



21

**DAYS OF
PRAYER**



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To Our Central Family,

There is a 1916 poem *The Winds of Fate* by Ella Wheeler Wilcox that contains these lines:

“One ship sails east and another drives west. With the selfsame winds that blow. 'Tis the set of the sails, and not the gales, that tells the way we go.”

I interpret this poem to represent the reality that God (like wind) is always moving, speaking, and working. If we are willing to align our desires, words, and actions (the sails) to His way, we can expect to move in the right direction. That is really what the 21 days of prayer is all about. It is our way of ensuring that we begin 2021 moving in God's direction.

So, I encourage you to take advantage of this journal, to make sure that you start the New Year on the right trajectory. Our prayer is that you would experience God's very best this year.

-Bill Markham

LEARNING TO PRAY

Jonathan Gallo

WHAT PRAYER IS

Prayer is simply talking to God. It's speaking and it's listening. It needs to flow from our heart (Psalm 18:6; Mark 15:34), simply (Matthew 6:7), honestly (Psalm 38:9; Proverbs 16:2; James 4:3) and humbly (2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 66:18).

WHY WE PRAY

As we pray, we develop a close relationship with God (Mt 6:5-13; John 17:11, 20-21), are filled with peace (Phil 4:6-7), strengthened to fight temptation (Matt 26:1), encouraged when we are tired (Luke 18:1), prepared to hear God's voice (John 14:26), ready to receive His wisdom (James 1:5) and positioned to have our needs supplied (Mt 7:7,8; John 16:24).

TYPES OF PRAYER

Just as human communication varies depending on the setting - so does prayer. It can be pre-scripted or spontaneous. Jesus promised that God hears us each time we pray and He knows what we need before we ask (Matthew 6:7-8). Jesus modeled many types of prayer (Matthew 6:5-13; Luke 18:1; John 17; Ephesians 6:18). Here are some common types of prayer we find in the Bible.

Praise or Adoration - when we recognize God for who He is (Matthew 11:25)

Thanksgiving - when we thank God for what He has done (John 11:41)

Petition - when we pray for needs and wisdom (Hebrews 5:7)

Agreement - when we pray God's will as revealed in His word (Acts 4:23-24)

Intercession - when we pray for others (Luke 22:32; John 17)

Listening - when we wait to hear God speaking to us (1 Kings 19:11-12)

OTHER ELEMENTS

Here are a few other elements to consider as a part of your prayer time experience.



Music | Music is an emotional language that can help us get our mind focused on who God is and what He has or can do in our life. Getting a playlist of instrumental or worship music can help drown out the noise of the world around us and get into a concentrated space.

The Bible | The Bible is a record of God's interaction with people in history. These conversations are recorded for us to glean more about His character, nature, purpose, and thoughts. As you begin reading you will find your own ideas challenged and will begin to learn more about who God is.

Location | You can spend time anywhere that helps you connect to God. Some people dedicate a space at home. Others use headphones as they travel by bus or subway to work. Still others spend time with God as they walk through a park or forest. Wherever you choose, a daily quiet time is practiced alone where God is the focus of your quality time.

Journal | Writing down the things that you are thinking, praying, pondering, or learning is a great way to summarize and remember your experience for time to come. Some people like to write down their thoughts in a journal and others use apps they can search in the future.

Intentionality | Setting down quality time with God is not something that happens unless you make it a priority. If you have never done it, start with as little as ten minutes a day. Don't get down on yourself if you miss a day. Remember it's a lifestyle change that takes time to develop.

Scripted Prayers | Sometimes scripted prayers are a great way to learn to pray spontaneously. The book of Psalms is filled with scripted prayers used by Jewish people for thousands of years (including Jesus and his disciples).

SAMPLE PRAYER OUTLINE #1

As an example, here is how I generally connect with God each day.

Talk to God

(2 min) “God I invite you into my day. Speak to me today. I want to hear from you and I want to know you more.”

Read the Bible

(5-10 min) I choose to read a little bit at a time. I often read no more than a chapter and go over it a few times to get the sense of what its saying.

Write Down Your Thoughts

(3 min) I want to come out of each time with a thought so I use a journal or app to record my thoughts or questions of what I have read.

Talk to God

(5 min) I finish off by simply talking out of my heart to God. Express. Confess. Question. Give Thanks. Ask.

A person riding a horse across a vast, hazy landscape. The rider is in the lower right, moving towards the left. The background is a soft, misty expanse of land and sky.

**But seek first his kingdom
and his righteousness,
and all these things will be
given to you as well.**

Matthew 6:33

SAMPLE PRAYER OUTLINE #2

Jesus gave us a model prayer as a way of teaching his disciples to pray.

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever”

| Matthew 6:9-13

“Our Father in heaven...”

God wants to be known as our Father (Romans 8:15). Thank Him for the relationship you have with Him.

“...Hallowed be Your Name...”

Recognize who God is in your life. Savior. Healer. Provider. Peace. Thank Him for all He has done for you.

“...Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...”

Submit your life and agenda to God’s priorities. Give the situations in your life to Him to take care of His way.

“...Give us this day our daily bread...”

Ask Him for your daily needs. Let Him know what you have need of and depend on Him for the results.

“...Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors...”

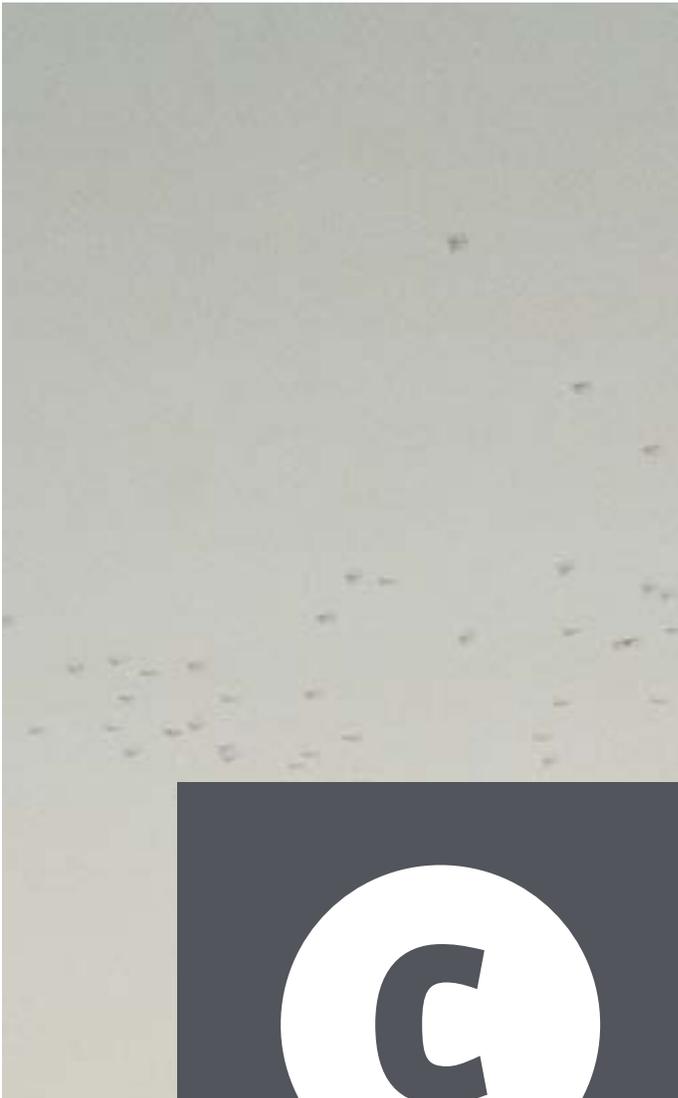
Ask God to forgive you of your sin. Talk to God about the pain others have brought you, forgive them and release them from owing you in any way.

“...And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one...”

Pray that God helps you resist temptations that come from inside you and from outside of you (Ephesians 6:12).

“...For yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever.”

Express your faith in God’s ability to ultimately accomplish His plan and purpose



R E L E A S E

R E S E T

R E N E W

HEBREWS 12:1-12

Bill Markham

01

SCRIPTURE

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees.

CHALLENGE

To run effectively, you must get rid of anything that would slow you down. It is the same in life. We must get rid of any attitude, thought, or action that hinders us from being fully who God created us to be. What do you need to get rid of to run the race of life more effectively?

LUKE 5

Mike Hicks

02

SCRIPTURE

Read the entirety of chapter five of Luke's Gospel.

CHALLENGE

The Bible records 20+ times where Jesus went to pray; Luke 5 is one of those. Jesus was always very busy, with crowds, interruptions and distractions. He also always took time to pray. In other words, prayer was a "habit" of Jesus. Moreover, it indicates prayer is not a matter of time but a matter of priorities. Jesus had time to pray because He decided to allocate time.

JAMES 5:13-18

Gianpaolo Galessiere

03

SCRIPTURE

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

CHALLENGE

Prayer is a very powerful tool that we, as the church, have at our disposal. We are encouraged to pray and ask for healing. We are to believe that when we pray, good things can happen. We are also encouraged to confess our sins to one another and pray for each other. There is power in confession. It can release what we have been holding onto and allow God to do a deeper work in us.

READ JONAH 1 & 2

Janet Collins

04

SCRIPTURE

Read the entirety of Jonah chapter one and two.

CHALLENGE

What has God been prompting you to do that you have been fighting him on? Are there any areas of your life where you may be actively moving in the opposite direction to what God asks of you? It's time for full surrender. Write out a prayer releasing all of it to God, be willing to throw yourself overboard and let him save you. You may end up in a place you don't expect to be, but you are not alone. God is with you and will use you for His purposes and His glory.

PSALMS 131

Jonathan Gallo

05

SCRIPTURE

Read the entirety of Psalms chapter 131.

CHALLENGE

Sometimes to go forward, we need to come to a place of humility and ultimate dependency on God. In this passage, the Psalmist paints a picture of himself snuggling as a child into the arms of God despite the challenges around him. What are the challenges you face that you need to, as a child, fully trust God?

MATTHEW 11:28-30

Andrew Rutledge

06

SCRIPTURE

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

CHALLENGE

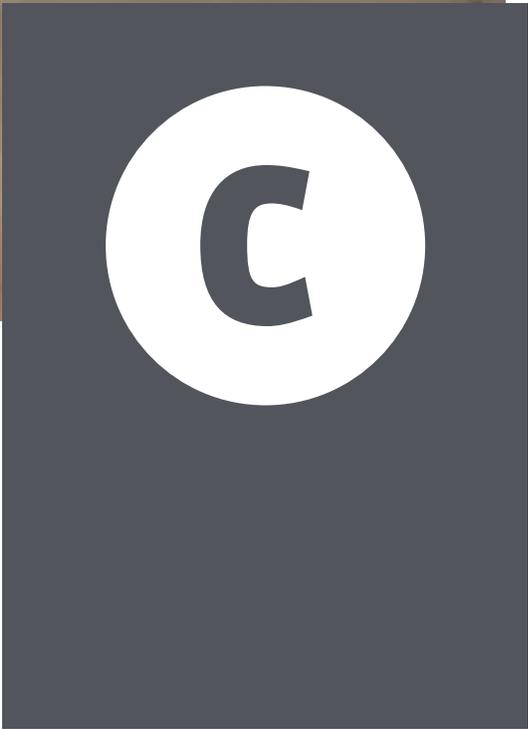
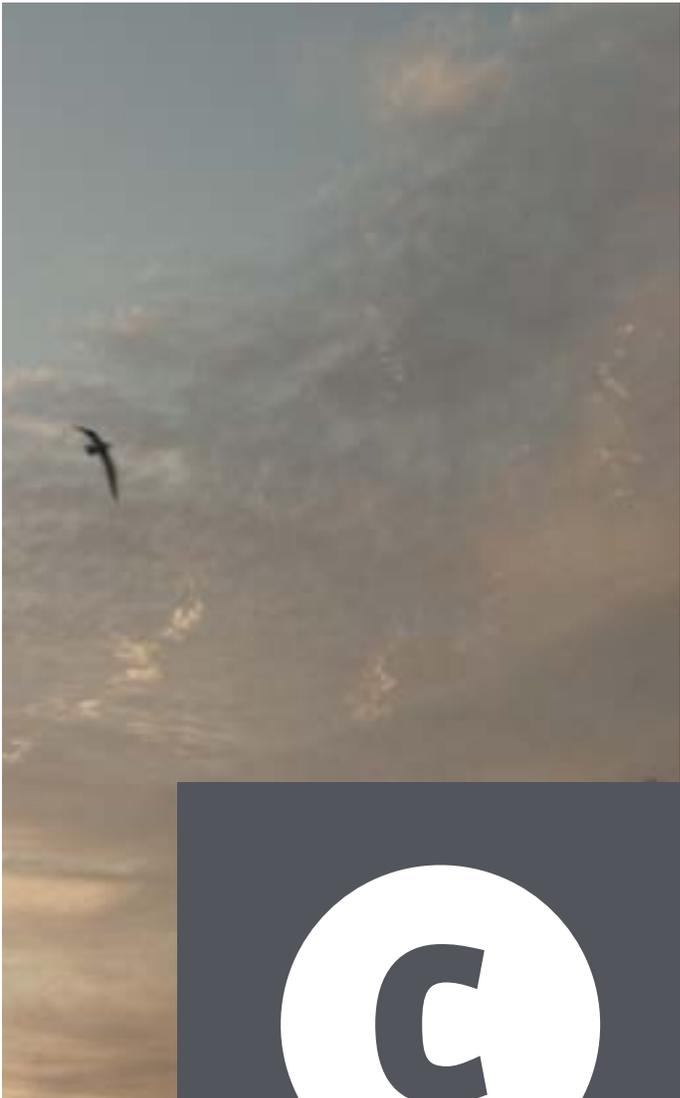
One step in finding release is to take time to grieve what has happened. It is through grief that we can find peace and begin to move forward. Grief is not just about death. It is about broken relationships, job loss, poor health, everything that happened that is outside God's plan for your life. What should you be grieving to start fresh?

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07

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R E L E A S E

R E S E T

R E N E W

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

Bill Markham

08

SCRIPTURE

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

CHALLENGE

My grandmother used to say, “garbage in, garbage out.” She was right! Whatever you allow into your mind, eventually infects your heart, which in turn impacts your words and actions. The Bible reminds us only to let God’s truth fill our every thought. What have you been allowing into your life that keeps you from experiencing the full Peace of God?

MATTHEW 4:18-20

Matt Colbourne

09

SCRIPTURE

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

CHALLENGE

When Jesus calls His first followers, He gives them a command and a promise. He commands “Follow me” and then promises “I will make you fishers of men”. He promises incredible life transformation, a new life, a wild journey! He promises that to you and me that our lives begin to look like his, our hearts start to align as we follow

Jesus. What does following Jesus look like in your life? The disciples left their nets; what do you need to leave behind?

2 COR 5:16-21

Gianpaolo Galessiere

10

SCRIPTURE

From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

CHALLENGE

When you reset an electronic device, all the information is deleted. You are able to start fresh. If you downloaded a virus or something isn't working, the reset will fix it. When we become followers of Christ, there is a reset that happens in our lives. It's a fresh start. We no longer are affected by the mistakes of the past. We can move forward with a new purpose and perspective.

MARK 1:35-39

Jeffrey Tuffour

11

SCRIPTURE

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

CHALLENGE

At the onset of Jesus' ministry, when everything was going well, he chose to steal himself away. His success didn't stop him from creating a space to talk and listen to God. What does a reset look like for you? How do you plan it into the regular rhythm of your life?

ROMANS 7:14-8:17

Janet Collins

12

SCRIPTURE

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

CHALLENGE

What kind of thoughts, actions do you see flowing out of your life? Things that are coming from your sinful nature or things that please the Spirit? How can you tell? What does it look like? What would it take for you to experience a reset right now in your life where you are choosing to live a life controlled by the Spirit? What are the benefits of living this way? How does this scripture describe what a life controlled by the Spirit looks like?

PSALMS 51:1-7

Jonathan Gallo

13

SCRIPTURE

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

CHALLENGE

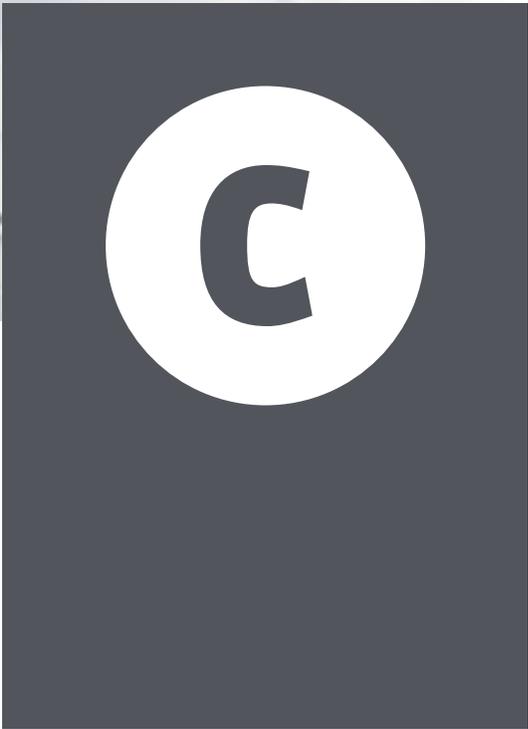
Transgression and iniquity are old English words that we don't often use. They suggest the idea of an inward tendency to sin a particular way repetitively. In this passage, the Psalmist asks God not just to clean him from the moments of sin in his life but to thoroughly clean him from the deep tendency to sin in a particular way. Are there areas in your life where you see a repetitive pattern that you can ask God to reset in your life this year? This year can be the year you find freedom in an area that holds you back.

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R E L E A S E
R E S E T

R E N E W

ROMANS 12

Bill Markham

15

SCRIPTURE

Read the entirety of Romans chapter twelve.

CHALLENGE

We are all being forged by expectations and demands. We are either being pressed like clay into a mold by this world (conformed) or we are being sculpted like clay into a unique masterpiece by God (transformed). One is a cookie cutter that has no regard for you as an individual, while the other carefully and skillfully crafts you into something beautiful and unique. Who will shape you this year?

EPHESIANS 4:17-24

Gianpaolo Galessiere

16

SCRIPTURE

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ! Assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

CHALLENGE

Once you have tried a juicy ribeye steak, you never want to go back to salisbury steak. You just know one is better. It's the same with our lives. Once we know the goodness of God, we never want to go back to regular living. Now that we live this new life, we need to renew our thoughts and attitudes towards our new nature. To truly to be like Jesus.

JOSHUA 1:9

Andrew Rutledge

17

SCRIPTURE

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

CHALLENGE

We can get ourselves caught up in all that is going on around us. In a world of chaos it can be easy to be troubled and afraid. How can you remind yourself that God is with you so that you can get a fresh perspective?

1 PETER 5:7

Matt Colbourne

18

SCRIPTURE

Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

CHALLENGE

We live in a busy society! Stress, anxiety and worries are common traits we live with day to day. In some cases, we use stress and a busy life to mask the concern we live with. The Scriptures say to cast our anxieties on Jesus. Did you know you have a loving father who wants to take those burdens? We serve a compassionate God. Take time today to think about what you can give to Him. What is causing you to stress today that distracts you from what God wants to do in your life?

PHILIPPIANS 2-3

Mike Hicks

19

SCRIPTURE

Read the entirety of Philippians chapters two and three.

CHALLENGE

We all have feelings and thoughts about who we are. As Canadians, we are ranked to be the second-best country in the world to live in, as surveyed in 2020. A lot of people ask who am I? Spending their life searching for the answer. The bigger question is, who does God say you are?

ISAIAH 43:18-19, 2 COR 5:17

Jeffrey Tuffour

20

SCRIPTURE

Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

CHALLENGE

Renewal is the work of God, and Isaiah hints at it. The beauty of God initiating a regeneration means the results are left to him. In the most difficult places [wilderness and a desert], God says he will make a highway and cause a river to spring up. What do you want God to renew in your life?

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