

40 DAYS OF *prayer*



THEALLIANCE

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

INTRO

Dear Alliance family,

Welcome to our third year of the Alliance's 40 Days of Prayer! This prayer guide features daily devotionals and prayer prompts designed to lead you into the presence of God, cry out to Him in prayer, and listen for His still, small voice.

This year's prayer emphasis will focus on the various aspects of the Lord's Prayer. The aim of this 40-day focus is to fix our gaze on Jesus; remember who He is, what He has done, what He has given us to do, and what He asks of the Father on behalf of those who call on His name.

**"Then you will call on me and come and pray to me,
and I will listen to you." –Jeremiah 29:12**

As we anticipate how the Lord will fulfill His promise to His people during this year's 40 Days of Prayer, we believe there is power in praying together. Let's step into this prayer experience with the anticipation that we will encounter the living God and fix our eyes upon Him. Let's pray with faith-filled expectancy that the Spirit of God will do great things in, among, and through us to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Keep the faith!



Terry D. Smith
Vice President for Church Ministries



THEALLIANCE

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

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DAY
01

WEEK 1

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

Prayer is our invitation to commune with God Himself and in its purest form, begins as worship simply by addressing Our Father in heaven. We acknowledge His place in the world and our lives. We honor His name and His power. The spoken words to a loving Heavenly Father are a testament to His authority and divinity. Our prayers are futile if they are directed toward any other entity. We worship our Father when we acknowledge His rightful place on the throne, and we express our faith in a sovereign God when we make known our requests. To pray is to worship.

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THE NAME OF GOD

PROVERBS 18:10

Jesus is our strong tower, protector, refuge, strength, and our source of peace and safety. This is something we cannot find in anything or anywhere from the world. In these past few years, you may have heard the phrase “uncertain times” more than once, and that can be a troubling phrase for us. Uncertain times can cause all sorts of emotions because it means we might not have walked that road before or cannot predict what is happening. However, if we look to the truth found in Proverbs 18:10, we see that God has given us the promise that in these very times, He is our strong tower and the One we should be running towards instead of maybe trying to change our circumstances.

Security can't be found in circumstances. Circumstances can change. They can take us by surprise. But God, our fortress, our strong tower, never changes, and nothing ever catches Him by surprise. No other person, and nothing else on this earth, can bring us the peace and safety that He can . . . and does . . . and will. So, as we step into another year, no matter what you experience, no matter how uncertain the times may be, you can be certain of this: Your help comes from the Lord your God. So let's run to Him and stand firm in Him and live in the certainty of His love and provision for us.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your faithfulness and unconditional love for us. Thank You for Your open arms holding us tight and being our safe place in the midst of any uncertain times. Help us to always run to You, to keep our eyes fixed on You, and to never forget Your promises. Convict us when our time and energy is spent on anything other than something that brings glory to Your name. Guide us on our individual paths to remember You are always here regardless of how uncertain the journey or times seem.

In Your precious and holy name, amen!

HE IS HOLY

EXODUS 15:11

The holiness of God appears in all our new beginnings—the one that began when He found us at the end of ourselves; the one that began when we learned to trust Him to take the lead; the painful ones and the joyful ones alike. The holy, holy, holy God was there. Because we are His and because He is holy, we are able to begin again.

He is matchless in perfection. He is able to do abundantly more than we can imagine. This God, who knows the beginning and end of all creation, radiates holiness. Yet here He is, enveloping us. He sits beside our spouses at the same time He watches over our children. He walks with our mothers just as He rejoices with our grandmothers in eternity. Can you comprehend it? His holiness surrounds us daily. His holy mercy greets us in the morning with the warmth of the sun. His holy providence guides us as we work, study, and accomplish mundane day-to-day tasks. His holy love pierces through our fears as we lay down to sleep.

As we anticipate the new beginning He is writing for us this year, we can trust in His ever-faithful hand on our lives. We can choose to praise Him with a victory song in the here and now, knowing full well that there is no one like our God: “Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like You—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?” (Ex. 15:11).



REFLECTION PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

You are the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end. Would You open our eyes to see Your holiness, not only on the mountaintop but also in the valley. Tune our hearts to sing Your praises as we do the hard and holy work You have set before us.

Forgive us, Lord, for forgetting the majesty of who You are, and help us to remember all that You have done. Until the day You lead us home, Father, teach us to be a holy people who bring glory and honor and power to Your name alone. Amen.

HE IS SOVEREIGN

DANIEL 2:20-22

The God who creates all things with a word, who splits the seas, who orchestrates the universe, who knows each star by name, sees you. The God who clothes the lilies, who feeds the birds, who knows the number of hairs on our head, knows your name. The God who commands the stormy seas to be still, who brings life from a barren womb, who fells fortress walls with sounds of trumpets, hears your cry and sees your pain.

This same God, our Father in heaven, invites His children into His presence, into His very throne room. Through Jesus, the Great “I AM” has restored this safe place of intimate fellowship, a two-way sacred conversation. The holy, almighty, all-powerful, strong, most high God beckons us, “Come, abide.” Mindful of our unworthiness yet drawn by His grace-filled, never shattering, always and forever promise of love, we enter, always welcome. We dare draw near. We open our hearts to His listening ear. We listen in turn, in unhindered trust and surrender. He whispers, “Shalom.” We fall into His embrace in thankfulness and worship.

Abiding with Yahweh

“Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be Your name . . .”

El: Strong One

El Elyon: God Most High

Elohim: All-Powerful One, Creator

El Shaddai: All-Sufficient One, Almighty

Yahweh: “I AM,” Self-Existent One

El Roi: God Who Sees Me

Immanuel: God with Us, “I AM”

Father, how magnificent is Your name!



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

When we are confronted with hard news, the kind that rocks our world, the drop-to-our-knees-unable-to-breathe kind of news, we thank You that You invite us to come to You. We are grateful You are the One who “is all wisdom and power . . . controls world events . . . removes kings and sets up other kings” and who walks with us in the darkest of valleys. Father, the more time we spend with You, our mourning turns to praise. Our fear melts into faith. We thank You. We worship You.

HE IS BEAUTY

PSALM 27:4

Change is hard. Transitions are hard. Life is hard. Whether you're faced with navigating a new city, in the process of mourning, or simply reinventing who you are in a new stage of life, these small shifts in our lives of eternity remind us of the very real fact that we are human, and we are limited—limited to fear, to anxiety, and we are vulnerable to faithlessness.

In one of King David's darkest moments, he pens this simple yet profound thought—at the end of our unraveling, there is only one thing worth asking in prayer, one thing that will allow us to throw away our laundry list of prayer requests, and that is to simply be in the presence of the Father.

In this verse, the beauty of the Lord is so much more than something to behold with our eyes, but it is the very power that will allow us to find our footing when the world falls out from underneath our feet. Within the beauty of the Lord lies the authority to destroy and to establish, and King David reminds us of this in these simple lines of text: There is nothing too out of control that cannot be brought into control with one glimpse of heaven.



REFLECTON PRAYER

Father,

Forgive us for the times that we inadvertently choose the ugliness of the world over the beauty of Your throne room. Would we be reminded, with every new morning, to recite the words of David and know that You, and only You, King Jesus, are the answer to every need that we will ever have. Would Your grace find us here. In Jesus' name, amen.

HE RULES IN HEAVEN

COLOSSIANS 1:16-17

Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). These words are so profound that we must wonder if we truly understand the magnitude of the statement. Many people pray but are unaware of who they are praying to. Perhaps they are just hoping there is someone out there listening to them. Perhaps they are praying out of formality. However, when the Christian prays, they do so with the assurance that they are praying to the one true God. He is the very creator of all that exists in both the physical and spiritual worlds. He has no beginning and no end. He has always existed and will always exist forever. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, and sovereign over all the earth.

And within His infinite power lies His infinite love for us. This love is so great that He sent His only begotten Son to die for our salvation even though we have done nothing to deserve it. We pray to this loving God. We trust that because He loves us, He also hears us. He cares about every detail of our lives and desires an intimate relationship with us.

Oh, what a joy it is that we can come to such a holy God in prayer knowing that He may be reigning in heaven, but He is also reigning in our lives!



REFLECTION PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come to you in awe of Your glory. There is no other god like You. I thank You today for Your sovereignty and for Your love. Draw nearer to me, Lord, as I draw near to You. I desire to know and love You better each day. Please give Your Church a better appreciation of who You are. Continue to reign supreme in our lives, in our churches, and in our country. It is in Your holy name I pray, amen.

HE GIVES US FATHERLY LOVE

1 JOHN 3:1

Lord, I call upon Your name and give You praise. I worship You now, Lord, and acknowledge Your rightful place upon the throne in my heart, for the great love You so lavishly pour out upon me daily. Lord, remind my heart this day that I am a child of God set apart from this world by Your grace, love, and acceptance. Breathe Your Holy Spirit upon me, Lord, so that I may feel Your loving embrace. Encompass me in Your fatherly love—love that is unconditional, unfailing, and forever present in our lives.

Lord, turn Your face towards me so that I may be reminded of Your great love for me. Reveal to me my value as a child of God, for You loved me long before I was ever formed. May Your presence go before me so that those I encounter may know the glory of Your great name by the reflection of Your presence in my life.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord,

Thank You for the consistent love You freely give us daily. Lord, fill this space with Your holy presence. May Your presence go before me. Guide my steps, Lord, that I may glorify You more with each passing day. May this prayer ring out as an anthem of my heart's desire to draw closer to You. May my heart sing praises to Your name for Your love for me is true and unconditional. Amen.

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

DAY
08

WEEK 2

PRAYER AS KINGDOM PARTNERSHIP

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

The Kingdom is where the King rules. Dallas Willard describes the Kingdom as “God in action.” A large portion of Jesus’ teaching was about His Kingdom—defining it, describing it, parables that illustrate it. The people of God’s Kingdom can participate with Him where we live, work, play, and worship—but are we? Do people see our Alliance churches and Alliance members partnering with King Jesus so that His will is done? May the focus of our prayers release God’s Kingdom and reveal!

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ARE WE KINGDOM-MINDED?

MATTHEW 13

Dallas Willard said, “You can’t think correctly about life or the church without first thinking correctly about the Kingdom.” Being kingdom-minded is paramount and priority. For Jesus, the Kingdom was the priority. The Kingdom was part of His first sermon (Mark 1:14–15), what He preached regularly (Luke 8:1), what He talked about for the last 40 days He walked this earth (Acts 1:3), and what He taught His disciples to pray (Matt. 6:9–10), proclaim (Matt. 10:7) and pursue (Matt. 6:33).

Maybe we have lost the priority of the Kingdom somewhere in the midst of our Western ideas of a kingdom, our democratic perspective on governance, our misunderstanding of the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom, or our theological constructs.

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells seven parables all related to the Kingdom. In the midst of those parables, Jesus says that the “secrets” of the Kingdom have been given to those who belong to the Kingdom. Being Kingdom-minded means we are aware of the secrets and pursue a deeper understanding of those secrets and how to live them out as Kingdom people.

The question is, “Are we Kingdom-minded?” The answer is found in how we live our lives. Characteristics of a Kingdom lifestyle are discovered throughout the “secrets” of Matthew 13. Kingdom-minded people bear fruit, live distinctively, live incarnationally, see transformation regularly, act counter-culturally, pursue continually, and live sacrificially.



REFLECTION PRAYER

To our King,

We are grateful to have experienced the great joy of being redeemed out of the kingdom of darkness and made citizens of Your Kingdom. We are grateful to be included among those to whom the knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom has been given.

We ask, Lord, that You would enable us to steward Kingdom secrets well, to seek first, to treasure dearly, and understand fully Your Kingdom. As ambassadors of Your Kingdom in this world, we ask for eyes to see open doors and boldness to declare the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations. Amen.

KINGDOM THROUGH ALLIANCE MISSIONS

LUKE 10:17-21

As I read Luke and Acts, tracing their major themes, one of the threads that caught my attention was the thread of joy. We had a friend in Uruguay who was of the opinion, influenced by his favorite book, that Christ did not laugh. My husband conversed with him more about that view, but I was struck by that man's picture of a joyless Jesus.

The picture we see in the gospels is quite the opposite. We see a person full of joy, a person who rejoiced and celebrated well. In the passage for today, Luke 10:17-21, Jesus sent out the disciples for ministry, and they came back rejoicing about what happened as they ministered in His name. There is a lot we could parse out here, but what captured my attention was Jesus' response in Luke 10:21: "Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit."

As I read this passage, I felt Jesus' joy in partnering with His people, in empowering His people to do the work He created them for. Revealing the things of the Kingdom to "little children" is thrilling to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus was filled with joy to see the Kingdom lived out in front of His eyes through His friends.

It brings Jesus great joy to partner with you.

Also, I am pretty sure Christ had the best laugh ever.



REFLECTION PRAYER

May we experience again the wonder of God in action. May we feel the joy of Jesus over us as we live out the Kingdom wherever we are located. May we be filled with an "inexpressible and glorious joy" (1 Pet. 1:8) because of our salvation. May we be filled with joy in Your presence (Ps. 16:11). May we have the full measure of Your joy within us (John 17:13). May we go out in joy (Isa. 55:12). Thank You that You delight over us. Amen.

KINGDOM THROUGH CHURCH PLANTING

LUKE 17:20-21

My wife always says, “You notice everything.” Sometimes it is said with a sprinkle of admiration, and other times it is said with splash of annoyance. I am observant, and if I wasn’t called to vocational ministry, I like to think I would be a gritty detective who brings justice to the streets. I like to characterize and categorize my surroundings. This personality has benefits, but most of the time, it has to do with control. I observe and categorize so I can have control over my environment.

The Pharisees approach Jesus with predictable interference when they ask Him in Luke 17 when the Kingdom of God would come. What they were asking for was control. Jesus has a magnifying glass on the meditations of their heart, as He often does in these exchanges, and answers, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (Luke 17:20–21).

In other words, The Kingdom of God will not be observable through culture, creed, or power structure. It won’t be formulaic or able to be controlled. The Kingdom of God will be observable through the presence of the King.

I believe cities can be changed through church planting. However, church planting that seeks to garner their own kingdom or control a city will fail. Church planting that seeks for and chases the presence of the King will prevail.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Dear King,

We long for You to be the center and in our midst.
We repent for where we are off-center.
We ask for Your presence to be the tip of the spear.
We repent for where we have led with our own name.
We ask for You to control and have Your way.
We repent for our need to control and have our own way.
We call on Your presence.
We call for Your leadership.
We call for You, our Shepherd.
Be in our midst; be in our midst. Amen.

KINGDOM THROUGH DIVERSITY

JOHN 13:31-38

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”—John 13:34-35

In the beginning of this dark setting, Jesus washed His disciples’ feet then predicted His betrayal by Judas in the Upper Room. Jesus then tells of His leaving for the cross and predicts the denial of Peter. In the middle of this conversation, Jesus tells them “to love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

At first glance, I suppose Jesus knew that His disciples would need each other when He left them—no fighting or blaming, but love one another. However, tucked in between loving one another is “as I have loved you.” This isn’t just Jesus’ example of sacrificial love for the world; we also need to receive His love and be filled with His love. Only then can we love one another.

What’s the purpose of this command? The purpose is so that the world will know that we are followers of Jesus. As we call upon God’s coming Kingdom, we also submit to His rule and reign here today by loving one another. Jesus came to us as a bridge between His Father and sinful humankind, not just for one group of people, but for all.



REFLECTION PRAYER

“Teach me to treat all that comes to me with peace of soul and with a firm conviction that Your will governs all.” —Elisabeth Elliot

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for loving me. Continue to fill me with Your love so that I can love others. Show me how I can build bridges in our community as an example of Your Kingdom. Help me reflect on how people will see that I am a follower of You, especially if I don’t break down my own walls of hostility and separation. Encourage me to have a meal with someone outside of my own beliefs and ethnicity. Thank You, Lord. Amen.

KINGDOM THROUGH HEALTHY CHURCHES

MATTHEW 5:13-16

God's Kingdom is being built upon the Living Cornerstone, Jesus (1 Pet. 2:4), and on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets (Eph. 2:20). God is using the believers, the living stone to build His Kingdom from the past, to the present, and into eternity (1 Pet. 2:5), and this living Kingdom is ever-growing and expanding (Acts 13:49).

The Kingdom is dependent on the new hearts, natures, and spiritual value system that God gives (John 1:12). Our identity has become His (Gal. 4:19). The Kingdom is being built by God Himself, using His holy living materials to build it, which are His chosen living stones. The distinctive lifestyle of the lives of Christians comes from a transformational disposition of the heart by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 5:3-10). This is a transformation as the result of the living present of the Lord Jesus Christ in us (Gal. 2:20). It is His attitudes, thinking, and actions, for the living God who lives inside a person is in itself a miracle (Luke 1:35).

In Matthew 5:13-16 we are "salt" and "light" of this world! How could it be? Without the life and influence of Jesus Christ in me, my life would bear no result nor influence! God is establishing His Kingdom from eternal past, to present, into eternity; and He is doing it with the Body of Christ where Christ is the head of this Body (Eph. 5:23).



REFLECTION PRAYER

Pray according to Romans 11:33-36: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

KINGDOM THROUGH CARE OF THE EARTH

ROMANS 8:19-23

“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

This is what I think of when I read Romans 8:19–23. Anticipation and longing form a palpable tension between what is and what we hope will come to be: the coming of the God’s Kingdom.

Strikingly, Paul intertwines creation’s anticipation with the fate of humanity. Creation awaits liberation “from its bondage to decay” while humanity awaits adoption and redemption. In fact, creation’s liberation is dependent on humanity’s redemption; it waits in expectation “for the children of God to be revealed” in order that it might be “brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.” Kingdom–living brings life to the whole word.

Paul reminds us that when people sin, creation suffers. In Genesis 1, creation was subjected to humanity, who was tasked to rule over and care for it. When humanity promptly rebelled against God and this task, creation began its suffering, waiting for the redemption of those who would reflect God and His rule.

In our redemption, we become what we were created to be: participants in the Kingdom of God who rule over and care for creation. To participate through care of the earth, we must commit to orienting our lives toward God’s creation in the ways that He designed us to do—to rule as He rules and to care as He cares so that we help bring about the flourishing of all life.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord of Creation,

We thank You first and foremost for the gift of life that comes through Jesus Christ. As we reflect on this passage, we repent of the ways that we fail to be Your image bearers, not least in how we choose to live in the world. Forgive us for failing to love our neighbor and Your creation. May Your Holy Spirit convict and guide us into new habits of living. Give us the strength to be obedient to Your Kingdom rule. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we pray, amen.

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

DAY
15

WEEK 3

PRAYER AS PETITION

Give us today our daily bread.

This week, we will be focusing on prayer as petition. The Scripture says that our Lord is our Heavenly Father who knows all our needs even before we ask Him. Yes, that is one of the reasons Paul says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Phil.4:6). 1 John 5:14 says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." As we ponder over prayer as a petition, our focus is to meditate on God's faithful nature to hear our petitions, His justful nature to validate our petitions, and His sovereignty to fulfill our petitions. What is our role and action as we bring our petitions to Him?

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GOD IS FAITHFUL

EXODUS 34:6; DEUTERONOMY 7:9-11; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-9

Have you ever had an extended conversation with someone you met for the first time? For most of us, it tends to be an awkward encounter. The subject matter usually remains at the surface level. There's no trust developed to go any deeper than what we do for a living.

Unfortunately, that is a posture that many take with knowing God. People guard their hearts and avoid vulnerability. They may feel free to trust Him with provision of their needs, but is He trustworthy with those painful areas of our lives?

God is always faithful to supply our every need, and He gives us the choice to remain at that level of relationship. However, His desire is to go much deeper. God was faithful to meet the physical needs of the Israelites as they wandered the desert. As for Moses, that wasn't enough. He longed to experience the fullness of God at the deepest level; he ultimately wanted what Adam and Eve experienced before the Fall.

Because of His death and Resurrection, Jesus has taken out the prohibitions to knowing who He truly is. Within the Trinity, there is love, delight, security, and acceptance. The invitation is not just to be a bystander craving that kind of relationship; it is to fully take part in that relationship.

Action: Meditate on John 15:9. Ask God to reveal the places in your heart where you haven't opened up to Him. What is He asking of you in response?



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

You see the deepest part of my soul. You understand me better than I understand myself. You consistently prove Yourself to be faithful, and the love that You have expressed to me can be found nowhere else. Yet, how often do I find myself holding back? I don't want to keep anything from You. I long to experience the fullness of Your love for me. I want to know what it means to be united with You. Jesus, thank You for making the way for this to be available to me. And it's in Your name I pray, amen.

MEET THE NEEDS OF THOSE IN CIVIL UNREST

PSALM 32:7, 34:4, 107:6; ISAIAH 43:18-19; 1 JOHN 4:4

The world around us is filled with constant pain—from overseas conflicts where the mighty attack the weak to our own backyard filled with violence against the innocent and children. How do we approach God amid this injustice and unrest?

It is good and right to weep with those who weep and to mourn with those who mourn. It is being like Christ who had compassion and wept with Mary and Martha over Lazarus though He knew Lazarus would rise by His hand. It is good to cry out to God and grieve the pain and destruction in our world.

God has also called us to be a people of prayerful petition, asking Him to protect children, those who are being wronged, and our Christian brothers and sisters who are suffering. We claim the promise of Psalm 32:7: “You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.”

Further, we should give thanks that even while evil is at work, God is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4) and is doing a new thing. He is making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland (Isa. 43:18-19). We claim these truths and pray that God will overcome evil with good. We pray that He will send His people to bring peace, restoration, and justice to the places in our world thirsty for the hope only Christ can bring.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Take a current event in our world and pray over the situation with God; grieve with Him over the injustice of it. Pray for God’s protection of those facing trials by name or group.

Ask Him to make a way in the wilderness, to make streams in the wasteland.

Ask Him to bring the love, hope, and peace of Jesus Christ to the people walking through this hard reality of life, that the name of Jesus would be lifted up for all to see. Thank you for walking beside them in prayer today.

MEET THE NEEDS OF THE MARGINALIZED & IMPOVERISHED

EXODUS 22:22, 23:6; LEVITICUS 19:15;
DEUTERONOMY 10:18; LUKE 10:25-37

Read Luke 10:25-37. Do you want to feel good, or do you want to be an answer to prayer?

We've heard the Good Samaritan parable many times. It was in response to a ruler who felt good because he had the religious answers about how to obtain eternal life—love God and love your neighbor—but was the ruler willing to really answer the question, “Who is my neighbor?”

There are many in our communities, in our world—and, yes, right next to us—who are hurting, trafficked, forgotten, starving, abused, and living in poverty for whom Jesus is the answer. Take a moment today and pray for them specifically. Pray that they will find healing, stability, purpose, food, comfort, shelter, sustenance, and employment. Maybe even go a step further and become the answer to the prayer.

Theologian Miroslav Volf states, “There is something deeply hypocritical about praying for a problem you are unwilling to resolve.” Part of a good prayer life is aligning our thoughts and desires with the heart of God. While you and I may not have a Jericho-road experience as in the parable, we can begin to see others as God does as we intercede spiritually, materially, and physically on their behalf.



REFLECTION PRAYER

The chorus in Brandon Heath's song “Give Me Your Eyes” will serve as the reflection prayer today:

“All those people going somewhere, why have I never cared?

Give me Your eyes for just one second.

Give me Your eyes so I can see everything that I keep missing;

give Your love for humanity.

Give me Your arms for the brokenhearted,

the ones that are far beyond my reach.

Give me Your heart for the ones forgotten.

Give me Your eyes so I can see.”

MEET THE NEEDS THROUGH OUR CREATIVE OUTREACH

JEREMIAH 1:7; MATTHEW 25:35-40; MARK 16:15

“Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, ‘Now, I have put my words in your mouth.’” –Jeremiah 1:9

God’s Word encourages us with stories of people who, on the exterior, may not appear to be likely candidates to spread the good news of the Kingdom; but their interior life tells a different story. People God uses in Kingdom advance are not favorites; they are intimates who take the hand of the Father in prayer.

One of my fondest memories of my “steelworker” Dad was of him walking me to school during kindergarten. Each day, he would take my hand and walk me to the Juniata Terrace Elementary School. At the end of the day, he would be there again to take my hand, hear what I had learned, and walk me home. It’s the same when we take the hand of the Father in prayer. When we are intimate with God, we sense His presence and hear His promptings, which come to us in prayer. When we move into prayer that is intimate conversation with our Father, we take His hand just as Jesus told us to do, praying, “Our Father in heaven. . .” In the presence of the Father, we bring our petitions to Him and then respond to His promptings to take His Word to a lost world around us. What is your petition today? Will you take the Father’s hand and ask?



REFLECTION PRAYER

Use this simple prayer pattern to take the Father’s hand today, sensing His presence and hearing and responding to His promptings.

Father,

You are great, and You are good.

I need Your help.

They need Your help.

Heal me and forgive me.

Thank You.

In Jesus’ name, amen.

(Taken from *Before Amen* by Max Lucado)

MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR EMPTY SOULS

PSALM 23:2, 119:11; MATTHEW 4:4; ROMANS 10:17

Where do you run when your soul is empty? When you are worn and weary, do you seek fulfillment from your own power, effort, and plans, or do you run to Jesus and seek the comfort that comes from knowing Him and His Word? Matthew 11:28 says, “Come to me, all you who are weary. . . and I will give you rest.” It’s natural for us to try to find satisfaction in other things (it’s been the case since Adam and Eve), but the only thing that can truly make us whole is Jesus.

The closer we run to Jesus, the more we will know Him and His Word, and this will keep us from sin. Jesus Himself turned to Scripture to rebuke Satan’s temptations in Matthew 4, and as the psalmist writes in Psalm 119:11, hiding His Word in our hearts keeps us from sinning against God.

Jesus calls Himself the *Good Shepherd* and says that like sheep, His followers will know His voice (John 10:27). As David writes, “He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul” (Ps. 23:2–3a).

Do you know the Word of the Lord? Can you discern the voice of the Good Shepherd? The more time we spend with Jesus (the incarnate Word) and in our Bibles (the written Word), the clearer His voice becomes, and He will restore our empty souls.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father in heaven,

We confess and repent of all the times we have tried to treat our emptiness under our own power and through worldly means. We acknowledge that You, and You alone, are the key to a fulfilling, whole, and satisfying life.

Lead us to a greater appreciation of Your written Word and a greater desire to study it and know it because knowing the Word allows us to know You better; and in knowing You, we can find rest. Amen.

Please reflect on Psalm 23 again as you end your prayer time.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

PSALM 23:1; MATTHEW 6:33; JOHN 15:5

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall [lack nothing].”—Psalm 23:1

God provides for all humans and creatures, but He is a shepherd only to His people. As shepherd, He’s always there to take care of His sheep, and they will lack nothing. Jesus is our Good Shepherd (John 10:11). He looks after our whole being—spirit, soul, and body.

Jesus wanted His disciples’ hearts to be occupied by Him and His Kingdom. He did not want them to worry about the things of this world. He said, “But seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt. 6:33). For those who set King Jesus before them, God makes sure that they have all they need.

As believers in Christ, we depend on Him for all things. He said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). The assurance for the branch to always bear fruit is in abiding in the vine. The Father, the farmer, is looking for fruit on the branches—fruit that comes only from the farmer’s vine. Only these fruits bring glory to Him.

We are to produce Christ’s fruits—His character. Let us look to our source, our enabler, our sustainer, our true vine. He will never disappoint us.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

We thank You, for You are our Shepherd, our Provider. Help us not to worry about little things. Help us to trust You and Your Son.

As Your Word says in John 14:1, “Trust in God; trust also in Me”; we want to continually believe in and depend upon You. We want to be fruitful. We want to produce Your character. Help us. Help us to get the order right: You before us and the things we need behind us. Occupy our hearts with You and Your Kingdom. Let our prayer always be “May Your Kingdom come.” In Jesus’ name, amen.

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

DAY
22

WEEK 4

PRAYER AS CONFESSION

Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Confession is crucial to the Christian life—both as repentance before God and as forgiveness between one another. Scripture is clear: God desires mercy. His loving kindness and mercy toward us abound; therefore, we must extend mercy toward others. This week, the devotionals will guide us through the confessional aspect of prayer, discussing the love that leads us to forgive as we have been forgiven.

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HELP US FORGIVE

EPHESIANS 4:32; COLOSSIANS 3:13

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”—Ephesians 4:32–5:2

My four-year old doesn’t like help. But . . . he can’t button his shirt yet either. So, in the morning, I watch him struggle. He gets so mad trying to cover himself with that little shirt, and I often offer to be an example. One of two things is likely to happen: (1) On a good day, he watches me button it while I explain how much better it will cover him this way; and (2) On a not-so-good day, he tells me I’m not his friend anymore and walks around with a shirt that will open wide to leave him exposed any moment.

When it comes to forgiveness, I differ little from him. Have I been dressed in Christ’s forgiveness through His sacrifice? YES! And do I try it myself with great frustration sometimes? YES! It’s like telling Jesus He isn’t my friend and trying to “button myself up” when I’m a moment away from being exposed. He asks if I will allow Him to show me the immense forgiveness He has offered me so that I can begin to rely on how it changes me. This allows Him to help me forgive others in return.

It’s when I don’t allow His amazing grace in forgiveness to be shown to me that I end up holding onto grudges I have against those who have wronged me—at the risk of being uncovered completely! Can we agree together today that we desire the graceful covering of Jesus’ forgiveness offers? We must allow His example to change the way we offer it to others.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Jesus,

It is hard to admit that we need You for so much, and it is our pride that tempts us to feel that way. We repent of the pride we still carry. We acknowledge that forgiveness is not only something You have audaciously offered us but also something you have commanded of us. We repeatedly fail at this, Lord, but you have promised us that we can follow You as our example. Please come into our lives. Humble us to see Your forgiveness towards us so that we may graciously extend it to others. We need Your help. Amen.

HELP US EXTEND MERCY

MICAH 6:8; MATTHEW 5:7; JAMES 2:13

Our church put together thousands of grocery bags of food for a free drive-through giveaway in our underserved community. People drove up, popped their trunks, and we loaded their vehicles. A Bible was included, and many requested prayer on the spot.

After weeks of advertising on social media and on the radio, the response was lackluster. It wasn't until some of us went to the intersection leading to the venue—with signs, fingers pointing, and words of encouragement—that we began to see a steady response of people and cars. People said, "There is no such thing as 'free' anything" and drove in the opposite direction, never availing themselves to this blessing. Some ignored us. But those who turned in to see if what we proclaimed was true emerged enthusiastically, thanking us for letting them know.

I was gripped by the varied responses. I thought about grieving the Holy Spirit by rejecting God's merciful offer of His Son. God endures the varied responses of skepticism, misunderstanding, and rejection: "But as many as receive Him, to them He gives power to become the sons of God; even to them who believe on His name" (John 1:12). An undeserving humanity has been offered a lavish gift: deliverance from the penalty, power, and presence of sin by the Son in whom God is well pleased. If we make it about our Lord, and not ourselves, we can extend mercy to those who need deliverance and keep pointing the way to the *only* Way.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shown to me . . ." (Gen. 32:10, KJV). I bless Your name, "For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell" (Ps. 86:13, KJV). Help us bless people with the mercy we've been shown so they can "taste and see that [You are] good" (Psalm 34:8)! And, Lord, thank You for allowing us give away all that food. May we always be conduits of blessing to reflect the merciful Provider that You are. In Jesus' name, amen.

HELP US RELEASE OUR BURDENS AND BITTERNESS PROVERBS 10:12; EPHESIANS 4:31-32; HEBREWS 12:15

Simon was famous. As the local sorcerer, many people knew him and were amazed at his work. But once Jesus' disciples came onto the scene, Simon's fame was in trouble. In his mind, the only way to win back the favor of the people was to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit. And in that moment, we see a glimpse of a heart that is burdened with the weight of bitterness.

How does your heart do when you see others succeed? How do you respond when people no longer come to you for answers? This was a hard reality for Simon—one that greatly impacted his heart towards God. And if we are not careful, it will affect our hearts as well.

The writer of Hebrews implores us to not allow any root of bitterness to grow up in us (Heb. 12:15). Likewise, the Apostle Paul instructs the church of Ephesus to “get rid of all bitterness” (Eph. 4:31). Like the stubborn root of the most pervasive weed, we must suffocate bitterness completely so that it doesn't have any place in our lives.

Even though Simon was “full of bitterness and captive to sin” (Acts 8:23), he was not too far gone from God's grace. The instructions for his restoration are still true for us today. If you find yourself captive to bitterness, heed the voice of the apostles—repent from that wickedness and commit yourself to loving your neighbor because “love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8).



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord,

I come to You today acknowledging the times I have harbored bitterness in my heart. Envy has soiled my joy and taken my eyes off of You and Your goodness. Forgive me for the ways that I have treated my neighbor with contempt rather than with love. Lord, as I confess and repent of my sin, I trade the weight and burden of my guilt and shame for the easy and light yoke of forgiveness and restoration that You offer. May my feet flee from bitterness and run towards love, compassion, and understanding, both now and forevermore. Amen.

HELP US BE FREE FROM GUILT AND SHAME PSALM 103:8-14; ROMANS 8:1-2

If there is a struggle with living free from guilt and shame, it's not uncommon for there also to be a struggle with believing in the goodness of God. Who you believe God to be will reflect what you believe about yourself. In His goodness, Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead—according to the Scripture—to set you free not only from sin and death but also from guilt and shame. However, the enemy will ride guilt and shame on the back of conviction in the form of false claims:

You are so _____. I can't believe you would _____. You'll never _____.

Then, with a subtle shift, “you” turns to “they”: *They think you're so _____. They can't believe you would _____. They think you'll never _____.*

And gradually “they” becomes “I”: *I am so _____. I can't believe I would _____. I'll never _____.* And when you tell yourself a lie long enough, you'll eventually believe it.

Conviction does not equal condemnation. Conviction is the feeling of having done something wrong; condemnation is the impending punishment for what you did wrong. In His goodness, Jesus received your punishment; therefore, you are no longer condemned.

Living free from guilt and shame doesn't come without practice. Being able to recognize the enemy's false claims only comes after having realized you've believed a lie. Once you've learned how to identify the voice of the enemy, you can extinguish false claims with the truth of God's goodness: You've been acquitted, and the Lord has honored you.



REFLECTION PRAYER

(Pray aloud) Jesus, help me. I am struggling with living free from guilt and shame.

I confess that sometimes it's hard for me to trust in Your goodness. When I'm convicted for repeatedly doing the wrong thing, I feel like such a failure.

I renounce the lies that “I'll never be able to quit,” and that “You're disappointed in me.” I choose to believe that You will help me and that You take joy in me because Your Word says I am no longer a slave to sin but to righteousness—and You smile on me. Amen.

WE CONFESS INDIVIDUALLY

PSALM 32:5; PROVERBS 28:13; ACTS 3:19

I don't know how many times I've seen "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" calligraphied on some farmhouse style home decor or on some lady's prayer journal. And justly so—it's a beautiful reminder that we are utterly and completely known. Could anyone claim to know me better than the One who created me?

If you haven't yet—pause and meditate on the whole of Psalm 139. This Psalm starts by declaring that the Lord God has searched and known our every thought, action, and circumstance—our very soul. When we're at our best or our worst, when we're feeling distant or close, there's nowhere to flee from His presence. Does that warm you up or make you shudder? I reckon, both?

This leads us to the second half of the passage—a plea. It's a heartfelt longing to know Him as He has known us; a profound yearning to be as righteous as He is just. But no matter how well we think we've managed our own thoughts and ways, we don't know what we don't know.

"Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting."

You believe God answers prayers, right? Are you willing to be obedient when He reveals His response? Do you understand the gravity and power of this confession? Are you willing to go there?



REFLECTION PRAYER

God,

You know me so well! As my Creator, You know how I was meant to be. As my Savior, You've experienced the extent of my fallen state. You demonstrate Your love for us in this: *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Rom. 5:8).

Like the psalmist, I acknowledge what I do know—about You, about me, about others—but I confess that I don't know what I don't know. Examine me, O Sanctifier, and lead me as You will. And by my will—my heart, mind, soul, and strength—I will follow you daily into everlasting. Amen.

WE CONFESS CORPORATELY 2 CHRONICLES 7:14; JAMES 5:16

The Bible consistently positions repentance before revival—whether it’s spiritual awakening, national healing, or cultural renewal. Throughout the Scriptures, we see God’s kings and prophets alike who are led to confess and repent of their peoples’ sin. Each time the Lord answered with healing and renewal—just like He promised (2 Chron. 7:11–14). When Jesus teaches us to seek forgiveness for sin, His prayer assumes a corporate nature: “. . . forgive **us our** debts . . .” (Matt. 6:12). Of “the prayers” to which the Early Church was devoted, corporate confession would have been vital. A culture of repentance was at the heart of the New Testament Church.

My friend Jim planted a church where another church had closed several years before. In his first months, while reading through old church files, he discovered that the church had made the decision to forbid performing interracial marriages in the 1970s. While it was a decision Jim had nothing to do with, his response was to lead his church in corporate repentance for the sinful, systemic patterns practiced by the previous congregation. The Lord answered. Today, Jim pastors one of the most diverse congregations in The Alliance.

Our churches ought to be marked by the perpetual practice of confession and repentance. It’s how the people of God reorient themselves from the powers and patterns of the world to the presence and purposes of God. The Lord responds by breaking the chains of cultural and institutional patterns of sin. If we want revival, let us begin with repentance.



REFLECTIVE PRAYER

Seek the Spirit’s leading to bring attention and awareness to areas of sin that may have taken root in your church. Allow these questions to shape prayers of confession and repentance:

1. What practices or patterns in our church are lacking in love (thoughts, words, deeds)?
2. Where might we be allowing sin to compel us in what we’re doing or what we’re not doing (pay attention to inherited behaviors)?
3. If anyone has been wounded by our sin, how might we seek forgiveness?

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

DAY
29

WEEK 5

PRAYER AS SPIRITUAL WARFARE

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

2 Chronicles 20:12 is interesting: "Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." Three armies had surrounded the Israelites. Understandably, they were tempted to be afraid, discouraged, overwhelmed, and worried. You can feel it in their words, their pleas. Often, we do not know what to do. Other temptations in the form of the devil's spiritual attacks can seek to neutralize us and drain our spiritual life. When we are faced with personal troubles or attacks from the evil one, when the devil tries to dump all kinds of evil temptations on us, we can stand strong. Christ will lead us on into victory.

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LEAD US INTO LIBERATION FROM THE GRIP OF THE EVIL ONE LUKE 5:1-11

Liberation is the act of setting someone free. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free! He made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

Likewise, many on the battlefield have given their lives for our freedom. Lt. Murphy is credited with risking his own life to save the lives of his men when he knowingly exposed himself to enemy fire to gain a better position to transmit a call to get help. In his memory, “Murph” is a workout completed by CrossFitters and Navy Seals on Memorial Day every year. In the midst of running one mile, completing 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups, 300 squats, and finishing with another mile, it is tempting to give into the pain and give up, but many persevere to honor the fallen who have died for our freedom.

Similarly, in life, we find ourselves tempted to give up or give into the enemy’s schemes, but we must keep fighting to honor Christ’s sacrifice and remember that He gives us victory over sin in our lives. He died so that we may be free from Satan’s grip. Not only that, the weapons we fight with have divine power to demolish the strong grip of the enemy. We fight with worship, the Word, and with prayer. In 2 Chronicles 20, worshipers led the march into battle. In response, the Lord sent an ambush against their enemies! The Israelites kept their eyes on the Lord and followed orders to stand firm and watch the deliverance God would bring!



REFLECTION PRAYER

- 1.** Our freedom isn’t free. Spend a moment in silence to honor those who’ve died for your freedom. If you’ve ever been to a war memorial, remember the deep reverence and gratitude you felt.
- 2.** Take some time to remember Christ’s sacrifice. Thank Him for your freedom. Praise Him for the victory He gives over the grip of the enemy! Satan has no hold on you!
- 3.** Take time to worship Him, focus your eyes on Christ, follow His orders to stand firm on the ground that’s already been won by His sacrifice, and be watchful as He brings deliverance!

LEAD US INTO DELIVERANCE

PSALM 23:4

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” –Psalm 23:4, KJV

In times of danger, difficulty, and even death, I will fear no evil. Why? “For thou art with me” in every situation of life. The “rod” (a short club) is a weapon of defense or discipline, symbolizing God’s strength, power, and authority. The “staff” (a long slender stick with a hook on one end) is used to draw a sheep close to the shepherd, guide it in the right way, or deliver it from trouble.

God’s rod and staff reassure us of God’s love and guidance in our lives. We often require deliverance from the onslaught of Satan and the world’s system, which is separated from the holiness of God. Satan is a masterful strategist who seeks our downfall by his various schemes. Some schemes of Satan are failures, disappointments, hurts, depression, worry, fear, grief, anger, conflicts, and broken relationships designed to defeat God’s people. Because of the presence and nearness of God, we can walk in victory and above all our circumstances. Our deliverance from evil is assured by our intimate relationship with Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Almighty God,

You sent Jesus to suffer and die for my sins. Lead me through all things that hinders my walk with You. I call on Your name to deliver me from the entanglements of Satan and everything that impedes me from receiving Your blessings and a victorious lifestyle. By Your grace and mercy, I stand on the promises of Your Word that “thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” In the name of Christ, amen.

LEAD US INTO PROTECTION AND COURAGE

PSALM 125

“Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore.”—Psalm 125:1–2

In 2018, I was assigned to Hill Air Force Base, Utah, which is nestled at the foot of the beautiful Wasatch Mountains. When we arrived, we were awestruck by how huge the mountains were and how close they seemed. They were especially beautiful in the winter—snowcapped and strong, always there, always present.

One morning, I got up early, weary and worried, looking to pray regarding the uncertainty of the future we were facing at the time. I opened my Bible and landed on the above Psalm. After I read these words, I looked out and saw those steady and strong mountains literally surrounding our house. I felt God saying, “You see those mountains there? That’s how present I am with you. Do you trust that those mountains can’t be shaken? Neither can I, because I made them. So trust in me. I’m surrounding you. I’m protecting you. I will not be moved from you, my child.”

When we are in times of difficulty and stress, it can often seem like God is distant. At times, we look for answers or rescue and there seems to be none. This is a reminder that regardless of the trouble we face, God is surrounding us with protection and provision both now and forever.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

When it seems like we are being surrounded by attacks and adversity, may we remember that You do not forsake Your people. Rather, You surround us with Your presence. You are a God who cares for His people and longs for us to cast our cares upon You. We thank You for Your Spirit that guides us in truth, comforts us in our pain, and guards our hearts and minds with Your peace. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen.

LEAD US INTO PUTTING ON THE ARMOR OF GOD

EPHESIANS 6:8

You must remember that each day God permits you life on this planet, you are engaged in spiritual warfare. This is not simply a descriptive statement (acknowledging a truth). For the Christian, this is a prescriptive statement (a truth you must act on).

When Paul talks about putting on the armor of God to the Ephesian Christians (Eph. 6:10–18), he makes it clear that it is a necessary first step for every Christian. It is the armor of God that gives you the strength to stand firm (v. 11), fight against the mighty powers of darkness who rule this world (v. 12), and be fully prepared for what He is calling you to (v. 15).

Are you feeling spiritually exhausted? Defeated? Overwhelmed? Unprepared? Are you ready to retreat? Circle the wagons? Wave the white flag of surrender to the world around you? Is the enemy too great and your own strength too small?

Your Father promises you His strength and victory when you lay down your armor and weapons and take up His. Don't be fooled into thinking that acknowledging this truth is the same as acting on it. Paul's final encouragement in this passage is to "pray at all times and on every occasion" (v. 18).

Make it a point today to spend time with Him in prayer. Confess your dependence on Him. Don't stop praying until you are encircled with His peace. Meditate on Scripture. Consider His truth and righteousness. His armor brings the victory today. Put it on, Christian!



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

You have called me to spiritual warfare today. Without You, I cannot win. If I fight this battle on my own, defeat is certain. Fill me with Your peace today. Remind me of who You are. You are the God of truth. You are the God of righteousness. You are the God of salvation. I confess my dependence on Your Holy Spirit. Replace my exhaustion with Your joy and my fear with Your boldness. Fill me with Your strength that I may stand firm and fight faithfully today.

LEAD US THROUGH SPIRITUAL WARFARE

MATTHEW 6:13

You may be familiar with the passage on Jesus and His temptations but have possibly missed a very key aspect: Jesus wasn't there by accident, but rather the Holy Spirit led Him into the desert for the expressed purpose of being tempted by Satan. This may seem at odds with the Lord's Prayer, "... lead us not into temptation . . ." (Matt. 6:13). However, it gives insight into God's relationship with us. God could shield us from all temptation, but He desires for us to trust Him to deliver us, to equip us to face our enemy head-on. The Lord has given us His authority, His power, and His purpose. All it takes to access those tools and weapons is our faith in Christ.

When Jesus was in the desert, He used Scripture to combat the lies of the devil. He also stood firm in His authority, in His sonship, and in His purpose. Using that example, it is clear that our greatest weapon against the enemy is intimacy with the Father. The closer we draw to the heart of the Father, knowing His Word, the more effective we are against the powers and principalities of this world. When temptation comes, our knowledge of our firm place in the Kingdom of God and our connection to the love of the Father will give us the same strength we see Jesus exercise in Matthew 4 when He said, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for Your presence in our lives. Thank You that You knew us and loved us and chose us long before the creation of the world. We stand righteous and redeemed because of Your sacrifice on the cross and because of Your great love for us.

Because of that, the enemy has no ground on which he can accuse us and no weapon with which he can attack us. Draw us more and more near to Your heart, and forgive us when we doubt.

We ask all this in Your holy name, Jesus. Amen

LEAD US INTO VICTORY

DANIEL 7:25

Each week, Christian churches gather together and proclaim songs of God's victory such as, "The Battle Belongs to the Lord!" These songs are both a declaration and a reminder that no enemy can defeat God and His people. This refreshes our faith and challenges us not to get short-sighted when troubles find us, knowing that our sovereign King has already won.

In Daniel 7, Daniel's vision reveals coming kings and kingdoms who subdue the earth. A final king rises up, oppressing God's people. But afterward, Daniel sees that "all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him" (Dan. 7:27). God's eternal victory is guaranteed.

A friend shared with me three "p's" to consider in the midst of present suffering and temporal defeat, to which I will add a fourth. The first is "presence." God is with us in the midst of trials. He will never leave us nor forsake us. The second is "prayer." Petition for God's mighty hand to deliver you while accepting and acknowledging your desire to see His will accomplished regardless of personal pain. Pray for peace regardless of the outcome. Third is "perspective." Reframe your thoughts from temporary sufferings to the eternal victory promised by God. And finally, "perseverance." We run the race set before us, which is an arduous journey guaranteed to contain troubles. We must not give up! God will lead us to victory!



REFLECTION PRAYER

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father,

Yours is the power, glory, and honor forever.

Lead us to victory in Jesus. Help us not to despair in the midst of temporal pain but set our eyes on the eternal hope of glory that we might run well this race that You have set before us. In Jesus' name, amen.

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

DAY
36

WEEK 6

PRAYER AS AN EXPRESSION OF HOPE

For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

When we look around this fallen world, we see and hear so many incidents that seem so unjust and evil. If we let those things sink deep into our minds, we can easily fall into frustration and even have our faith come down with doubts and questions about the future. As children of God, this is where we are called to deepen our roots in His Word and grow in our faith. As the Word says in John 15:5, abiding in the relationship of Jesus is the key for us to have hope in this world as Jesus has promised that He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." We need to believe that our Lord is in control of everything in our life. Hence, prayer becomes an expression of hope. So, how do we use our personal and corporate prayer time as an expression of hope? In what ways could prayer effectively build believers to become His witnesses in this fallen world?

DAY

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WE TRUST IN YOUR GOODNESS

TITUS 2:13

I ensure my future by remembering the past.

We've all gone through difficult moments in life. Sometimes we walk through circumstances that are adverse to us. But when we focus too heavily on our problems, we often lose sight of the blessing that God is more powerful than any situation we are experiencing. We cannot deny that the problem is there, that it troubles us, that it robs us of our joy and our hope. In our worst moments, we feel that heaven is closed to us. How can we escape these paralyzing thoughts?

The psalmist reminds us whom we serve: the Creator of the heaven and earth, the omnipotent Maker of wonders. He is always good. His love is everlasting. We must proclaim these truths with boldness and gratitude. We must take Scripture at face value and remember that there is no one like Him! If He is omnipotent, is anything too difficult for Him?

Regardless of your circumstance, declare the greatness of our God! Remember that He will work for His name to continue to be glorified in all things. His Word reassures us that He is always in control of every situation—even those we are not aware of. And in each of them, *His purposes will be fulfilled!*

How long should I wait for Him to answer? Knowing that His plans are always for His own glory and my own good, we must not lose hope or be discouraged—or least of all, tire of praying. Continue proclaiming that He is a doer of wonders and that His works are perfect.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

I believe that You are the almighty Creator and Sustainer of everything that exists. As I am Your child, You'll take care of my life and family. I know that You will care for the things that worry me because You seek to help Your children. I am experiencing situations that I cannot understand, but I look at the past, and the Scriptures remind me that You are good, that Your love is everlasting, that You are the omnipotent Doer of wonders, and *nothing is impossible for You!* Amen.

WE TRUST IN YOUR REDEMPTIVE PLAN **GENESIS 1-3; ROMANS 3:23**

God is good and can be trusted. He made a beautiful garden for mankind to live in and rule and then blessed us to be fruitful and increase in number. Sin entered the world through Eve and Adam's choice to break the boundary God established when He told them they must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or they would die. We see this sinful nature even in two-year-olds who walk directly toward the very thing their parents told them not to touch. I, too, have moments when I willfully disobey what God asks of me. God wanted Adam and Eve to freely choose obedience out of love for Him, but their choice to do their own thing led to separation from Him (see Gen. 1-3 and Rom. 3:23).

But the story doesn't end here. God would not allow sinful separation to be the final word. He had a redemptive plan for us in the same way good parents have a redemptive plan for their two-year-olds. God's heart is revealed in 2 Peter 3:9, which reads, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." God's plan is freely offered and available to all people, and though He knows not all people will choose Him, He will never stop His loving pursuit. Will you trust His redemptive plan for your life today?



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

Thank you for free will. I repent of my momentary lapses of defiant willfulness to go my own way and do my own thing. I surrender to Your Lordship. I acknowledge that I do not know better than You, and I will continue to come into Your presence and wait for Your direction before I act. I will trust Your ways, especially when I cannot see around the corner, because Your redemptive plan for my life is good. Thank You for always desiring deeper intimacy with me. I say "yes" to Your tender invitation to choose You. Amen.

WE PARTICIPATE IN YOUR KINGDOM AS AN END-TIMES MOVEMENT **MATTHEW 24:14; ROMANS 10:13-15**

It happened again—someone added something new to Scripture. I’ve read it many, many times before, but clearly that phrase is new since last I read through the Word. The first part of the verse I’ve heard and even preached on: “Therefore [Jesus] is able to save completely those who come to God through him” (Heb. 7:25a). These are powerful words on their own, but someone snuck in an added phrase: “. . . because [Jesus] always lives to intercede for them” (Heb. 7:25b). I had never seen that before; at least it had never registered until the Spirit pointed it out this time.

Yes, Jesus modeled a powerful prayer life while on earth. Jesus taught us how to pray. But here and now, I find that He, sitting beside Abba in heaven, is always interceding for me. It stands to reason that He prays more wisely than I do, with more power than I have, with greater insight than I ever could have, and with knowledge of the future that I could only wish for. My grocery list of prayer pleas and Christmas lists of requests seem somehow less needed when I discover Jesus is already always praying for me and with me. Yes, I should still share my heart in prayer, but I find I can more easily abide in Him with hope and rest when I realize that He is already, always, powerfully, wisely praying for and with us.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Jesus,

You have granted grace and salvation; I am eternally grateful. Further, You’ve gifted me with the companionship of the Spirit. I couldn’t imagine life otherwise. Beyond that, You continue to labor in love on my behalf by *always* interceding for and with me. Seeing the powerful impact of Your prayer life while You walked in this world makes me take a deep breath of hope as I abide in the reality that You are praying for my life and journey in the same all-powerful way. And here I exhale in rest, peace, and hope. Amen.

WE KNOW YOUR KINGDOM IS ETERNAL AND HAS NO END **EXODUS 15:18; PSALM 145:13; DANIEL 4:3**

My friends and the youth I serve often tease me because one of my favorite places to go for quiet reflection is the cemetery. When I first started visiting the cemetery, I didn't know anyone who was buried there, but sadly I do now. Nevertheless, it's a place I go to talk to Jesus, to slow down, and to remember that the time I have here is limited. Though I find comfort in knowing that this life is temporary, I confess that the thought of eternity sometimes scares me. I can't wrap my head around "forever."

It's overwhelming to think that those who have passed before us are already experiencing "forever," either with Jesus or eternally separated from Him. While dwelling too long on "forever" can be frightening, I find comfort in knowing that in the "forever" that I will experience, the Lord—our good, good King—reigns. While whatever peace and goodness we experience here is often overthrown by heartache and evil, the goodness, faithfulness, and kindness of God rules over the whole universe forever. There will be no end to His wonderful and mighty dominion. In moments when life is hard, dark, and heartbreaking, let us remember that our God is on His throne, that His goodness reigns supreme, and that one day we will see it with our own eyes and enjoy it forever.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Our Father,

You have put eternity in our hearts to remind us that we have been made for more than what our eyes can see, what our hands can touch, and what our minds can conceive. I praise You because You are the God whose wonders are mighty and whose Kingdom is everlasting. Jesus, by Your Resurrection, You have provided the foundation of our hope—that the day we are absent from the body, we will be present with You. Holy Spirit, please help us today to set our minds on things above and live faithfully for You. Amen.

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE WRITERS

ELIAT APONTE

Eliat Aponte was raised in a Christian home in Puerto Rico. He has been married to Debra for 32 years, and they have two daughters, Keila and Keizah, and a son-in-law, Kenny Tran. Eliat loves reading and construction and serves the Lord with gratitude in the Alliance Spanish Eastern District.

SYLVIA BENNETT

Sylvia Bennett is a loving wife, daughter, sister, and friend. She is also a United States Army chaplain and a devoted child of the Most High God!

MEICA CAMPBELL

A Pacific Northwest native, Meica Campbell has lived and served in Kentucky for her adult life. She currently serves the Ohio Valley District as the ordination/consecration and leadership development/Greenhouse coordinator. She is a consecrated minister with The Alliance and along with her husband, ministers to a small congregation in Georgetown, Kentucky.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE WRITERS

CHARLES CHAPMAN

Charles Chapman serves as the candidate development specialist for Alliance Missions where he connects with and helps prepare prospective international worker candidates for long-term service opportunities. Charles, along with his wife, Liz, and children, Julia (12) and Marcus (9), live on the west side of Columbus, Ohio.

CAESAR (CHAVO) CHAVEZ

Caesar (Chavo) Chavez was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. He served in the U.S. Army Infantry in Iraq. He holds a BA in philosophy from Kansas State University and an MA in intercultural studies from Asbury Theological Seminary. He currently serves as the associate pastor at Hope (C&MA) Church in Aurora, Colorado.

GRACE CHEON

Grace Cheon grew up in New York as a second-generation Korean-American, graduated from Alliance Theological Seminary with an MDiv in missions, and now works as the church multiplication coordinator at the U.S. Alliance National Office. She is married to Jonathan.

KATERINA COOK

Katerina Cook is an insurance agent who is deeply involved within her church. She directs Sunday school ministries and also leads the women's ministry and outreach programs within her church.

BEN DOUGLAS

Ben Douglas is the lead pastor of Faith Community Church on the west side of Columbus, Ohio.

JUSTIN DUBOSE

Justin Dubose is the lead pastor at Alliance Bible Church in Baytown, Texas. He is also a CH (MAJ) in the USAR serving as chaplain for the 7th Psychological Operations Group (POG). A husband to Alanna since 2005, they have five beautiful children. Justin has his PhD in organizational leadership and is passionate about equipping God's people to mobilize and train present and future Kingdom leaders.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE WRITERS

PAUL GARCIA

Paul Garcia is a Navy chaplain serving Marine Corps Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia. He has been with The Alliance for 13 years. He and his wife, Heather, have been married 20 years; they have four boys, Isaac, Rylan, Jude, and Liam.

DARIA HASTIE

Darea Hastie is the director of family ministries at Long Hill Chapel in Chatham, New Jersey, where she has served for the last 10 years. She has a heart for connecting people, our next generation, and her community. Darea loves to spend time with her husband and their two teenage children.

JERRY HENDERSON

Ch., Capt. Jerry Henderson currently serves as an Active Duty United States Air Force chaplain serving at Holloman Air Base, New Mexico. Jerry and his wife, Joanna, have been serving in Christian ministry for more than 15 years and together have been blessed with six children.

DAVID AND TY KING

David and Ty King have been in ministry with the C&MA for 40 years. From student ministry, campus ministry at Penn State University, church planting in Bangkok, seminary teaching at Bangkok Bible Seminary, pastoring in York, Pennsylvania, and finally leading the Evangelical Church of Bangkok staff for 12 years, they have served in a broad range of capacities. They have have six children and seven grandchildren and currently reside in York, Pennsylvania.

EDEN KRAHN

Eden Krahn is a second-generation Hmong American Christian and Michigan native. She owns a small business, creating apparel that advocates the joy of prayer and the importance of inner work and spiritual development. Eden currently resides in Georgia with her husband and three daughters.

KRISTA LAIN

Chaplain 1st Lieutenant Krista Lain recently joined the U.S. Air Force Reserve and will serve 30+ days each year at Moron ARB in Spain. Previously, she served alongside her family overseas in Spain and Mongolia for 10 years with Envision/CAMA. Currently, she ministers at Arise Christian Fellowship in Lafayette, Indiana.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE WRITERS

GABE LAWSON

Gabe Lawson is an Active Duty Air Force chaplain (Capt.) currently stationed at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia. Prior to his active duty service, Gabe served as an Alliance pastor in Kentucky for eight years. He is joined in ministry with his wife, Mary, and their four children.

RUFUS MCDOWELL

Rufus McDowell is a native of Griffin, Georgia. He served in the United States Army for twenty years and received his MDiv in pastoral ministries at Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary (Lynchburg, Virginia) and his DMin at Luther Rice Seminary (Atlanta, Georgia).

LES MCMAHAN

Les McMahan has been serving as cohort director for the LEAD program for the past six years after having graduated from the program. He was also co-director of Men's Ministries for the Central District and served as a bi-vocational pastor and youth pastor.

JEFF MILLER

Jeff Miller and his wife, Pam, graduated from Alliance University in New York, New York, and have journeyed together in ministry for 37 years. He is currently the Ohio Valley District superintendent. Jeff and Pam reside in Lexington, Kentucky, and have two daughters.

BETTY MOREJON

Betty Morejon serves as the youth director at Iglesia Alianza Cristiana y Misionera de Kissimmee in the Spanish Eastern District.

ANITA MORRISON

Anita Morrison is a Bible teacher and speaker who attends Hope Alliance Bible Church in Maple Heights, Ohio, where her husband, Ronald, is the founding and senior pastor. Anita leads worship, teaches a women's Bible study, and is the tutoring site coordinator for the church's after school program. She holds an EdM degree.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE WRITERS

CHINH NGUYEN

Chinh Nguyen is the senior pastor of Washington Metropolitan Church and the secretary of the Vietnamese District. He and his wife, Xuan-Lan, have three children, Caleb, Rebecca, and Priscilla.

AARON PFAHLER

Aaron Pfahler has served as the Worship Arts pastor at First Alliance Church in Columbus, Ohio, since September 2020. He is passionate about leading people to authentically encounter Jesus and inspiring the Church to become more engaged in advancing the Kingdom.

BRIAN SCOTT

Brian Scott has been married to Susan for 30 years. They live in Lexington, Kentucky, and have two daughters, Payton (24) and Jordan (22), and one son, Bryson (20). Brian works in the Ohio Valley District Office.

JOEL SMITH

Joel Smith has been a church planter and lead pastor in The Alliance for 30 years. He now serves the National Office as the dean of EquippingU Max and the Metro District of The Alliance as coaching team lead in the Church Health Department. Joel is also the founder of dalahcoaching.com.

TODD SOVINE

Todd Sovine grew up in The Alliance as a pastor and professor's kid. He has served in the local church for 16 years and in the Central District Office as the director of church multiplication for 16 years.

SPENCER SWEETING

Spencer Sweeting is the lead pastor of North Springs Alliance Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He's married to Beth and is a dad to Lucy, Josie, and Emma. Spencer is also a part-owner of the Green Bay Packers (the only publicly owned franchise in the NFL).

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE WRITERS

KORA TAUBE

Kora Taube is an Alliance international worker serving in Montevideo, Uruguay. She is married to Mark and is a mom to three kids. Kora loves that her work includes teaching English, working with kids, building relationships, and helping people consider Jesus. She longs to see people walking the way of Jesus together.

JUSTIN THORNTON

Justin Thornton is a desperate son of Jesus, a husband to Anne, and a father to three children, Selah, Anabelle, and JD. Justin planted churches for 12 years before becoming the director of multiplication for the Great Lakes District. He is also the author of *The Preacher*.

CHRIS VENA

Christopher Vena is a professor of theology and dean of the School of Christian Ministries at Toccoa Falls College in Toccoa Falls, Georgia. He is also ordained with The Christian and Missionary Alliance. A life-long sports and outdoor enthusiast, he enjoys sharing these activities with his wife and four daughters.

LISA VOGA

As a consecrated disciple-making specialist for the Northeastern District of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, Lisa Voga spends her time coaching, consulting, equipping, speaking, and facilitating leadership growth across the district and the United States. Lisa's greatest passion is encouraging, equipping, and empowering ministry leaders for Kingdom impact.

WANDA WALBORN

Wanda Walborn is an associate professor of spiritual formation at Alliance Theological Seminary in New York, New York, and the director of Empower, a certificate program for women of the Metropolitan District. Wanda is passionate about training leaders to advance the Kingdom of God.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE WRITERS

HANG WONG

Hang Wong grew up in New York City and was saved by Jesus in high school. He serves in the Candidate Recruitment & Development Office of the C&MA working with Alliance Theological Seminary students who desire to join the ministry of The Alliance. He is married to Kathy, and they have three young adult children.

GLORIA YANG

Gloria Yang is a wife, mother, and small business owner whose life is a testament to God's faithfulness and healing power. She is passionate about motherhood, writing, worship, and capturing moments in time. In all that she does, Gloria's desire is to tell the story of God's goodness.

DANIEL ZEWDU

Daniel Zewdu serves as a pastor in an Ethiopian congregation in Columbus, Ohio. He and his wife, Cherie, are blessed with two sons, Theo (19) and Eyosi (15), and one daughter, Nanette (9). Daniel and his family came to the United States to serve this church in 2008.