judgment and restitution did not fall from the sky, a much wiser person than myself revealed and reminded me of what God was up to – He was transforming me into the image of His Son. This is God's life-saving mercy and in this way, God is always at work in our lives.

The wonderful part of the Biblical story is that the child was raised up and restored.

The wonderful part of God's story today is that He transforms our dead and destructive ways, as well as our misplaced trust, and He restores to life those who are yielded, both here and now, and in eternity. Don't fight him when he shuts the door on the noise and invites you in for something more. Know that He has a really good plan!

Written by Robin Garvin

# DAY 10 JANUARY 14, 2020

GEN. 30:1-31:16

MATTHEW 10:1-23

PSALMS 12:1-8

PROVERBS 3:13-15

## PSALMS 12:1-8 (NIV)

(REFERENCE: A PSALM IN YOUR HEART (VOL. 1) BY GEORGE O. WOOD)  
FOR THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC. ACCORDING TO SHEMINITH.[B]. A PSALM OF DAVID.

V. 1 HELP, LORD, FOR NO ONE IS FAITHFUL ANYMORE;

THOSE WHO ARE LOYAL HAVE VANISHED FROM THE HUMAN RACE.

V. 2 EVERYONE LIES TO THEIR NEIGHBOR; THEY FLATTER WITH THEIR LIPS BUT HARBOR DECEPTION IN THEIR HEARTS.

V. 3 MAY THE LORD SILENCE ALL FLATTERING LIPS AND EVERY BOASTFUL TONGUE - THOSE WHO SAY,

V. 4 "BY OUR TONGUES WE WILL PREVAIL; OUR OWN LIPS WILL DEFEND US - WHO IS LORD OVER US?"

V. 5 "BECAUSE THE POOR ARE PLUNDERED AND THE NEEDY GROAN,  
I WILL NOW ARISE," SAYS THE LORD. "I WILL PROTECT THEM FROM THOSE WHO MALIGN THEM."

V. 6 AND THE WORDS OF THE LORD ARE FLAWLESS,

LIKE SILVER PURIFIED IN A CRUCIBLE, LIKE GOLD[C] REFINED SEVEN TIMES.

V. 7 YOU, LORD, WILL KEEP THE NEEDY SAFE AND WILL PROTECT US FOREVER FROM THE WICKED,

V. 8 WHO FREELY STRUT ABOUT WHEN WHAT IS VILE IS HONORED BY THE HUMAN RACE.



Have you ever trusted someone and then they took advantage of you? Well, you are in good company! David had been anointed king of Israel, but now finds himself in a place where he is deeply discouraged and distraught because someone close to him has betrayed him. He even says that "those who are loyal have vanished from the human race".

A long time ago, I had a friend whom I trusted and shared my thoughts and secrets with. One day, we found ourselves on different sides of an issue that created a division between us.

(If we entertain our negative thoughts, seeds of betrayal can take root in our hearts).

As the situation unfolded, my friend shared her changed opinion of me, with an individual who had the power to levy a change in my life, that would redirect my path. My first response to this betrayal was to allow the wound to fester and grow. However, when I began to remember who God was, what He had led me through before, and how much He loved me, then I begin to gain the courage to move forward and thrive. Emotionally and mentally, I was freed from the crippling effects of betrayal! Eventually, the friend and I reconciled, and God led me into a season that was filled with unexpected joy!

David's prayer doesn't reflect Biblical truth, but rather his emotional state. Betrayal is a deep, throbbing wound that can bring us to the point where we don't trust anyone. As David processes who God is and His faithfulness, his emotional tenor begins to change. You can trust God to keep His word. His opinion of you will never change. He will always love you and never betray you. He is the ultimate, ever faithful loyal friend!

Written by Sharon Noble

# DAY 11 JANUARY 15, 2020

GEN. 31:17-32:12


MTT. 10:24 -11:6

PSALMS 13:1-6

PROV. 3:16-18

MATTHEW 10:32-33 (ESV)

**“SO EVERYONE WHO ACKNOWLEDGES ME BEFORE MEN, I ALSO  
WILL ACKNOWLEDGE BEFORE MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN,  
BUT WHOEVER DENIES ME BEFORE MEN, I ALSO WILL DENY  
BEFORE MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.”**



The NKJV that I grew up with has “confess” instead of “acknowledge.” As a new Christian, I ran across this passage and imagined a scenario of standing before a firing squad and being threatened with death if I didn’t verbally renounce Jesus. Still riding the wave of enthusiasm that comes from recent conversion, I imagined myself bravely maintaining my confession of faith in God. In my mind, I satisfied my obligation concerning the passage, leaving God obligated to satisfy His.

That was a long time ago and my understanding of this passage has matured over the years. Where I once thought this passage only concerned a verbal confession, I now understand it to be broad enough to include a living confession as well. You see, there are many who make a verbal confession, but who simultaneously demonstrate a living denial of Jesus as Lord of their life. The fruit of their actions contradicts their profession of faith.

Have you ever heard of “stolen valor”? This means that someone has tried to make others believe that they’ve served in the military, when in reality they haven’t. They will even wear a uniform, which often includes service patches and maybe even some medals, and they won’t shy away from making a verbal confession when addressed in conversation.

Are we engaging in a type of spiritual stolen valor? Are we satisfied to think that we’ll probably affirm Christ if put on the spot by a co-worker, yet live in a way that denies that verbal confession? Resolve this year to acknowledge Jesus not just in speech, but in action also... in word and in deed.

Written by Jeff Smith

# DAY 12 JANUARY 16, 2020


GEN. 32:13 -34:31

MTT. 11:7-30

PSALMS 14:1-7

PROV. 3:19-20

## GENESIS 33:1-4 (NASB)

- 
- 1 THEN JACOB LIFTED HIS EYES AND LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, ESAU WAS COMING, AND FOUR HUNDRED MEN WITH HIM. SO HE DIVIDED THE CHILDREN AMONG LEAH AND RACHEL AND THE TWO MAIDS.
  - 2 HE PUT THE MAIDS AND THEIR CHILDREN IN FRONT, AND LEAH AND HER CHILDREN NEXT, AND RACHEL AND JOSEPH LAST.
  - 3 BUT HE HIMSELF PASSED ON AHEAD OF THEM AND BOWED DOWN TO THE GROUND SEVEN TIMES, UNTIL HE CAME NEAR TO HIS BROTHER.
  - 4 THEN ESAU RAN TO MEET HIM AND EMBRACED HIM, AND FELL ON HIS NECK AND KISSED HIM, AND THEY WEPT.

Do we have fears and anxiety? The wealthy Jacob (a liar, cheat, and deceiver) was journeying back to Canaan. During this time, his brother Esau (his earliest 'victim') had become very powerful in his own right. Jacob was one who had talked with God and been led by angels.

Though he had a close relationship with God, still he was anxious about and even fearful of Esau. He sent expensive gifts to Esau as though he were a king. He bowed and worshipped him out of fear, not respect. It seems as though Jacob thought that everyone was like himself: lying, deceiving, and unforgiving. All of his preparations for reuniting with his brother came to naught, for when Esau welcomed him, he refused the gifts and revealed that he simply wanted a relationship with Jacob. Do we ignore God's promises, allowing fears and anxieties to take over our minds, thoughts, and actions?

So much time and effort can be spent on projecting our thoughts, feelings, and standards upon others. It interferes with our lives and relationships with people.

The Lord instructs us:

1. "Cast all your anxieties upon Him.." 1 Peter 5:7
2. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything pray and petition to God." Phil 4:6
3. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in troubling times. We do not need to fear." Ps 46:1

Let us rely upon God's word, not on our anxieties.

Written by Dave Brooks

# DAY 13 JANUARY 17, 2020

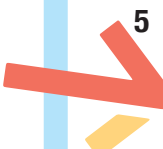
GEN. 35:1-36:43

MTT. 12:1-21

PSALMS 15:1-5

PROV. 3:21-26

## PSALMS 15:1-5 (NASB)

- 
- 1 O LORD, WHO MAY ABIDE IN YOUR TABERNACLE (TENT)? WHO MAY DWELL ON YOUR HOLY HILL?
  - 2 HE WHO WALKS WITH INTEGRITY, AND WORKS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SPEAKS TRUTH IN HIS HEART.
  - 3 HE DOES NOT SLANDER WITH HIS TONGUE, NOR DOES HE DO EVIL TO HIS NEIGHBOR,  
NOR DOES HE TAKE UP A REPROACH AGAINST HIS FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR;
  - 4 IN WHOSE EYES A VILE PERSON IS DESPISED, BUT WHO HONORS THOSE WHO FEAR THE LORD;  
HE SWEARS TO HIS OWN HURT AND DOES NOT CHANGE;
  - 5 HE DOES NOT PUT OUT HIS MONEY AT INTEREST, NOR DOES HE TAKE A BRIBE AGAINST THE INNOCENT.  
HE WHO DOES THESE THINGS WILL NEVER BE SHAKEN OR MOVED.

Stability is an attractive quality. In a culture of high divorce rates, low commitment levels, and relations ended by the push of an “Un-friend” button, reliable people stand out. So to be someone who will “never be moved” is notable and comforting these days.

The knowledge that you will remain unmoved despite the curve-balls life throws at you is sweet, secure knowledge indeed. Things may get awfully tough, but according to God’s Word, a certain type of person can expect to be steadfast, anchored and secure when the storms come.

It’s good to know that the qualities of such a person are qualities any of us, by God’s grace, can attain. To live in close communion with Him and remain unmoved, we need to: speak honestly, live consistently with our own standards, be good neighbors, refuse to participate in slander, honor what’s right while condemning what’s wrong, keep our promises, and refuse to exploit others.

This is neither rocket science nor a triathlon. Any of us can do it, imperfectly, of course, and with glitches along the way. But it can be done. You and I can be people of our word, fair in our treatment of others, consistent, and faithful to keep our commitments. This is not only the way of peace, but the way of safety.

It will never be said of us that our lives were easy. But may it be said, with accuracy, that in the hardest of times we dwelt close to God and remained blessedly, peacefully, unmoved.

Written by Joe Dallas

# DAY 14 JANUARY 18, 2020

GEN. 37:1-38:30

MTT. 12:22-45

PSALMS 16:1-11

PROV. 3:27- 32

## PSALMS 16: 1-11

**V. 1 KEEP ME SAFE, O GOD FOR I HAVE COME TO YOU FOR REFUGE.**

**V. 2 I SAID TO THE LORD, "YOU ARE MY MASTER. EVERY GOOD THING COMES FROM YOU".**

**V. 5 LORD, YOU ALONE ARE MY INHERITANCE, MY CUP OF BLESSING. YOU GUARD ALL THAT IS MINE.**

**V. 9 NO WONDER MY HEART IS GLAD, AND I REJOICE. MY BODY RESTS IN SAFETY.**

**V. 11 YOU SHOW ME THE WAY OF LIFE, GRANTING ME THE JOY OF YOUR PRESENCE AND  
THE PLEASURES OF LIVING WITH YOU FOREVER.**



I think most of us have prayed, "Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to You for Refuge." Yet the rest of this psalm reminds us of His faithfulness, His blessings, and the joys of simply being in His presence. This is what truly helps me when my faith feels too weak to believe God has my back and is "working all things together for my good". (Romans 8:28) Having been retired for some time now, I've felt my physical weaknesses more frequently.

So, I turn to the Lord more than ever to keep me safe and give me the strength to continue using me in some kind of ministry. Having that sense of purpose is so important, yet doubts do come in.... "Will I be able to continue living independently until the Lord takes me home?" "What if my memory fails and I'm not able to take care of myself?" "Will I have the strength to keep serving Him as I love to do?" These are some of the nagging questions that come up. Then, the Lord brings to mind His tender loving care for me when I was a young single mom raising three kids and working full-time. We always seemed to have enough, and God performed several amazing miracles that brought such great joy, even to this day. How can we not trust Him? His love and mercies endure forever. (Psalm 136)

I challenge you to take a deeper look at the things that cause you stress or fear today. Spend some quality time reflecting on what wonderful things God has done in your life, and thank Him for His kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and love for you. My favorite scripture is Romans 5:2 in the Living Bible. "For because of your faith, God has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to actually becoming all that a God has in mind for us to be."

Written by Lora Finch



# DAY 15 JANUARY 19, 2020

GENESIS 39:1-41:16


MAT. 12:13-23

PSALMS 17:1-15

PROVERBS 3:33-35

## GENESIS 39:20-23 (ESV)

- V. 20 AND JOSEPH'S MASTER TOOK HIM AND PUT HIM INTO PRISON, THE PLACE WHERE THE KING'S PRISONERS WERE CONFINED, AND HE WAS THERE IN PRISON.**
- V. 21 BUT THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH AND SHOWED HIM STEADFAST LOVE AND GAVE HIM FAVOR IN THE SIGHT OF THE KEEPER OF THE PRISON.**
- V. 22 AND THE KEEPER OF THE PRISON PUT JOSEPH IN CHARGE OF ALL THE PRISONERS WHO WERE IN THE PRISON. WHATEVER WAS DONE THERE, HE WAS THE ONE WHO DID IT.**
- V. 23 THE KEEPER OF THE PRISON PAID NO ATTENTION TO ANYTHING THAT WAS IN JOSEPH'S CHARGE, BECAUSE THE LORD WAS WITH HIM. AND WHATEVER HE DID, THE LORD MADE IT SUCCEED.**



How do you react when circumstances do not go the way you feel they should have gone? During these times do you complain about your circumstances? Maybe you fall into despair, feeling like you were abandoned by God.

After Joseph was wrongfully accused of seducing Potiphar's (Pharaoh's officer) wife, he lost his position as overseer of the officer's house and even worse, was thrown into prison! This must have been so difficult for Joseph to accept. But even in prison, God was faithful to Joseph and lifted him up as an overseer of all of the prisoners. God eventually went on to elevate Joseph's position to a place where he was given a measure of authority over all of the land of Egypt!

I believe God was not only producing humility in Joseph, but also patience. Ultimately, this was all in preparation for the task of being second in charge in Egypt. God is good and He is faithful. He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion (Phil 1:6), and even if we are faithless, He remains faithful (2 Tim 2:13). These are promises we can stand on whenever our circumstances seem to indicate otherwise. Joseph later declared, "...you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good." (Gen. 50:20) God is working things in us that we may not yet see or understand, but these things will surely serve us well in the next big step He has planned for us!

Written by Dawn Frawley



# DAY 16 JANUARY 20, 2020

GENESIS 41:17-42:17

MATT. 13:24-46

PSALMS 18:1-15

PROVERBS 4:1-6

## PSALMS 18:1-3 (ESV)

V. 1. I LOVE YOU, O LORD, MY STRENGTH.

V. 2. THE LORD IS MY ROCK AND MY FORTRESS AND MY DELIVERER,  
MY GOD, MY ROCK, IN WHOM I TAKE REFUGE,  
MY SHIELD, AND THE HORN OF MY SALVATION, MY STRONGHOLD.

V. 3. I CALL UPON THE LORD, WHO IS WORTHY TO BE PRAISED,  
AND I AM SAVED FROM MY ENEMIES.



In the introduction to this Psalm it says that David addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the very day when the God had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.

Have you ever cried out to God in desperation, begging to be freed from a struggle in your own timing?..... Only to find you are being asked to walk through the process to freedom behind the footsteps of the Savior in his timing?

I found myself in this place several years ago with the struggle of anxiety and the “what if” lies I was listening to. The Lord asked me to trade fear for trust and promised me he would lead me every step of the way. In the process I learned to be dependent on him alone and continually seek him. In his grace so much healing occurred as I followed his direction. I still cling tightly to the Lord to keep me on track. I ask for His help to replace “what if” thoughts with the Word of God when they still creep in.

God did not immediately deliver David from the hand of his enemies and Saul, nor did he immediately deliver me from the stronghold of anxiety. However, just as God walked closely with David, he walked closely with me, guiding and protecting along the pathway to freedom.

Although this time in my life was difficult, lonely, and exhausting, the faithfulness of the Father never wavered. He was and continues to be my strength, my rock, my fortress-- the Lord, who is worthy to be praised.

Written by Kelly Harris

# DAY 17 JANUARY 21, 2020

GEN. 42:18-43:34

MATT. 13:47-14:12

PSALMS 18:16-36

PROVERBS 4:7-10

## MATTHEW 13: 54-58 (ESV)

**V. 54 COMING TO HIS HOMETOWN, HE BEGAN TEACHING THE PEOPLE IN THEIR SYNAGOGUE AND THEY WERE AMAZED. "WHERE DID THIS MAN GET THIS WISDOM AND THESE MIRACULOUS POWERS?" THEY ASKED.**

**V. 55 "ISN'T THIS THE CARPENTER'S SON? ISN'T HIS MOTHER'S NAME MARY, AND AREN'T HIS BROTHERS JAMES, JOSEPH, SIMON AND JUDAS?"**

**V. 56 "AREN'T ALL HIS SISTERS WITH US? WHERE THEN, DID THIS MAN GET ALL THESE THINGS?"**

**V. 57 AND THEY TOOK OFFENSE AT HIM. BUT JESUS SAID TO THEM, "ONLY IN HIS HOMETOWN AND IN HIS OWN HOUSE IS A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR."**

**V. 58 AND HE DID NOT DO MANY MIRACLES THERE BECAUSE OF THEIR LACK OF FAITH."**

So often those who claim to love Jesus most and know Him best do not receive Him well. Just as the people in His hometown questioned His abilities, we are often amazed at His teaching and then begrudge Him His authority in our lives.

We leave church after hearing a moving sermon, but dismiss it indifferently a few days later. We minimize what God is speaking to us because He's asking us to do the uncomfortable. Or perhaps we've just become too familiar in our faith and cynicism has set in. The weight and power of Jesus' work amazes us, but instead of responding in faith we become offended and stuck in our own ways.

A few years ago, I worked with a woman who once had been in a gang. She shared her conversion story unabashedly and joyfully. But I was embarrassed by her honesty and minimized her in front of others. I realized later my conscience was offended because I was not where I should have been in my own faith. The Lord spoke to me and in no uncertain terms told me I had no right to put her light under a bushel in front of others.

Let it never be said that He was "a prophet without honor" in His hometown. We are Jesus' hometown because we are His dwelling place, the Church. Let's be sure to honor Him with our faith.

Written by Renee Dallas

# DAY 18 JANUARY 22, 2020

GEN. 44:1-45:28

MTT. 14:13-36

PSALMS 18:37-50

PROVERBS 4:11-13

## GENESIS 45:4-8

V. 4 "PLEASE, COME CLOSER," HE SAID TO THEM. SO THEY CAME CLOSER. AND HE SAID AGAIN, "I AM JOSEPH, YOUR BROTHER, WHOM YOU SOLD INTO SLAVERY IN EGYPT."

V. 5 "BUT DON'T BE UPSET, AND DON'T BE ANGRY WITH YOURSELVES FOR SELLING ME TO THIS PLACE. IT WAS GOD WHO SENT ME HERE AHEAD OF YOU TO PRESERVE YOUR LIVES."

V. 6 THIS FAMINE THAT HAS RAVAGED THE LAND FOR TWO YEARS WILL LAST FIVE MORE YEARS, AND THERE WILL BE NEITHER PLOWING NOR HARVESTING.

V. 7 GOD HAS SENT ME AHEAD OF YOU TO KEEP YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES ALIVE AND TO PRESERVE MANY SURVIVORS.

V. 8 SO IT WAS GOD WHO SENT ME HERE, NOT YOU! AND HE IS THE ONE WHO MADE ME AN ADVISER TO PHAROAH- THE MANAGER OF HIS ENTIRE PALACE AND THE GOVERNOR OF ALL EGYPT."



Did you know that some seeds require fire in order to germinate? The seeds of the lodgepole pine are surrounded by a resin that only melts away by the heat of fire, thus allowing the seeds to settle in the land and grow into the towering pines. Other seeds sit dormant for years, and growth is triggered by chemicals only released during a fire. For these special plants, the same thing that destroys them also brings new life, and it happens simultaneously.

We all walk through times when it seems like everything is burning down, times when dreams are dying all around us. In the midst of those seasons, it seems nearly impossible to hope. How can we even imagine a future filled with something other than devastation when we are doing our best just to survive? Imagine if, at the same time that we are walking through fire, seeds are awakening that would have otherwise lay dormant...silent...still, except for that fire. Imagine the beauty sitting just below the surface, waiting for the fire so it can bloom.

You may be in the middle of your own fire season right now. Joseph surely endured the fire! So let his story remind us that a time will come when we can look back and see how God was planting seeds of hope. He is bringing forth something that would have forever lay in waiting, and you will see His faithfulness through the fire.

Written by Jenny Sumner

# DAY 19 JANUARY 23, 2020

GEN. 46:1-47:31

MATT. 15:1-28

PSALMS 19:1-4

PROVERBS 4:14-19

## PROVERBS 4:14-19 (KJV)

V. 14 DO NOT ENTER INTO THE PATH OF THE WICKED, NOR FOLLOW THE WAY OF EVIL MEN.

V. 15 AVOID IT, DO NOT PASS BY IT, TURN FROM IT, AND PASS AWAY.


V. 16 FOR THEY SLEEP NOT, EXCEPT THAT THEY HAVE DONE MISCHIEF;

SO THEIR SLEEP IS TAKEN AWAY, UNLESS THEY CAUSE SOME TO FALL.

V. 17 FOR THEY EAT THE BREAD OF WICKEDNESS, AND DRINK THE WINE OF VIOLENCE.

V. 18 BUT THE PATH OF THE JUST IS AS THE SHINING LIGHT, THAT SHINES MORE AND MORE  
UNTO THE PERFECT DAY.

V. 19 THE WAY OF THE WICKED IS AS DARKNESS. THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW AT WHAT THEY STUMBLE.



The New Year is a good time for me to think and reflect on the previous year. I like to set spiritual, personal, and business goals each year. This is a good time for me to seek God regarding direction for my journey. When I read these passages from Proverbs I think about my journey and continually having to choose between two distinctly different paths: (1) One is the path of wickedness which lies in darkness; (2) The other is the path of righteousness which rests in the light.

People who choose the path of darkness feed on violence and wickedness. Lately, television and films are one tool the enemy is using to plant darkness in our lives. Hollywood is happy to provide food for the wicked's appetite, because most television programs and films these days either blaspheme God, contain violence, or exhibit some other form of wicked behavior.

This area was challenging for my husband, John, to deal with because we love going to the movies and watching shows. However, as I reflect on this past year, we have been more in-tune with recognizing the darkness in so many movies and shows. We have asked God to give us wisdom for what we should be watching. Is what you're watching honoring to God and uplifting to your spirit?

We cannot be neutral or passive in avoiding the path of the wicked. Do you find yourself under pressure to do something you shouldn't do? We all know that feeling, especially when we get that reminder from God's Word or that little nudge from the Holy Spirit telling us to not do it.

I pray in this season of the New Year that we choose to follow God and turn from the worldly, wicked ways of the world that seem to surround us. Let's be on guard, and "put on the full armor of God" (Ephesians 6:10-20). Remember... If you are not consistently reading your Bible, attending and participating in church, and keeping fellowship with other Christians (Heb. 10:24), then it is all too easy to get sucked into the path of wickedness. I like to go to Jeremiah 29:11-14 when I need reminding of what to do and I need help on my journey. We need to diligently seek Him, follow His guidance, and He will faithfully bring us out of captivity. In 2020, may we all continue to seek and trust the Lord in every aspect of our lives.

Written by Marsha Placencia

# DAY 20 JANUARY 24, 2020

GEN. 48:1 - 49:33

MATT. 15:29-16:12

PSALMS 20:1-9

PROVERBS 4:20-27

PSALMS 20:1-5 (NLT)

1 IN TIMES OF TROUBLE, MAY THE LORD ANSWER YOUR CRY. MAY THE NAME OF THE  
GOD OF JACOB KEEP YOU SAFE FROM ALL HARM.

2 MAY HE SEND YOU HELP FROM HIS SANCTUARY AND STRENGTHEN YOU FROM  
JERUSALEM.

3 MAY HE REMEMBER ALL YOUR GIFTS AND LOOK FAVORABLY ON YOUR BURNT  
OFFERINGS.

4 MAY HE GRANT YOUR HEART'S DESIRES AND MAKE ALL YOUR PLANS SUCCEED.

5 MAY WE SHOUT FOR JOY WHEN WE HEAR OF YOUR VICTORY AND RAISE A VIC-  
TORY BANNER IN THE NAME OF OUR GOD. MAY THE LORD ANSWER ALL YOUR  
PRAYERS.



As I write this from Molokai, Hawaii, I am thanking God for knowing exactly what I needed and where I needed to be at this time in my journey. I have had the first truly restful sleep in a long time. It was such a peaceful experience falling asleep to the soft calls of the birds as the night crept in and the sounds of the gentle rains falling while the ocean waves crashed in the distance. While drifting off I pictured the lush, tropical beauty around me and the tropical breezes that caressed my skin on my walks along the beach, and feeling such a sense of peace.

God has truly answered me in my distress. He saw the frustrations I had been dealing with.

He has answered my prayers, given me the desires of my heart, and kept me safe. God always has time for us. He understands every detail of our lives. He is there whenever we call out to Him in prayer. It is so important that we remember to seek out a special place and time, to find those quiet places that offer healing for our hearts and souls, so we can be open and available to hear from God. When we let God bless us and give us peace, we become more open to sharing that peace with others. So find some time and a special quiet place, then let God restore that special peace to your soul.

Written by Dianna Kujawski

# DAY 21 JANUARY 25, 2020

GEN. 50:1 - EXO. 2:10

MATT. 16:13- 17:9

PSALMS 21:1-13

PROVERBS 5:1-6

## GENESIS 50:14-21 (ESV)

14 AFTER HE HAD BURIED HIS FATHER, JOSEPH RETURNED TO EGYPT WITH HIS BROTHERS AND ALL WHO HAD GONE UP WITH HIM TO BURY HIS FATHER.

15 WHEN JOSEPH'S BROTHERS SAW THAT THEIR FATHER WAS DEAD, THEY SAID, "IT MAY BE THAT JOSEPH WILL HATE US AND PAY US BACK FOR ALL THE EVIL THAT WE DID TO HIM."


16 SO THEY SENT A MESSAGE TO JOSEPH, SAYING, "YOUR FATHER GAVE THIS COMMAND BEFORE HE DIED: 17 'SAY TO JOSEPH, "PLEASE FORGIVE THE TRANSGRESSION OF YOUR BROTHERS AND THEIR SIN, BECAUSE THEY DID EVIL TO YOU.'" AND NOW, PLEASE FORGIVE THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE SERVANTS OF THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER." JOSEPH WEPT WHEN THEY SPOKE TO HIM.

18 HIS BROTHERS ALSO CAME AND FELL DOWN BEFORE HIM AND SAID, "BEHOLD, WE ARE YOUR SERVANTS."

19 BUT JOSEPH SAID TO THEM, "DO NOT FEAR, FOR AM I IN THE PLACE OF GOD?

20 AS FOR YOU, YOU MEANT EVIL AGAINST ME, BUT GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD, TO BRING IT ABOUT THAT MANY PEOPLE SHOULD BE KEPT ALIVE, AS THEY ARE TODAY.

21 SO DO NOT FEAR; I WILL PROVIDE FOR YOU AND YOUR LITTLE ONES." THUS HE COMFORTED THEM AND SPOKE KINDLY TO THEM.



The fear in the hearts of Joseph's brothers was palpable. In spite of Joseph conveying to them that their evil plan to rid themselves of their younger brother was actually God's plan to save the nation of Israel (see Gen 45:5-8), and with dad out of the picture, they faced a new dilemma:

Do we trust...or do we doubt? Sometimes we are faced with the same dilemma and ask that same question. In spite of all the reassurances that God has given us... that He does not condemn us... that nothing can separate us from His love... doubt can still be a formidable opponent.

A few years ago, I struggled with doubt over a major decision I had to make about my vocation. Do I walk away from a career I loved in order to pursue a new avenue God placed in front of me? In my flesh, I could not comprehend how God could make the numbers work with a looming pay cut. My family would surely be disrupted and was I even sure God was really behind this new path? Within a few weeks, three different people – all unconnected – validated God's plan for me. Once I trusted and committed to that plan, all the concerns that drove my doubt were vanquished.

Friends, God is infinitely good to us. Unfortunately, most of us have experienced bad things in our lives that may cause us to fear... to doubt... or to mistrust. Perhaps the "bad" we experienced was intended by God for a greater purpose, one that could literally save the lives of many others.

I desire for myself and for you that our hearts declare, "Whatever happens today, God is at work!"

Written by Rick Francis