

TWENTY ONE

DAYS OF PRAYER



2023





WELCOME

There is a powerful transaction that takes place when we intentionally put time aside to seek God.

Prayer aligns us with heaven's agenda. Prayer changes natural circumstances. Prayer breaks the bonds that hold us. Prayer gives guidance when we don't know the way. Prayer conquers the captivity of the enemy.

"The earnest prayer of a righteous man has great power and wonderful results"

James 5:16

This is the journey we are going to take over the next 21 days.

Let's be expectant as we set out on this amazing journey together.

Elim family, now is the time to PRAY!

God bless!

Boyd & Sharon Ratnaraja

National Leaders Elim New Zealand

DAY ONE

PSALM 133:1-3

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe.

It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

—

There are certain aspects of our relationship with God that can only be revealed through our relationship with others. We know that God's nature is one of community; Father, Son and Holy Spirit (**2 Corinthians 13:14**). We also know that we are created in the image of God to reflect His nature to all the world (**Genesis 1:27**). So, we cannot reflect the nature of God to creation without having community with others. This is God's design in building the Church—that we would have intimate relationships with other God-loving people.

Psalm 133 tells us that it is “good and pleasant when God's people live together in unity.” That it is like being covered in “precious oil.” Oil represents the Holy Spirit and God's protection. It goes on to say that God places on us His “blessing, even life forevermore.” Unity commands a blessing. When we live in unity with others, we become covered by the Holy Spirit! Unity is such a beautiful thing. We really are stronger together. Keep looking for ways to bring unity with those in your family, workplace, church and community.



As we continue on this 21-day journey of intimacy with God, can I encourage you to pursue unity with your brothers and sisters in Christ? As you pursue unity with others, you will discover greater levels of intimacy with God.

Prayer

- God, help me today to pursue unity with those around me. Help me to make peace my priority and look for ways to love others the way you love me.

- God, help me to look for opportunities where I can unite with the body of Christ. I pray for open doors to be able to bring greater unity with those around me.

- God, I pray for grace and love for those people in my life that I have disunity with. Show me the relationships in my life that need reconciliation, and I pray for restoration with those people.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

DAY TWO

PSALM 23:6

Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life...

—

The word “follow” in Psalm 23:6 comes from the Hebrew word *‘radaph’* which means to follow after, pursue or chase. David uses this interesting word about twenty different times in different psalms. Apart from Psalm 23:6, every other usage of *‘radaph’* is translated into English in a far more aggressive sense. Here are some examples:

- **Psalm 31:15** ... deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me.

- **Psalm 142:6** ... rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me.

This evidence suggests that Psalm 23:6 might be better translated with a much stronger sense than our English word “follow” captures. David believed that he was being relentlessly pursued by the unfailing, immeasurable loving-kindness of God. This is an incredible truth in itself, but David’s use of *‘radaph’* in Psalm 23:6 also reveals that God had brought healing and resolution for David from some very traumatic memories.

There are many times described in the Bible when David was actively pursued and persecuted for no good reason other than the jealousy and anger of other people. Even King Saul—the most powerful man in Israel—wanted to kill David. David hadn’t done



DAY THREE

PSALM 18:1-5

I love you, Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies.

The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.

In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. From His temple He heard my voice; my cry came before him, into His ears.

PSALM 18:28-29

You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.

With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall.

—

King David received a calling and a promise over his life as a teenage shepherd boy that he would be King of Israel. However, it wasn't until he was 30 years old that he saw the fulfillment of the promise. For years, God led and taught him how to trust wholeheartedly during tough times. Over many years David experienced betrayal from the King he served, battles with

Philistines and at each time, saw God deliver him from all his enemies. He wrote the words of Psalm 18 with, no doubt, many stories in mind of all the times God moved to protect or provide for him.

Often in hard times, we don't have the words to pray and struggle to honestly pray prayers of faith, believing God will come through. During these times, by praying the words of Psalm 18 and placing ourselves in the story, we declare the truth of God. He is Jehovah Jireh, providing it in His nature. He is Jehovah Rapha, the one who heals. He is Elohim Shomri, the God who protects.

Wherever you are today, whether full of faith and hope or struggling with something big, would you pray the words of this Psalm to God **“You, Lord, keep my lamp burning, my God turns my darkness into light. With your help I can advance against a troop, with my God I can scale a wall”**

Prayer Points

- What is something you're going through you've yet to take before the Lord? Pray honestly and openly and bring it before Him.

- Who is someone in your life going through a particularly tough time? Bring them before the Lord asking that his provision of strength, peace and perseverance would be a refuge for them this week.

- Name an area to God in prayer that you're believing Him to move in to provide or to protect. Declare verse 2 over that area.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



DAY FOUR

PSALM 55:1-8

Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea;

hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught

because of what my enemy is saying, because of the threats of the wicked; for they bring down suffering on me and assail me in their anger.

My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me.

Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me.

I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.

I would flee far away and stay in the desert;

I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm."

PSALM 55:12-14

If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide.

But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend,

with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshipers.

PSALM 55:16-18

As for me, I call to God, and the Lord saves me

Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and He hears my voice.

He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me.

PSALM 55:12-14

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.

But you, God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of decay; the bloodthirsty and deceitful will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.



This Psalm was written by David when he was facing feelings of a sense of injustice and anguish as he struggled with the afterthoughts of betrayal by a close friend. He tells us that he would love to flee and hide from the storm he is facing.

Then he makes a wise and valued decision to call upon the Lord, and we are given the verse that has become a timeless classic, **Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.** Then he closes by saying about God, **“But as for me, I trust in you.**

Don't let the stresses and distractions of the trials and troubles of this life stop you from WALKING WITH THE LORD and staying in close fellowship with Him.

Prayer Points

- Ask the Lord to show you any thoughts that are causing your mind to be troubled and your heart to be out of peace. List them if you need to.
- Are these thoughts and feelings causing you to want to run away or flee from the situation that you are in, or are they drawing you closer to God?
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to show you the next step to take. You can trust Him to guide you; He is always with you!

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



DAY FIVE

PSALM 105:1-4

Give Thanks to the Lord, call on His name; make known among the nations what He has done.

Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; Tell of all His wonderful acts.

Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Look to the Lord and His strength; seek His face always.

—

Our devotion time with God in the morning can sometimes be another job we tick off that has to be done. But our time in the morning with God can be the beautiful start to a whole day that He is a part of. Involving Him in every conversation, meeting we attend, school pick-up time, and the way we do our job. I believe we can have true intimacy with God when we infuse Him in our whole day, and as we see Him working and His character at work, we rejoice and tell others of His wonderful acts.

Most days, when I go to work, I pray on the way and ask God to use me in my workplace to bring light where there is darkness. To show His love to those who need it and to have the courage to speak for Him.

One day when I was working serving food and drinks to people in the hot pools, I had a large group of women come to the counter. They were incredibly mean and rude to me as they gave their order. To the point that as I turned to the till to put their order through, I prayed, "God, please help me not to cry. Please help me to be kind to these ladies." One of the women told me they were all primary school teachers having a day out together. So I bought some bottles of water and enough glasses out to where they were sitting, and I said, "I'm so proud of all of you for taking the time to relax. Being a primary school teacher is really hard, and it is so nice to see you are having this time together."

After that, they completely changed. They were kind for the rest of the session and left happy. We have no idea what people are going through, and when we involve God in these situations, He helps us and gives us what we need to love them.

When you ask God to open your eyes to see Him in many different ways throughout your day, when you seek His face always, and when you look to the Lord for His strength, it is amazing what you will see in a day. Your relationship with Him deepens, you grow closer, and you start to go to Him first at every moment because He becomes your best friend.

The amazing thing is each time you see or hear Him in nature as you go for a walk, or you hear Him speaking life through you to someone He's put in your path, or you feel God's love in a hug with someone who needs it, or you see God give you strength in a tough situation, you can't help but rejoice. You can't not tell others about what He has done because it is just bursting from you.

Let's be people who look for God all through the day, seek Him and infuse Him in everything we say and do. Then have a heart of gratitude, give thanks to Him, be full of joy and tell of His wonderful acts to others.

Prayer

- God, help me to see you all through my day, involve you in every moment, every conversation, and open my eyes to you and what you are doing.

- God, help me to be more intimate with you, grow closer to you each day so that you become my closest friend.

- God, help me to have the courage to tell people about the wonderful things you have done in my life and all around me. Let me have a heart to praise you, to give thanks and be full of joy when I see you in so many different ways throughout my day.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

DAY SIX

Prayer is the most essential way to cultivate intimacy with God.

Most Christians know that King David was a man after God's heart (**1 Sam 13:14**). But what did that look like?

Part of the answer lies in the following Psalm:

PSALM 78:70-72

He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance.

And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.

—

I am reminded of the story of the prophet Samuel going to Bethlehem to anoint the future King of Israel, sanctioned by God. The word would've spread like wildfire; a prophet coming to town was a "Main Event", and the town would've been buzzing! The saddest thing about this story is that David, the youngest in his family, wasn't even invited. Perhaps this is a sneak peek into the dysfunctional relationship David had with his family. He was always looked down upon, not included in events etc.

The Main Event:

When Samuel reached Bethlehem, he invited a few guests for a special meal. The meat for the meal came from a cow that Samuel first offered to God as a fellowship offering. A fellowship offering was a kind of sacrifice (gift to God). Its purpose was to express friendship between people and God.



The guests at Samuel's meal were the elders of Bethlehem (In other words, the old men who acted as local leaders and judges). Samuel also invited Jesse and his sons to the meal. Unfortunately for David, though, he was out tending his father's flock (1 Sam 17:34), but we know what the Devil meant for evil, God will use for good instead of seeing David's neglect. David sees the perfect opportunity to be intimate with God in a time of privacy & prayer, shutting the door and removing all distractions. David's greatest battles were won in privacy.

PSALM 78:71-72

He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep



David developed his intimacy with God in the sheep pens. This allowed him to lead well & ultimately qualified him to be one of the most influential kings of all time.

Prayer is not practised in order to get people's attention but for intimacy with God. "Shutting the door" means we have to remove distractions. God wants us to close the doors because intimacy takes place behind closed doors. When we close the door to distractions, we are seeking privacy and intimacy with God. The goal of prayer is that the oil will flow, and the anointing, presence, and strength from God will flow. That flow occurs in your secret place. Once it flows in private, it can be a blessing publicly.

Your intimacy with God in private will produce fruit, and your fruit will speak of your intimacy.

However, the most important result of intimacy is not that the fruit will speak but that the fruit will feed others. The posture of the heart is the most important posture in prayer. We can pray sitting, standing, kneeling, with our face to the ground, hands lifted up, eyes lifted to Heaven, placing the head between the knees, and even pounding the chest.

God is not looking at our body posture when we pray; God is looking at our heart's condition.

Is your heart directed towards Him? Closing the door helps us to realign our hearts, attention, and affection to God.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I commit to removing distractions from my life and heart when I pray. Help me to put aside all distractions to focus only on You. Holy Spirit, redirect my heart, attention, and affection towards God, in the almighty name of Jesus.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

DAY SEVEN

Psalm 139 is one of my favourite Psalms and speaks to us of a God that wants intimacy. We know that God desires intimacy with us because He knows us intimately. We see this in verses 1 - 6.

PSALM 139:1-6

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

—

He knows everything about us, our thoughts, what we will say before we say it, everything we will do, where we will go before we go there, and He even chooses to go before us on our journeys. But intimacy is more than knowledge. We also know that God wants intimacy with us because He is present. Sandwiched between all the language of God's presence are verses 7-12, where God is one who is present and available to us.

PSALM 139:7-12

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

—

Intimacy requires close proximity and presence. God is present and available, and He knows everything about us. Presence and proximity are just as essential an ingredient for intimacy with God as knowledge.

But there is more to intimacy than knowledge and presence. Intimacy is the freedom from anxiety in the presence of vulnerability. We find this reflected in the final words of this Psalm.

PSALM 139:23-24

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.

David here trusts God with everything—nothing is hidden, and the beauty of it all is that intimacy prevails even in moments where anxiety would be the natural response because God has proven Himself trustworthy, faithful and graceful. He trusts God because He has been faithful to him in the past. He has no need to fear God seeing what is really going on in his heart because he knows God can deal with it precisely because of the relationship he already has with the Lord.

There is something about knowing everything about someone else and loving them through it all anyway that develops closeness, openness and trust. It develops an environment and relationship of trust because we know they know all there is to know, and they still have you as their heart’s greatest desire. We are welcome and safe even as the imperfect person that we are, even though we need to improve, and even though we don’t have all. We can have that intimacy with God.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



DAY EIGHT

PSALM 84:1-2

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty!

My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Prayer is personal and precious, and when we move beyond what can be seen as formalities, we enter a place of relational conversation with our living God—a place that stirs our hearts and connects with our souls, a place where every moment of our day becomes an intimate connection with our Creator.

God's heart is that we would be intimately connected to Him and passionately wanting to be in His presence—that our whole being would come with a desire for Him to be with us and us with Him, understanding and knowing that no matter what is going on in our world, He can meet us right where we are, and His desire is that we would find Him right there.

To have that passion for a close relationship with our Creator is something special; it's more than special as it's God's heart that we would be in close relationship with Him, that all we are would cry out with that desire to be in His presence.

Today take some time to really search for that deep yearning, that deep desire to meet with Him in that intimate place, that intimate place being your heart, knowing that He loves you just as you are.

Take some time now to process what this verse means to you. Let it speak to you and really sink in. That it wouldn't just be words that roll off your tongue but actually resonate with your heart. Words that stir you to become closer and closer with God as you walk this journey, knowing that you are not alone.

Prayer Points

- Know that God loves you just as you are, and He will meet you right where you are. **(Jeremiah 31:3)**.
- God, reveal how much you desire that close connection with me.
- Have those open yet respectful conversations with God about those things that are on your heart, taking time to listen to what He says. **(Jeremiah 33:3)**



THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



DAY NINE

PSALM 100:4

Enter His gates with a song of thanksgiving
And His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him,
bless and praise His name.

—

Did you realise this attitude of praise and thanksgiving is the biblically mandated approach to God? This is why in our congregational worship sets, we begin with praise. They are not fast songs for the sake of fast songs! This attitude of joyful, exuberant thanksgiving is of great importance to the Lord!

In Luke 17, we find a powerful story where Jesus heals 10 lepers.

Luke 17:11-19

One of them, when he realised that he was healed, turned around and came back, shouting his gratitude, glorifying God. He knelt at Jesus' feet, so grateful. He couldn't thank him enough—and he was a Samaritan.

Jesus said, "Were not ten healed? Where are the nine? Can none be found to come back and give glory to God except this outsider?"

Be thankful.

It sounds so simple, and yet how often are we so consumed by what we don't have that we forget to be thankful for all that we do?! For what He's already done! What a sad moment in scripture it is to hear Jesus saying, "Were not ten healed? Where are the nine? Can none be found to come back and give glory to God..." Something about that really touches my heart. I pray that Jesus would not have to say that about me. That I would not forget to SAY thank you. To LIVE gratefully. To WORSHIP with a grateful heart. I pray we will never become so familiar with worship that we neglect to bring heartfelt praise to our Saviour. Especially after all He has done for us. After the horrific price He paid for my freedom and yours. For my soul and yours.

Prayer Point

- Take some time to thank Jesus for His grace and for saving you. Really think about the horrific price He paid when He died for you, and be specific in your thanksgiving.
- Take time to thank God for three things important to you. E.g., your spouse or kids, for keeping you safe, for allowing you to wake up this morning, giving you your gifts and talents, helping you make a living, etc.
- Take some time to thank God for something you are trusting and believing Him for (based on promises found in His word) that you are yet to receive. E.g., healing, peace, provision, a future spouse etc. Declare His word back to Him as you pray! E.g., "Thank you, God, that by your stripes I am healed!" **(Isaiah 53:5)**.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

DAY TEN

PSALM 116:6

I love the Lord because He hears my voice and my prayer for mercy.

Because He bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!

Death wrapped its ropes around me; the terrors of the grave overtook me. I saw only trouble and sorrow.

Then I called on the name of the Lord: "Please, Lord, save me!"

How kind the Lord is! How good He is! So merciful, this God of ours!

The Lord protects those of childlike faith; I was facing death, and he saved me.

Let my soul be at rest again, for the Lord has been good to me.

He has saved me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.

And so I walk in the Lord's presence as I live here on earth!

—

Since I was a teenager, this Psalm has been a source of comfort for me. May this psalm remind us that He is Emmanuel, God who is with us. Here are three things we see in this passage.

God hears our voice

Verse 1 tells me that with the billions of people on the planet, He still hears my voice. The imagery of God bending down to listen is one of a Father bending down to hear the cry of a child.



Prayer

Thank you, God, that you hear my prayer and that there is nothing I am facing that you are not interested in. May I always bring everything to you in prayer, knowing you hear my voice.

God is kind and merciful

We all recognise we are sinful people, and it won't be long before we find ourselves in trouble again, either through our mistakes, our sin or as a result of living in a sinful world. Verse 5 reminds us of God's kindness and mercy. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Prayer

Thank you, God, that even though I don't deserve your mercy and another chance, you still show kindness and mercy to me.

God will walk with me

After the Psalmist declares that God has saved him from death, he declares with confidence in verse 9 that while he walks here on earth, God will walk with him. This reminds us that nothing can separate us from His loving presence, and because of the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross, we can walk with God again as He always intended it to be.

Prayer

Thank you, God, that through Jesus, my walk with you has been redeemed. Though I face trials and even death, I have this promise that I may walk in your presence.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



DAY ELEVEN

PSALM 103:7

He made known his ways to Moses, His deeds to the people of Israel...

—

I've always loved this picture of intimacy—this delineation between just seeing what God does and knowing God's ways, the difference between observing God acting and understanding His heart and direction. This is the difference between those who saw God from afar and complained and the one who met with God personally and spoke to Him face to face, as you do with a friend (Exodus 33:11).

I know which one I want to be. I love that in this psalm, David makes it clear that the initiative is God's. He makes known His ways. That means God intends us to know them, experience them, and become familiar with them. The Hebrew translation of the word 'ways' is 'de-rek'. Strong's Concordance describes it as a road, as it is walked on. It carries this idea that God reveals His ways as we walk on it together. We know God's ways because we have walked them with Him.

This is not about understanding an aspect of God's character through study. This is about God delighting to show us His ways as we walk the road alongside Him today, talking as we would with a friend, taking moments to understand what God sees and what God wants us to see.

I love the old book "In His Steps" by Charles Sheldon, about a group of Christians in everyday life who committed together to make no major decision without first asking the question, 'what would Jesus do if He was in my shoes?' It is the story of a bunch of ordinary people who learned God's ways.

Let's take a minute to consider your day today. What will you be doing? Where will you be going? And what would it be like if you walked it today with Jesus, your Lord and friend?

Prayer Points

- That Lord, you would show me your ways, not just your deeds.
- That Jesus, you would show me how to be with you like a friend.
- That Holy Spirit, you might reveal to me what Jesus would do if He was in my shoes today.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



DAY TWELVE

PSALM 34:8

Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him

My favourite food is anything with chicken in it, with my all-time favourite being roast chicken with homemade stuffing. What's yours? Have you ever given any thought to how that food became your favourite? Most of us simply tried a new food, loved it, ate it more and now it's become our favourite.

The same can be said about getting to know God. To really get to know Him, you've got to try Him. Obviously, you can't try God like you would try food, but you can choose to get to know Him. You can go to church, pray, read your Bible, and listen to teachings, testimonies and online podcasts so that you learn more about His character. You can take steps to dare to believe His promises and choose to trust Him in specific areas so that you begin to discover for yourself that He is faithful and good.

"Taste and see" implies experiencing God personally. To "see" is about observing what God is doing around you and in the lives of others. To "taste" food is a personal experience as it involves putting food in your mouth. Likewise, "tasting" God is about choosing to personally experience Him through having deliberate, conscious, and regular encounters with Him.



The closer you get to God, the more you will realise that you can trust Him. You discover that God is constant, He is faithful, and He is for you. As you get to know Him, you will find yourself beginning to trust Him more.

Today, choose to make getting to know God more a priority. Decide to put effort into finding out that He is good!

Prayer Points

- Thank the LORD for what He is doing and has done in your life, particularly in your significant moments. As you do, think about how good He has been in your life.

- Ask God to help you “see” His goodness around you more this week.

- Make a choice to “taste” a little more this week by taking another step closer to Him. You might choose to pray more, read the Bible more, listen to people’s testimonies or get more involved with your church or its ministries.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

DAY THIRTEEN

PSALM 8:1-9

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour.

You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

—

Psalm 8 is a beautiful poem about how the Creator, God, rules the world out of the mouths of babes. It's like a riddle that is going to be unpacked by the next part of the poem: 'When I consider your skies the moon and the stars which you have established, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?'

The poet is reflecting on the creation story where there's this contrast between the splendour of the heavenly lights which God installs above, and man below, which He forms out of dirt. Why are humans so important to God? And so the poet continues, 'you made humanity a little lesser than spiritual beings, yet you crown them with glory and majesty'.

In Genesis, God elevates the weak, little dirt creatures for this majestic task to be His image, who will rule over all creation. The poet can hardly believe it.

Both parts of this poem are about how God loves to elevate the powerless, so He can rule the world through them, whether through babbling babies or lowly humans. God loves to choose the weak, the poor and the afflicted. Psalm 8 leads us forward to the story of Jesus.

Jesus invited His followers to share in His power and mission, but it's a different kind of power. It's like how Jesus said that to be His follower is to become like a child. When God's people serve others from a place of humility and powerlessness, that's when God's kingdom and power are most on display.

Prayer

- Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex (**Psalm 139:13-14**)
- Thank you for giving me purpose (**Ephesians 2:10**)
- Thank you that it is your love that sets me free (**1 John 3:16**)

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

DAY FOURTEEN

PSALM 20:6-8

Now this I know The LORD gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.

His love and faithfulness to us in every season of our lives. And He will continue to do so for the entirety of our remaining days too.

It's A Trust Issue.

Have you ever done a bungy jump? Standing on the platform looking over the side can make you scared, it can make you doubt, and it can paralyse you from taking the step over the edge. But you rationalise it because there's a giant rubber band tied to you that should stop you from hitting the ground. We trust in the rubber band, all the while forgetting to ensure there is a strong connection to the other end of the rubber band. It should be securely fastened to the bridge. We trust in the band, but I wonder if we should trust more in the secure connection.

It's amazing what we can place our trust in, careers, people, houses, money, identity, security, the latest thought, processes, and relationships. If you were to look at your diary or your bank, would it show you where you place your trust?



Verse 8 says, “they are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm”. Would it be appropriate to say that trusting God is more about the way you get up again? Could we say that a sign of really trusting God is more about rising up and standing firm? Maybe a display of your trust in God is found in your desire to stand firm when you’ve fallen down.

We can trust ourselves, our strength, our abilities or even the personal power we have, our chariots and horses, or we can choose to trust in the “victorious power of his right hand”.

It’s a trust issue. Where have you really placed yours?

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



DAY FIFTEEN

PSALM 1:1-3

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

One of the most transformative things on planet earth is, without a doubt, the Word of God. It describes itself as powerful, living and active. It operates in our lives as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. It leads the way to a life truly blessed by God. Sadly, for many Christians, we undervalue the power and place of the Word of God in our lives.

In this Psalm, the author highlights the blessing that comes when we delight in the Word. The prosperity we experience when we allow it to permeate our hearts, mind, thoughts, emotions and actions. There's a lot of controversy out there around the term "prosperity gospel". I won't get into that, but what I will say is this... The Bible is clear; if you want to prosper in your life, you need to hold firmly to the Word of God. I'm not necessarily talking about the prosperity of wealth and material things. That's a limited view of prosperity and blessing. I'm talking about prosperity of heart, soul, joy, peace, abundance, calling, purpose and love in God. Prosperity in any and every season!

Perhaps today, God is calling you back to His word. Maybe it's time to bring it back to the place of prominence and value in your life. Would you again allow it to shape, mould, and change you? Let it do its supernatural work of healing and leading you. It could just be that the prosperity you are looking for is found as you walk with God by holding to His word.



THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

Horizontal lines for writing.

DAY SIXTEEN

In **Psalm 73**, we find the Psalmist is in a deeply relatable place. He begins by confessing the goodness of God but quickly moves on to look at the wicked around him. He sees them prospering, despite being far from God, and he quickly starts asking, what's the point? What's the point in keeping my heart pure? What's the point in me keeping my hand from evil? I am working hard here to follow the Lord, but all I seem to get for it is chastisement, and when I look around, all I see is the evil flourishing! I am trying to be doing good, but I'm getting bad, and they are doing bad but getting good. God, what's the point?

Have you ever felt like that? You are out here trying your best to follow the way of the Lord, and you look around and see those who aren't, and they seem to be achieving more earthly success than you.

The hinge point of this psalm comes in **verse 17**. He says that he is filled with comparison and resentment, and then he says:

**Until I went into the sanctuary of God;
Then I understood their end.**

For the Psalmist, the shift comes when he shifts his perspective and realises that the only standard that really matters is not earthly standards of success, but the eternal one. Ultimately, despite all their perceived earthly success, the wicked have set their feet on a path to eternal destruction. Worldly standards fade in significance when compared to eternal ones.



A couple of things to note from the trajectory of this Psalm:

Comparison erodes your faith

We often talk about how comparison erodes self-worth and self-belief, and that is true. But this Psalm shows us that actually becoming fixated on the outcomes of others, in comparison with your own, erodes your faith in God.

Comparison is remedied by a shift in perspective

If you feel lost in comparison, friend, you are looking at life from the wrong perspective. You are observing your life from an earthly perspective, and you need to go into the sanctuary of God and start viewing life from His perspective.

This Psalm is an invitation to view the world differently. God says come, look at life from my perspective, not yours, and watch as your faith grows.



Reflection

- Have I been allowing comparison to erode my faith?
- Where have I been viewing life from an earthly perspective, and where do I need to shift my perspective?
- What is God's perspective of those parts of my life that I have been seeing from an earthly perspective?

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

DAY SEVENTEEN

PSALM 119:105

Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

—

I love this passage. It sits just inside the cover of my Bible so that I am reminded of its truths. For me, this is not just a passage to remind me of the importance of the Word of God but to remind me that His word is current and is a guide to me in my life.

Let me put it this way, 22 years ago, I hit a crisis point in my life. Some would call it an existential crisis. Whatever you call it, I was in a bad place. I was frustrated with where I was at in life. I felt unfulfilled. There was a sense of time running out and seemingly no clear answers in front of me. It was not good.

That's when one night, while in my frustration, I gave God an ultimatum (I don't recommend anyone does this). I said to the Lord, "You either tell me what I am supposed to be doing, or I'm walking away." After I said those words, I opened my Bible to the first passage I could find. It was John 21:15-19. Jesus had just finished His meal, then turned to Peter and asked him, "Peter do you love me?" Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you" then Jesus replied, "Feed my lambs". Two more times, Jesus questioned Peter, and Peter answered with the same response. Jesus replied, "Take care of my sheep. Feed my sheep". When I read those words, it was as if Jesus was next to me, asking me the same questions and giving me the same replies. I had an overwhelming sense of peace and conviction.

I had heard from the Lord, and he had given me clear directions for my life. Some 22 years later, I am fulfilling the word he gave me that night.

Often we seek a “word from the Lord”. We seek it in the form of prophecy, through a leader or even by God’s audible voice. But I want you to know that God is speaking clearly in His word. Trust me when I say that the words He speaks are for you now (I have numerous other stories I could share about this). The Logos, the written Word of God, is still God-breathed. This means there’s life in these words. The Rhema Word of God is waiting for us in the Logos Word of God.

Intimacy is about going deep in relationship with God. Through His word, we get to hear His voice, hear His heart and find direction for our lives. To press into the Word of God is to press into God. Moses understood intimacy with God. He went up to Mt Sinai and met with God. He received the Word and returned illuminated. The Word is a lamp and a light—it illuminates the way.

I challenge you to live a life in the Word and watch your intimacy with God deepen. You will become more discerning to the things of God because you know His voice.

Prayer

- Pray for a word from the Lord. Then open your Bible and begin to read. Write down what you read and ask yourself, “how does this passage relate to me?”
- Pray for another person. Then open your Bible and read. Write down what you read and ask yourself, “how does this passage relate to them?”
- Pray over the passages you’ve read and what you’ve written down. Then either step out in it or pass it on.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

DAY EIGHTEEN

PSALM 82:1-8

God has taken His place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods He holds judgement:

“How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah

Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.

Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

I said, “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince.”

Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!

In Genesis 11, humanity rebel by building the tower of Babel. But God scatters that rebellion. And when Moses in Deuteronomy **(Deuteronomy 32:8-9)** looks back at that story, he says that is the moment when God handed over the nations to worship the rebel spiritual beings, the gods of money, sex, and military power.





Moses is the first one to call them “demons”. Demons are spiritual forces at work behind corrupt human power structures. In the Bible, spiritual evil is at work in anything that drags God’s good creation back into chaos, darkness and death.

But that’s not the end of the story. Psalm 82 is a powerful chapter that reminds us that we do not need to walk in fear. That God is holding these rebellious spiritual beings to account. That God is reclaiming the nations that He had once scattered.

When did God do that? At the cross! When He had to disinherit humanity at Babel, He did not abandon the human race. Instead, He was so concerned for humanity that He became a man.

God is reclaiming the nations. This is why the Great Commission (**Matthew 28:18-19**) begins the way it does. ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations’.

Did you hear that? God wants to partner with you in reclaiming the nations. You have a purpose. To share the life-changing message of Jesus with those around you.

Prayer

- Pray for boldness to share the love of Jesus to those around us
(Acts 4.29)

- Pray for opportunities to share the Gospel message **(Colossians 4:3)**

- Pray that our nation is set free from spiritual captivity **(2 Timothy 2:25)**

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

DAY NINETEEN

Some fifteen years ago, I stood at my clothesline and whispered a prayer of surrender, "It's okay Lord, I let it go. I'm okay if we never own our own home." In the days that followed, God graciously promised me that if I would be faithful to build His house, He would be faithful to build mine, confirming through prophetic words that there would come a day when He would invite me to realise this dream of home ownership.

It's a dream that for now has had to stay on the altar, and most days, there is peace in that surrender. But sometimes I still yearn for a place to call our own. A place of stability and permanence that we can shape in a way that suits our family's needs.

Home. It's a primal longing planted deep within us. With home comes a sense of belonging—a place that we know we can always return to and find refuge in.

In Psalm 90, Moses, a man well-acquainted with wandering, writes, "**Lord, You have been our dwelling place [our refuge, our sanctuary, our stability] in all generations. Before the mountains were born, or before You had given birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are [the eternal] God**" - **Psalm 90:1-2**.

Moses knew that in a world filled with uncertainties and suffering, God is the constant; that He remains the same throughout all time, and for all generations, He has been and will be our home. The One that we can return to and find our belonging and our purpose in.

And so, even as he wandered in the wilderness, experiencing the consequences of Israel's disobedience, he did so with hope. He understood that they were not truly homeless, because God—their rightful dwelling place—wandered with them. This truth caused him to realise the brevity of his time on this earth, and to ask the Lord for wisdom to use his days well. Even in a time of discipline, He expected to know the compassion, joy, and favour of God again.

We can and must carry this same hope: God is our eternal home and He always walks with us. This year, may we determine to dwell and abide in Him no matter what.

Prayer Points

- Ask the Lord to show you what it looks like for you to make Him your dwelling place in this season and thank Him for providing you with a place of refuge and belonging in this world **(Psalm 90:1)**.

- Pray for the generations that will follow you and are yet to come—that they too would make the Lord their home **(Psalm 90:1 & 16)**.

- Invite the Lord to establish the work of your hands as you step into this new year and thank Him for His favour upon your life **(Psalm 90:17)**.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



DAY TWENTY

PSALM 5:3

Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly

In life, it seems we're always waiting for something: a need to be met, a dream to come to pass, to meet the right person, etc. This can be frustrating and cause us to lose hope. In Psalm 5, David teaches us there is a right and wrong way to wait. At the start of each day, David (like Jesus) would remind God of his needs, expecting answers to come.

If you notice a mother carrying her child, the pregnancy takes time—there is new life in her. The process takes energy, and months pass until the baby arrives. Yet during the pregnancy, the mum looks amazing—she is a picture of health and energy. You could say she is growing and glowing! God has given mums that extra energy and life during pregnancy for the baby to grow and mum to stay healthy so that the birth happens at the right time.

Waiting with confidence in God's promises is like that—He energises us. We have a sense of peace, assurance, and confidence in God's goodness! The answer is on its way!

Isaiah 40:31 - But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

When you're waiting expectantly, you know this could be the day you get the break you need.



This could be the day the problem turns around. There's an anticipation in your spirit. You're on the lookout. You talk like it's going to happen. You act like it's going to happen. That expectancy is your faith being released.

David's confident attitude to prayer is because he knows who God is.

"Surely, goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life."

He was looking forward, expecting God's blessing, not constantly looking over his shoulder out of fear of missing out or what could go wrong.

Today pray confidently, with expectation and look for God's favour!



THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



DAY TWENTY ONE

PSALM 27:14

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

—

I don't know about you, but one of the things that really irritates me is when I buy something online, I am given a due date, and the parcel doesn't arrive on the date I am expecting it to arrive. When I check online as to where exactly my parcel is, all I can see are the words—IN TRANSIT. When I ring the postal company and give them my tracking number, they, too, spout off these two words that I am not a big fan of —"IN TRANSIT"!

Have you ever felt like your life is in transit? The truth is at different times of our lives, we all find ourselves in transit seasons. In waiting seasons when nothing seems to be happening. We have left our port of departure but are yet to arrive at our God-given destination.

I believe there are many people just like me who don't really know how to respond when we find ourselves in transit. We don't know how to live between dreams and promises that are yet to be fulfilled. We don't know how to live in the wait. The sad thing is that many people give up on their God-given dreams and potential simply because they don't know how to respond when they find themselves in transit. Often we give up because the wait is too long.

However, this is not a new issue. The Bible is full of stories where men and women of God had to go through the "IN TRANSIT" process. Joseph had a dream, but as we know, he had to go through an incredibly difficult process before he became the second most powerful person in Egypt.

As a young man, David was anointed to be the next King, but he, too, had to go through a long and complicated process before he was able to lead Israel. Elisha was in transit for many years as an apprentice to Elijah before receiving his own great leadership mantle.

The truth is, we often want the blessing but are not willing to go through the process. However, God specialises in putting us all through this transit process because it is through this process that He prepares us for the season ahead.

So what do we do when we find ourselves IN TRANSIT?

Don't give up

Too many people give up too soon because we want everything done in our time frame. We want it here and now. We want the miracle immediately. Often we are tempted to walk away when it doesn't happen when we want it to happen. Be committed to the whole process. Tenacity is part of the miracle. Make a decision to refuse to quit. Decide — I am not giving up!

Expect breakthrough

I love the fact that I am part of a movement that expects breakthroughs. When we find ourselves in transit, we need to live expectant that our breakthrough is going to happen any day. Just because we cannot see anything with our natural eyes doesn't mean nothing is happening! God is always working behind the scenes and rearranging things, making the crooked paths straight. Every single day, decide to live with the expectation that you are one step closer to your breakthrough.

Stay Pure

One of the things that we are tempted to do when we are in transit is to take shortcuts and compromise our purity. The enemy will try everything in his power to lead us astray. Hang around the wrong people, form bad habits and end up settling for second best.

One of the things that God builds in us during the IN TRANSIT process is our character. I once heard someone say that your gifts and talents will get you through the door, but it's your character that will keep you in the room. Often you see someone start really well. You see them rising up and doing great things for God, and then all of a sudden, you see them lose everything. Why? Because they didn't have the character or the purity needed to handle the blessing.

21 DAYS OF PRAYER

I love what David says in-

Psalm 24:3-5

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in His Holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart.

God is looking for people with clean hands and pure hearts. There are some victories God will withhold until we deal with some character issues. Purity is the key!

My encouragement to you, if you are in a transit season, is to unfailingly trust in God's timing and His plan. Don't be discouraged. Keep on keeping on. God is faithful to complete what He has started!

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY





