

21 Days of Prayer Devotional

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Day 1: Worship of God

Scripture: John 4:19-24

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

Observation:

After a long journey, Jesus stops by a well in Samaria, exhausted. A Samaritan woman, comes out to get some water and Jesus begins to ‘read her mail’ by telling her life story, including the fact that she had been married five times and was currently living with her a man she wasn’t married to. Although she recognizes that He is a prophet, instead of repenting for her lifestyle, she asked Jesus where is the best place to worship?

Application:

Jesus gently corrects her and says that it is not the place that is important, but that we worship Him with clean hearts and minds (1 Tim 2:8). Although worshipping our God at church is important, it should not be the only place or time that we worship Him. Jesus also clarifies for us that worshipping Him in ‘spirit and truth’ is more significant than where we worship.

Prayer:

God, I come to you today, humble, and broken before you. I realize my need for you and how great You are. Create in me a clean heart that I may worship you purely. Help me to worship You throughout my day, when I rise, when I walk, and when I lie my head down to rest. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 2: The Presence of God

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:1-3

When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever."

Observation:

The glory and the presence of the Lord filled the house when Solomon prayed. Praying is one way to experience God's presence. In the presence of God, we will experience His power to be His witnesses. Nothing can be done outside of God's presence and power in our lives.

Application:

God has made a way for me to enter into His presence. Prayer is the first step to experiencing the presence of God. When Solomon prayed, God's presence was experienced both personally and corporately. I can experience God's presence in my personal time of prayer as well as corporately when we pray together as a church.

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for shedding Your blood on the cross, forgiving me of my sins and making it possible for me to enter into Your presence. May I never lose sight of the price You paid to redeem me and the privilege it is to enter into Your presence through prayer. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Day 3: Dependence Upon God

Scripture: Psalm 86:1-10

Bow down Your ear, O Lord, hear me; For I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am holy; You are my God; Save Your servant who trusts in You! Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I cry to You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You. Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; And attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, For You will answer me. Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; nor are there any works like Your works. All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall glorify Your name. For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God.

Observation:

The Psalmist writes this Psalm out of a cry for help as people are seeking to destroy his life. His cry for help begins with a statement of dedication, "You are my God" (v. 2). The writer of this Psalm then goes on to confess the great and faithful qualities of God as a way to encourage his soul. Finally, he ends his song of prayer with worship (v. 8-10). This is a great portion of scripture to use as encouragement. Despite the attacks of the enemy, the Psalmist stays encouraged as he keeps his focus on God.

Application:

Every day, we are faced with attacks from the Enemy. Some of them are obvious and others are subtle. We need to commit to encouraging ourselves in the Lord by confessing who He is. These words of encouragement will be the strength to get us throughout our day. When we live an encouraged life we will then have the opportunity to be an example of God's love and power to lost and hurting people.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for being a great God and loving Father. Thank you for your faithfulness and encouragement. Thank you for being the strength I need to live the overcoming life you promised me in Romans 8:37. I know today will be a great day as I walk in your grace and strength.

Day 4: Identity In God

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Observation:

Today’s passage describes the journey of every believer. While the details of your personal story are unique to you, the process is the same for all of us. First, we are lost in sin without God. Then, God reaches out to us with His irresistible love. We encounter God’s grace and receive the gift of salvation that comes through the sacrifice Jesus Christ made on the cross. We receive forgiveness for our sins and a new identity in Christ. Having brought us into a relationship with Him, God now gives

us a divine calling and destiny.

Application:

Christianity is all about a relationship with God. When we encounter the power of God's unconditional love for us, we get to know Him as our Heavenly Father, Creator, and Lord. In addition, as we get to know God, we begin to discover who we are as individuals. One of the most exciting aspects of the Christian walk is discovering your purpose – the “good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (v. 10).

Unfortunately, sometimes we can get stuck in our walk with God because we are too busy looking back to where we came from. We worry about our old sins, and doubt if God can ever use us. Today, let's make a decision to leave the past behind, and look to our future in Christ. Today's passage shows us that we are forgiven from our sin through the grace of God and now have direct access to our heavenly Father. Let's ask God to reveal His purposes for our lives today so that we can accomplish all of the things He has for us to do!

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the incredible gift of salvation. Thank you that through Your Son, Jesus, I have the ability to enter into a lifelong relationship with You! Because my salvation is such a precious gift, I want to do everything that I can do to serve You and to fulfill Your purposes for my life. Father, please reveal Your plans for my life. I choose to look to the future with excitement, knowing that as Your Word says, You have prepared good works for me to do. Give me greater clarity on my calling and my destiny today. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Day 5: Desire For God

Scripture: Psalm 51:1-12

Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and our judgment against me is just. For I was born a sinner —yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. But you desire honesty from the womb, teaching me wisdom even there. Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey.

Observation:

A true desire from God begins with the understanding that He is there for us, for US! Too often we look to God for help or for Him to do something for us, but the desire for God starts with us positioning ourselves in a place for the Holy Spirit to work in us. When we see that God desires us, it inputs a desire for Him in us. We then allow Him to come into our lives and begin to clean up and tidy the places in us that are messy. We should want to be blameless and without spot before the eyes of Jesus.

Application:

God will come into our lives to make us the very best we can be. In our daily life, we have to reach a desperation point for the Holy Spirit to create newness in us. Today, go before Jesus and let Him know that He has permission to do a work in you. It is then that God will send you out to make a difference in the world. With our repentance (changing the way we think), God will bring an influx of blessings and opportunities for us to give Him the glory.

Prayer:

God, I believe that You know what is best for our lives. You are my Savior and have rescued me from darkness and death. I ask Your Holy Spirit to come in and begin a work within my life so that I may be blameless before You. I ask that I may see Your face. I want to know You more so that I may be more like You. Forgive me, wash me, and show me the path I must take, but do not let me walk it alone. Lead me exactly to where You want me to be. Amen.

Day 6: Creating An Environment For Prayer

Scripture: Acts 4:23-31

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "You made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one. Indeed, Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed. They did what Your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable Your servants to speak Your word with great boldness. Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Observation:

This passage is the recorded response of the New Testament church, which suffered some adversity early in its development. Peter and John had been incarcerated for their public proclamation of God's Word regarding the life and ministry of Jesus. Notice what their prayer includes:

1. An acknowledgement of God's position in the universe that He alone is Creator. v. 24 He is addressed as "sovereign", which means he is above all.
2. An understanding of God's authority in every situation. vv. 25-27 He is in complete control of everything.
3. An invitation of God's empowerment to do what we cannot do alone. v. 29 A cry to enable His servants to respond.
4. A summons for God to demonstrate His power. v. 30 A plea for God to reveal Himself.

Notice the result: "The place where they prayed was shaken", which implies they were also.

Application:

Creating an environment for prayer involves total dependency upon God and complete humility and trust that God will respond. Regardless of what takes place in your life today, God is in control and will accomplish what He desires despite any opposition that may come. Stay humble and watch God rock (shake) your world.

Prayer:

Father, today we acknowledge Your power and Your authority over everything in our lives. We depend on the authority of Your position as sovereign King. Nothing can take place that You are not already aware of or is beyond Your ability to handle. You are a powerful, yet merciful God. Enable us to do what You have called us to do that we cannot do without You. May You be glorified in all that we do, in Your name and for Your glory, Amen.

Day 7: How Does God View Mankind?

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord

looks at the heart.

Observation:

In our society we can be quick to judge what someone can or cannot do by what we would consider outward appearance. Appearance does not just mean actual looks but also personality, perceived strengths or charisma. God tells Samuel in this scripture to not judge David by human standards or what we deem as valuable or full of potential. Instead, know that God sees the deepest parts of David and He knows what He put in David. Likewise, God knows the deepest parts of our lives and He looks at our hearts more than anything else.

Application:

If the primary thing God looks at is our heart, then the primary thing I must focus on is my heart. Everything flows from the heart and if the heart is right then everything else will be right. Therefore, I must focus on the attitude and intention of my heart and not just my actions.

Prayer:

Jesus, I am grateful You look at my heart and not what I see as limitations. Help me to guard my heart in all things and may the intent of my heart be always pleasing to You. Help me to have a heart for You and others. Help me to see others the way You see them. Help me to not look at the outward appearance but to look at the heart.

Day 8: For Salvation

Scripture: 1 John 5:11-13

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal

life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Observation:

God is explaining that there is only one way to eternal life, through His son, Jesus Christ. Jesus says in John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.”

Application:

God makes His plan for salvation very clear. Man cannot, in and of himself, be holy and enter into an eternal relationship with our Heavenly Father, but when Christ died for our sins on the cross, He made a way for us. It is through Him, and only Him, that we are forgiven, free, and will be able to spend eternity in heaven with our Father.

Prayer:

Father, I thank You that You made a way for us to be with You. Thank You for sending Your Son to pay for my sins and pave the way for me to spend eternity with You. Help me to see Your great love for me today through the power of the Cross, Amen.

Day 9: For Healing

Scripture: James 5:14, 15

Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.

Observation:

Divine Healing has always been a challenge in today's church simply due to the fact that there are so many interpretations. Some believe that God does not heal today, that somehow it ended when the last original apostle died (John). Some believe that healing is totally dependent on our faith. Some believe that it is completely dependent on God's will. Others state that healing is the natural result of man's God-given ability in the advancement of medicine and science. The scripture is clear.

Healing has always been part of the atoning work of the cross of Jesus. That is why He commands James to have elders pray. The procedure for this type of prayer is simple. First, if someone is sick let the elders pray over him or her. Second, the use of oil is commanded. Third, the name of Jesus is to be declared. Fourth, faith must be demonstrated. Finally, the sick were healed.

Application:

The big question remains, "Does God heal everyone?" The answer, "No." The point is that we are called to pray and trust; it's God's prerogative to heal or not. God calls us to trust not to understand. There is a tension that exists between 'can' God heal and 'will' God heal. Every believer knows that God is able to heal. The struggle lies in His choosing to heal. Remember, Christianity is more a matter of trusting than it is of understanding.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for sending Jesus into the world to purchase our salvation and restore relationship with You. Thank You that in that same act of giving His life for us, He also provided a way for our bodies, emotions, and minds to be made whole. Thank You for the hope that now exists that when we are broken, we can be restored.

Day 10: In Your Vocational Life

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Observation:

If we place our trust and confidence in the Lord, then He will guide us. Because God is a loving Father, we can trust that His will and guidance are the best things for our lives. There is no greater place to be than in the will of God.

Application:

Knowing God will lead us should bring peace to our lives. Daily, we can live with confidence because it is God who directs our steps. Even when we do not know where to go or what to do, we serve a great God who knows what is best for us. We should search God's Word and listen to the Holy Spirit speak to us instead of simply relying on our own ways.

Prayer:

Father, I thank You for promising to lead me and guide me. Please help me to trust in You more everyday. I look forward to the great things You have in store for me as I follow Your leading in my life. Amen.

Day 11: For The Nations

Scripture: Psalm 2:1-8

Why are the nations so angry? Why do they waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the LORD and against his anointed one. "Let us break their chains," they cry, "and free ourselves from slavery to God." But the one who rules in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. Then in anger He

rebukes them, terrifying them with His fierce fury. For the Lord declares, “I have placed my chosen king on the throne in Jerusalem, on My holy mountain.” The king proclaims the LORD’ s decree: “The LORD said to me, ‘You are My son. Today I have become your Father. Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession.

Observation:

In this scripture, it talks of the rebellion of the nations against God. Even in our time it is obvious people rise against what Jesus has done. With all the different religions and beliefs out there, people search for ways to fill the emptiness in their hearts. However, God wants to take possession of their hearts, and it is our job to reach them. The Great Commission was Jesus’ last order to us while He was on earth. “Go into all the world” is our job, and He will bless our work.

Application:

We must see that we are not the only believers on this earth; however, you may be the only believer that can reach the people within your environment. We were not saved for ourselves, but for the people we come in contact with on a day- to-day basis. The Great Commission begins with us in our immediate surroundings as well as through missions in other nations. “For God so loved the world” is the beginning of John 3:16 and it describes the exact thing that we must love, “the world.” God has given us the nations, so let’s take them.

Prayer:

Lord, right now I ask that You begin to first do a work in me and allow me the opportunity to reach the people around me. Give me the grace and power to love people directly into Your kingdom. Every nation around the world needs You, so we stand in the gap and pray that Your Word reaches every ear. Send me and I’ll go, or if I can help in any other way, please show me so that I may help claim Your world for You. Amen.

Day 12: In Your Family

Scripture: Joshua 24:14, 15

Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods, which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Observation:

In this passage, Joshua, the leader of Israel, is nearing the end of his life and is offering the people his final words of wisdom. There are literally decades of life experience packed into these verses. Joshua chooses to address the family unit, stressing that each family is responsible to decide if they are going to serve God and follow His commands. A critical component of obedience is the setting aside of any false gods or idols that each family may have been accustomed to worship in the past. Serving God is placing Him first in every aspect of life.

Application:

This passage speaks volumes about the importance that God places on the family. It shows us that we are responsible to decide whether or not we will be followers of Christ. Simply going to church, living in America, or being a “good person” is not enough. We must make a deliberate choice to put God first in every aspect of our lives.

We live in a time when Biblical values are increasingly being called into question by our culture. This passage is more important today than ever before. We are often faced with a decision between doing something God’s way, or man’s way. Making the right decision is not easy, but it brings blessings for us, for our families, and even for our

future descendants.

Prayer:

Lord God, I come before You today to affirm my commitment to serve You in every aspect of my life. I choose to put You first in all things, and to obey what Your Word tells me to do, even if it disagrees with what the world is telling me to do. Like Joshua, I commit to set aside any idols that come between me and my relationship with You. I thank You that when my family serves the Lord, it brings protection and blessing for us and for future generations. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 13: Praying The Heart Of God

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Observation:

Paul was writing to the believers at a church that he began during his short time spent in Thessalonica. The intention of this letter was to encourage the believers in their practical walk with God and to help discern God’s will for their life. One definition Paul uses to define “God’s Will” is “in everything give thanks.”

Application:

Knowing God’s will for our lives is important, especially when it comes to accomplishing the assignment He has set before us. However, knowing the assignment God has for us is not as important as us knowing His will. We may not always know the specific assignment that is before for us but His will for us is clear... “In everything give thanks “. Sometimes the circumstances of our lives are not always the best but we can always be thankful in them, for we know that God loves us and desires the best for us.

Prayer:

Father, forgive me for the times I have murmured and complained. Your plan for my life is great and Your will for my life is to be thankful in all things. Today I choose to give thanks in everything for I know You are with me. I love You! In Jesus’ name, Amen!

Day 14: Developing A Heart For God

Scripture: Romans 5:6-8

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Observation:

Having a heart for God is first about having an understanding of His heart for us. Paul explains the depth of Christ's love for us while we were sinners. In the midst of all of our sin, Jesus died for us and even looked down on the very people crucifying Him and said "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Knowing His love for us is the first step in our hearts being humble and developing a heart to know this man who endured so much for us.

Application:

Knowing what He endured for us is the motivating factor for us to know Him. Today as we go about our day let's reflect on how He loves us in the midst of all we do. Also let's look to Christ example of His love for us even when we didn't deserve it and extend it to others.

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for loving me so much that You died even in the center of my sin. Let me always live this life with an overall sense of acceptance because of Your great love for me. Also, help me to love other people where they are and not just love them when they get to a certain point.

Day 15: With Gratitude

Scripture: Psalm 105:1-5

Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; Speak of all His wonders. Glory in His holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad. Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face continually. Remember His wonders, which He has done, His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth.”

Observation:

These verses lay out a plan of worshipping our Father that may be different from our typical thoughts of worship. Worship is usually thought of as singing songs, accompanied by music, and done in corporate settings. Even though these are fantastic things to do, there is so much more to worship than this.

Application:

Worshipping God should be a lifestyle and not just an experience. These Psalms teach us to ‘give thanks’ which helps us to acknowledge that it is not by our own hands that we are blessed, but by His goodness. To ‘call upon His name’ and to ‘seek the Lord’ keeps us humble by stating that we are in desperate need of Him. We should worship Him by ‘making known’ His greatness by ‘speaking of all His wonders’ to all those we come into contact with. ‘Remembering His wonders’ reminds us that no matter what our current situation looks like, we know that God is for us.

Prayer:

Father, help me to see Your greatness, Your love, Your forgiveness and Your mercy that You have for me each and every day. Teach me how to worship You with my whole life, with all that is within me. May my life, the way I treat others, the way I handle conflict and disappointment, and even the way I handle praise be a reflection of

who You are and how great You are. May my worship of You be more than a weekly experience, but a lifestyle that sings of Your love for us. Amen.

Day 16: Influencing Others

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-16 (NIV)

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Observation:

There’s nothing better than a good bowl of cereal and a hot cup of coffee in the mornings. When I was growing up, my favorite breakfast was a bowl of Honey Nut Cheerios with a huge spoonful of sugar on top. Nothing like sugar on top of sugar for a child. One morning at a friend’s house, I loaded my cereal with sugar and as I went to take the first bite, I realized, to my horror, that I had put salt on my cereal instead of sugar. Needless to say, I never put sugar on my cereal again.

Now other than that example, salt is something I prefer on almost everything I eat. Why? Because the purpose of salt is to bring out the flavor in the food. You can always tell if there isn’t enough salt because the flavor isn’t there. In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus tells Christians that we are called to be the salt of the Earth. Every Christian is called to influence others, and one of the best ways to do that is to bring out the flavor in the world around you.

We are called to be salt to our families, friends, coworkers, and

everyone else in our circle of influence. We do this by bringing out the good in people, believing in them, praying for them, serving them and loving them. If we are not the salt, who else will be?

Jesus also tells us that we are called to be the light of the world! To bring the light of Jesus to dark places. Darkness, by definition, is the absence of light. With Jesus, we bring with us the light of love and the light of peace everywhere we go!

Application:

Take some time today to fix your attention on Jesus. Be intentional with how you love and how you serve, because through us we flavor the world around us, while shining light into dark places! Be intentional with your life, because Jesus was intentional with His! Bring the good out in others and shine the light that Jesus has so lovingly shined upon you! We are all called and created to influence others! But it starts with letting Jesus influence us!

Prayer:

Lord God, today we thank you for your life and for your love for us! We thank you that you did not just save us, but you saved us for a purpose, and that purpose is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world! Give us eyes to see and ears to hear the people you have called us to influence. Help us to bring the best out in people and in situations! Give us wisdom and compassion to shine your light of love everywhere we go! Help us to influence others the same way you so lovingly influenced us, Amen!

Day 17: Blessing Others

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8-9

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and He will grant you His blessing.

Observation:

We live in a fast paced society and we understand selfishness can come quickly. We make sure we get what is ours and soon forget everyone else. This scripture is telling us to remember those who are in need, be slow to action when it comes to offense. Hurting people, hurt people.

Application:

The easiest thing for us to do is get caught up in our jobs, school, and every day lives with a task list that must be completed. Before we know it, the entire day has gone by and we have missed the opportunity to love someone who is in need. If we look at the life of Jesus, we see that He was constantly stopping what He was doing to simply help out someone in need. God blesses givers and He blesses those who show compassion. We can miss out on a blessing from God when we get too busy. God is looking for a reason to bless us and reward us. If people are God's main priority, they should be ours as well.

Prayer:

Lord, today I ask that You help me to slow down enough to see the world through Your perspective. Show me those around me that need to be loved and give me the grace to help those who are in need. I understand You will bless me for these things, but don't let me do things for the rewards, but let me do them with a heart of love because that is who You are and I want to be more like You, Amen.

Day 18: Serving With Love

Scripture: 1 John 4:7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

Observation:

This passage reminds us that God's sole motivation for sending His Son Jesus to die for our sins was love. We have done nothing to deserve God's salvation, mercy, and grace. God asked Jesus to make the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf for one simple reason – He loves us unconditionally. As a result, we must be a reflection of God's love to everyone around us. Loving others not only helps others know God better, it brings us into a deeper relationship with Him as well.

Application:

Loving God is usually easy; loving other people is the real challenge. However, this passage makes it clear that if we are to grow in our relationship with God, we must learn how to reflect God's love to others – even those who are not always easy to love.

When God places someone in our lives who “pushes our buttons,” it can be easy to get frustrated. Our response to these kinds of people is usually less than loving. However, in these situations we need to recognize that God wants to use these people to work on us. After all, the only way someone can push our buttons is if we have buttons to push! If you are currently dealing with someone challenging, ask God

to give you a deeper revelation of His love and to show you any areas you may need to change in your own life to be a better ambassador of God's love. If you can change your perspective, you will find that your interactions with others will change dramatically as well, and you will be blessed with deeper and richer friendships.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we ask that You give us eyes of faith today to see everyone we interact with through Your heart of love. May we be used as ambassadors of Your love, mercy, and compassion today to anyone who is hurting, lonely, or lost. If there is anything in our heart that needs to change so that we can be more loving to others, please reveal it to us so we may repent and turn to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 19: Finding The Need

Scripture: Luke 10:30-37

Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Observation:

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is a response to a certain lawyer's question regarding the law of God that specifically states, "You must love your neighbor as yourself." The lawyer asks Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus responds by telling him this parable. There are a few things we can learn from His response. First, a neighbor is not identified by his location, but by the fact of his/her existence. Simply put, a fellow human being is a neighbor by virtue of the fact that they are part of the human race having been created in the image of God. The word "neighbor" used here in the original language is *plesion*. It means "any other person" regardless of ethnicity, nationality, race, or religion. Jesus is implying here that God's desire for every human is that we see others beyond color, creed, and country. He calls us to love and serve those who are different than we are. He demands that we not label, profile, or stereotype those who do not share our particular perspectives on life. Second, loving our neighbors is demonstrated through service. Serving is caring. The man (neighbor) was helped because someone (the Good Samaritan) found a need and did not ignore it. Notice how he was served: The Good Samaritan

- (1) Found him.
- (2) Felt compassion for him.
- (3) Went to him.
- (4) Bandaged his wounds.
- (5) Brought him to someone else to help.
- (6) Provided extended care for the man while he was away.

Application:

There are people all around us each day that are in need. They are in need of hope, love, care, and purpose. God calls us as Good Samaritans to serve them regardless of where they are from, what they look like, what religion they ascribe to, how much money they have or make, or what they have done.

Simply put we are called to find a need and meet it. That is what loving

our neighbors is all about. We need to pray every day that God would open our eyes to see the need of those around us and give us the love to care for those needs without expectation of remuneration. Our world needs more Good Samaritans and less Pharisees. Which one will you be?

Prayer:

Father, I ask you today to help me get my eyes off of me and refocus them on the needs of those around me. Grant me the ability to help someone today somehow. May my service to my neighbor make life a bit brighter, bring hope, and place a smile on their face. May that opportunity open up the chance to share the good news with them, Amen.

Day 20: The Power Of Serving

Scripture: Ephesians 2:10 (TLB)

"It is God himself who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus; and long ages ago he planned that we should spend these lives in helping others."

Observation:

God calls each and every one of us to a service far beyond anything we could ever imagine. We were put on Earth for a purpose - to be contributors in seeing His Kingdom advanced in the lives of others. We weren't created just to be a consumer—to eat, drink, and be merry. God designed us to make a difference with our life. We were created to add to life on Earth, not just take from it. God wants us to give something back.

The Bible says, "In our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life

of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10b TEV). These “good deeds” are our service to the world. Whenever we serve others in any way, even simple actions, we are actually serving Jesus and fulfilling one of our purposes. The power of God is released through our service and lives are forever impacted for His Kingdom. We are fulfilling our purpose by making a difference in the lives of others.

Application:

When most people think of this "special work," they think of pastors, priests, and very mature Christians, you know the "professionals," but God says the believer is to minister. God expects every member of His family to serve and minister to those who do not know Him. In the Bible, the words "servant" and "minister" are synonyms, as are service and ministry. If you are a Christ Follower, you are a minister, and when you're serving, you're ministering. Have you ever wondered why God doesn't just immediately take us to Heaven the moment we prayed the prayer of salvation? Why does he leave us here on earth? He leaves us here to fulfill his purposes. Once you are saved, God intends to use you in service to advance His Kingdom. God has a ministry for you in his Church and a mission for you in the world. As you step out in faith to serve, the power of God is released and lives are changed and transformed.

Prayer:

Father, let us be a people who are so transformed by your love that we have to share it with those around us. We want to be agents of transformation in our family, in our school, in our workplace and in our community. Open up doors and opportunities this week for us to serve and minister to those who do not know you. Give us the power and boldness to step through the doors you open for us. We love you and praise you! Amen!

Day 21: Continuing with God In Prayer

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Observation:

The early church emphasized meeting, eating, and praying together CONTINUALLY. The ongoing consistent life is what made the impact, which has changed the world. Community helped the early church to keep their passion for running after God and people wanted to be a part of godly community.

Application:

Prioritizing time with God will be the difference in making and sustaining impact on our culture. Time with God fills us up to live the way where we were meant to live. Also, staying connected to other godly people is critical to keep our passion burning bright.

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for the community of believers and the power they have to help encourage me when I need encouragement. I also thank You that I have the privilege to pray and be connected to You. Help me to stay consistent with my prayer time with You because prayer will keep me connected to You and will be the power source to make the biggest impact possible in our world, Amen.