

# Pray First 2023

## Abide • Ask • Follow

### Day 1 Abide and Find Rest

**Come Before Him In Worship:** As you begin this 21-day devotional, start with praising Him. Praise Him for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do. Thank Him for bringing you to this devotional. Thank Him for how He will speak to you and heal you. Thank Him for how intentional and personal He is with you. Worship Him for being the perfect Father, your Holy King, and loyal Friend. Let the fruit of your lips today be love for Him! Now give yourself to Him by saying this prayer: “My dear Lord, who is like You? In my wandering I have found that You are the treasure of my heart. I have understood that You are my All in All. I quiet my heart to tune in to Yours. I engage every part of me with every part of You. Have Your way in my mind and my heart as I listen to what You have to say to me. I love You Lord. Thank You for what You will do!” Anticipate His lovingkindness leading every part of you back to Him. Hallelujah!

**Daily Scripture:** “Come to me, all who labor 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.” Matthew 11:28-30

**Devotion:** The promise of rest is given to weary sinners by our Savior, Jesus. He gently and lovingly calls to the burdened one, “Come to me and receive rest!” This offer of “rest” is both rich and full! It encompasses peace, freedom from fear, the meeting of all our needs, and so much more. Perhaps you’ve experienced this life-giving rest at some time in your past, but are struggling to find it in your life today. If so, then it’s time to take up His yoke once again!

To all of us that come, Jesus says, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me.” In other words, “become My students, be trained by Me, let your whole life be one with Me, abide in Me.” Abiding in Jesus is the pathway to His peace. We live in a world that tells us to “find our own truth” and feeds us constant lies that weasel their way into our hearts and lead us down (or keep us on) roads to bondage, anxiety and unrest. In contrast to all of that, Jesus assures us that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. This doesn’t mean that what He asks of us will always be easy or light. It means that He will carry the burden with and for us, as we’re “yoked” to Him.

So, let us believe that it is not His yoke, but resistance to His yoke, that is causing us difficulty, and surrender to Jesus’ call to abide. Come and let Him prove that this is, in fact, the place of safety, victory, peace and rest, as we experience all that our Lord wants to give us of Himself!

**Respond in Prayer:** Thank you Lord for this invitation of Oneness with You! In this Oneness I find rest that supernaturally transforms me from the inside out. So, I remain open and willing before You for You to teach me how to abide in Your rest. I long to live in and from this place. There is no other way. How blessed am I to have the greatest Teacher and Shepherd to show me the way to Life!

## Day 2 Abide and Live

**Come Before Him In Worship:** Invite the Lord into your physical and figurative space. He's the All in All who fills everything everywhere with Himself. In Him, you live, move, and have your being. Receive Him as truth and life. Humble yourself before Him, and acknowledge Him in all your ways. "Lord, I welcome You! I am Your resting place, Great Shepherd and Keeper of my soul. Thank You for what You will do!"

**Daily Scripture:** "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

**Devotion:** The relationship of a believer (a "branch") to Jesus (the "vine") is a living one. The branch-life is a life of complete dependence on the vine. In the vine, it flourishes and grows. Separated from the vine, it dies. The vine gives life. With this simple analogy, Jesus teaches us a beautiful gospel truth: other religions and teachers tell us how we ought to live, giving us laws, examples, reasons and motives for how to live pure and noble lives; but Jesus gives us life itself, if we will take it! The powerful, pure and noble life of Christ alive in us and working its way out in our lives in Spirit-empowered obedience to his commandments and laws of love, freedom and life.

Put a different way, other religions and teachers stand over the crippled man shouting, "This is the way you ought to walk," while offering no healing! But Christ and Christianity lovingly bend to the crippled man, take his hand, and say to him, "In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk," thus enabling him, not just to walk, but to leap with joy and praise to God. (Acts 3:7-8)

Jesus gives us more than just commandments, examples and motives! He gives us His love and power which then enable us to live righteous, godly lives that bear the fruit of His Spirit and bring life to the people and world around us. And so, abiding in Him is not so much a work we have to do, as it is a surrender to the work that He wants to do in us and through us.

**Respond in Prayer:** Father, You have taught me that the fruit that is eternal comes from being conformed into Your image. You have shown me through Jesus what true humility and obedience looks like as He gave Himself away to You wholeheartedly, putting You first in all things. And this is my desire! So, help me surrender wholly to You as You lead me so graciously into Truth. I yield to Your way in and for me, acknowledging that You are the Potter and I am the clay. O come what may, for Christ the Lord is with me!

## Day 3 Abide by Faith

**Come Before Him In Worship:** Take a moment to offer yourself to the Lord in whole today. Let go of any resistance, only allowing Him to take over. Let Him soften your heart as you wait on His tender whispers to guide you in your learning, in your remaining. He who promises is

faithful. "Lord, everything that's within me praises Your holy name! Thank You for what You will do!"

**Daily Scripture:** "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." Colossians 2:6-7

**Devotion:** Paul teaches us here that, not only do we come to Jesus by faith; but that, by faith also, we are "rooted," "built up" and "established" in Jesus. As essential as faith is in coming to Jesus, it is equally essential to the rest of our spiritual lives. It's easy to slide into the belief that, once we are saved, we now have to try to become like Jesus through our own work and efforts. But, as we learned yesterday, Jesus doesn't leave us to do this work on our own. Our job as the "branches" is to abide in Jesus, who is the "vine", so that he can bear the fruit of his love and life through us! So, to put this differently: abiding involves believing.

But what, exactly, are we believing? We are believing in the strength of the vine to hold us, nourish us, grow us and bear fruit through us! And we are believing these things no matter how many times we have failed to follow Jesus in the past! Remember that, upon your salvation, irrespective of your failures, you took Jesus at His word and were saved! If He did that for you when you were yet His enemy, how much more will He fulfill His promise to forgive you for your failures to follow Him (your failures to abide) since that day and to fill you anew with His Spirit and bear fruit through you again as you seek to abide in Him today?

Keeping the thought "I am in Christ" in our hearts and minds, reminds us that it is not our job to achieve something great in our own strength. Yes, we are called to daunting things: to empty ourselves, obey, pray faithfully, bear fruit, but "all things are possible for one who believes" (Mark 9:23). Let your faith lay hold of a new power in Christ today. Trust in the strength of your mighty Savior, and know that, because He is your vine, you can abide in Him victoriously! "And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith." (1 John 5:4)

**Respond in Prayer:** Lord, I need You. I need You to teach my heart the way of faith. I need You to help me believe that You are the Author, the Story, and the Storyteller; that the good work You started in me You will fulfill until the day of Christ Jesus; that You are the One who brings the increase, and that my only job is to believe in the One you sent. You said in Your Word that if I don't believe I won't be able to enter into Your rest, so help my unbelief Father because I desire Your rest!

Spirit of wisdom and revelation, enlighten the eyes of my understanding so that I can see and know the Author and Perfecter of my faith rightly. Work out in me a childlike faith that isn't tainted by any internal or external baggage or noise. As I abide in You, let this substance of faith be formed and embedded in the innermost part of my being. Thank You Lord for the finished work!

**Day 4 Surrender and Abide**

**Come Before Him In Worship:** The Lord your God is in your midst—Your Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, Everlasting Father, Mighty God. Take a deep breath and let Him fill your body, soul, and spirit. Call on Immanuel, He is with you. Collapse into His arms as He tends to the garden of your heart. “Lord of Hosts, You are perfect in how You love me! You are gentle and humble at heart; teach me, Great Shepherd and Best Friend. Thank You for what You will do!”

**Daily Scripture:** “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” (Col 3:1-3)

**Devotion:** When we died to ourselves and were raised with Christ at our salvation, our souls were so changed that we now yearn to mount up with wings like eagles (Isaiah 40:31), for they can never be satisfied with anything less than flying. When we seek outward escapes from our circumstances or our distress, or look to find fulfillment in our own goals, relationships, happiness, etc, our restlessness and discontentment grows. Now that our life is hidden with Christ in God, He wants to direct and lead us. He has an agenda for us (Jeremiah 29:11, Ephesians 2:10), that leads to abundant life!

Having given His life for us, He now asks that we open our hands and give our lives to Him. Can you trust Him with your life (and don't answer too quickly!)? Can you trust Him with your health, reputation, business, children, family, and even with your wealth? Can you surrender to Him in those difficult circumstances that come your way, knowing that He is somehow using them to shape you and mold you, and maybe to take you to an entirely new level in your walk with Him? He holds it all anyway! It's just a matter of taking these burdens off of our shoulders and placing them at Jesus' feet. Simply put: abiding involves surrender.

Think about how happy you are to crawl into your cozy bed at night. You are perfectly content knowing that the bed will hold you and that you can relax every muscle in your body. But what if the bed was unstable? What if you crawled in, unsure if it would hold you. You would move about slowly and cautiously, tensed up for fear of what might happen, sleeping restlessly, always concerned that it was about to cave in beneath you. God wants you to trust Him so much that you can walk in assurance and rest, for the God of the universe lovingly and perfectly holds you, his child. Surrender to Him.

**Respond in Prayer:** I praise You Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for how everything is connected in You! I am joined to You, My Lord, and I am one spirit with You. I am my Beloved's and He is mine! Hallelujah! This is my truth for all eternity.

Abiding starts with a choice, a choice to surrender. You have set it up so beautifully that You need my “yes” to do the work in me because You desire partnership with me because, ultimately, you desire intimacy with me. How precious you are my Lord! I choose this day to surrender every area in my life to You. Give me the meekness and steadfastness Jesus had so

that I can let go of what is holding me back from true surrender. I give up the old, religious ways to receive the new You have for me, my Father. There is no other way. Give me the willingness of heart Isaiah had as he said, "Here am I." I am willing Lord!

## **Day 5 Abide and Know Love**

**Come Before Him In Worship:** "I exalt Your name above all else, Yahweh! Be enthroned upon my heart, for You are my King and my Lord! In Your presence there's fullness of joy, treasures forevermore, and it's my glory to find them! I keep my gaze fixed on You, the One who guards my mind and heart and makes me radiant! Let me be filled with the awareness of Your glory. For who can measure Your greatness, Your holiness, Your worth? My Lord, thank You for what You will do!"

**Daily Scripture:** "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love."  
John 15:9

**Devotion:** The word "abide" means "to remain, to stay." After giving us the parable of the vine, in which Jesus speaks of the blessing of the fruit that will come from our union, He draws us even closer and more tenderly by reminding us of His perfect love for us, which mirrors that of God's love for Him. In context, Jesus was comforting and encouraging His fearful disciples in his last hours before the cross, reminding them to rest in His love for them. That love is different from our love. It is a divine, pure, and eternal love that compelled Him to leave heaven and come to earth to rescue us through his death on the cross and resurrection from the grave! He explains 4 verses later, that "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." Abiding in Jesus involves remaining in His love.

How do we do this? We do this by believing in the reality of Jesus' love for us and walking in the certainty of it. His love is so intense and perfect that we can depend on it to hang on to us and keep us in it. None of our imperfect or weak ways will be able to block or undo it! It is powerful enough to hold us tight and never let us go (Isaiah 54:10). If we could, for one moment, understand the mighty depths of God's love for us, we would have no trouble surrendering all to Him! It is knowing this perfect love, that gives everything and holds nothing back, that compels us to place our lives into His hands. Rest in the promises of His perfect love for you today.

**Respond in Prayer:** Your love is better than life, my Lord! How could I want anything else after tasting the richness of your everlasting love? You have made a case for Your love in laying down Your crown so that You would give me mine. You gave up your glory for a moment so that I can partake in it with you. Your love is magnificent and extravagant! I could shout it from the rooftops all day long!

Thank you Lord for modeling true love for us—a love that is unconditional and selfless, that gives everything and holds nothing back, time and time again! You gave everything to the Father as You gave everything for us. Because You understood true love, You surrendered all to Him. You laid down Your life for Him in obedience and faith, and there is no greater love than

this one you prototyped for all to see! This displays trust, honor, and friendship between You, the Father, and Holy Spirit. Help me do the same for You, for You have proven that You are worthy of it! Help me to fully believe Your love so that I may too give away what You have given me. I need Your love to abide; I need Your love to love You and others. For You are love, and as I remain in You, I remain in love. Let it be so Jesus!

## **Day 6 Abide and Obey**

**Come Before Him In Worship:** Enter into this time with an open heart before Him. Make room to see your Teacher with your own eyes, to hear Him with your own ears. Ask Him to expand your borders in the spirit, for the Spirit searches out everything and reveals the secrets of God to us. Only His love can transform the heart of man. Even in this moment, stop and let Him minister to your heart. Let His love move you as you move His, by your faith in who He is and His ways.”Father, you have my yes! You are worth it—the abiding, the surrendering, the believing, the obeying, everything. This is how I love and live, here on earth as it is in heaven. Oh my precious Lord, I love you, and eagerly anticipate your perfect work in me. Thank You for what You will do!”

**Daily Scripture:** “If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.” John 15:10

**Devotion:** After Jesus calls us to remain in His love, He tells us to keep His commands in order to remain there. He then points us to His own example for direction. These are not works that we have to do in order to be saved (or to become - or remain - worthy of his love). Salvation is given to sinners simply because of the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). But, to the believer that is in Christ, our works are strength and blessing, for through them our faith is made perfect (James 2:22), our relationship with Jesus is cemented, and our hearts are more deeply rooted in the love of God (John 14:23).

When we read these commands to obey God, which are everywhere in God’s word, many obstacles come to mind, including the following: First of all, we worry that, since our salvation is not the result of works, but of grace, focusing on works might bring bondage and make us like Pharisees. Secondly, it just feels impossible! We tend to equate obedience with absolute perfection, adding up all of the things we’re supposed to be and do, and then give up in despair at the first sign of failure.

In actuality, it is sin that brings bondage (John 8:34). If we let it stay, it will dull our conscience, darken our hearts, and rob us of the fullness of Jesus’ presence and power for our lives. God’s commands are always given to protect us and to bring us abundant life and freedom (John 8:31-21). We can not (and will not) obey them perfectly! On this, we all agree! We must rely on Him to help us and to purify us. What God wants is our heart, our wholehearted, “Yes, we agree with you on what is right and wrong!” Then, as we step out in faith and love to do what He says, He will provide the grace and strength for us to be able to accomplish it. What the law demands of us, grace promises and performs for us. At the end of the day, we repent over our failures,

and receive the loving forgiveness of our compassionate heavenly Father, who spurs us on to righteousness and freedom! The next day, we commit again to obey in the strength of the Spirit. This is the obedient life. This is the life that abides and overflows with the Spirit of God! Abiding involves obedience.

**Respond in Prayer:** “My Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth (in me) as it is in heaven.” This is my prayer as I walk in obedience to You! You never said it would be easy, but the fruit that comes from it is eternal, unto abundant life, and therefore unto Your glory. Teach me how to not look inwardly, Father, but to look to You for the grace and strength to stay the course. When condemnation tries to creep in, silence the voice of my accuser and let the voice of my Shepherd sing louder! The road to sanctification is one of continual surrender and obedience to You Lord, and as I keep my heart open before You, I trust You because I KNOW that everything You do is perfect and good.

As my heart is awakened to greater depths of Your Person, obedience becomes easier and I’m made more holy. So Father I ask You, by faith and in Your name, that You search my heart—is there any wicked way in me? I want to surrender, I want to abide, I want to obey, I want to be holy, so that Your heart’s desire is fulfilled in my life as a vessel made for Your glory and Kingdom, on this earth as it is in heaven! Fulfill what You wrote in my scroll since eternity past my Lord, so that You may receive all the honor and praise!

## **Day 7 Abide and Receive Christ’s Joy**

**Come Before Him In Worship:** Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise His name forever! For His goodness is unsearchable, His love knows no end. Take a moment to let go of any burden and worship Him. Turn your worries for today into praise. Something shifts inside and all around us when we let faith arise from our mouths, so shout His praise with joy, proclaim how great Your God is! For His joy is your strength, for all eternity; He has poured over you the oil of gladness, He has given you a garment of praise! Take courage, He’s never left you and He never will. Yahweh, Elohim, Adonai, the I AM walks with you! “My Lord, You are worthy to be praised! With joy I drink deeply from the fountain of salvation. I proclaim Your greatness to all the nations. I sing with joy about Your righteousness. You are close to me because I’ve called on You. You are faithful; You always keep Your promise. God of Abraham, God of Jacob, Holy One of Israel—You are the same yesterday, today, and forever! HALLELUJAH! Thank You for what You’ve done and what You will do!”

**Daily Scripture:** “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” John 15:11

**Devotion:** Do you think of Jesus as a joyful man? He was a “man of sorrows” (Isaiah 53:3) to be sure, but what about joy? Only a few hours after Jesus made this statement about joy to his disciples, his walk toward the cross began. It seems like an odd time to speak of joy, and yet the author of Hebrews reminds us that it was “for the joy set before him he endured the cross.” Speaking of Jesus, the Psalmist says, “You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore

God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.” (Psalm 45:7) Jesus’ joy was found in his completed work of restoring the relationship between God the Father and a people set free from sin and death! (Col 1:20) We share in his joy by abiding in Him. Therefore, abiding is the key to true and lasting joy! For Jesus’ joy is a joy that overcomes the world’s sorrows and troubles! And His joy also is the source of our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

You may have bought the lie that a life of surrender and self-denial is a life of drudgery and sadness, when in fact, it’s the pathway to joy and peace like you have never known. Go all in, fellow saints! Just say “Yes Lord,” to this call to abide, and then watch and see what He will do in your heart and life!

**Respond in Prayer:** Father, thank You that You have given me everlasting joy! Thank you that You have poured your oil of gladness over me and my cup overflows! Thank you that Your joy is my strength. Thank You for undoing worldly systems and narratives within me and revealing that a life of surrender and death to self doesn’t mean I’m stuck in a doom and gloom pit forever, but that it means joy because I’ve been conformed into Your image and therefore set free! Now I get to experience true bliss! Jesus, thank You once again for detailing a beautiful blueprint of what relationship with You looks like; it models the divine union within Your Person. It is such a gift. Holy Spirit, thank You for revealing all these truths to me, and for a continual revelation of the Father’s heart for me as I abide in You. Keep my heart tender so that I remain humble and teachable before You! I love You, Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit—the Great I Am, my true joy and love, forever. Amen!

## **Day 8 Ask and It Will Be Done**

**Come Before Him in Worship:** Come into the Father’s presence today with full assurance of His love. Take a moment to posture your heart to receive everything He desires to give you. Maybe this even looks like physically opening your hands as an act of faith and surrender. Praise Him for His faithfulness to always answer when we call on Him.

**Daily Scripture:** “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” John 15:7

**Devotion:** We have just spent a week meditating on what it means to abide in Christ. In this verse, Jesus gives us an astounding prayer promise that comes as a result of this abiding: “ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.” Jesus also changes the thought slightly, from Him abiding in us (verse 5), to His words abiding in us. He is telling us that when we are connected to the vine and therefore, filled with the Spirit, and the words of Jesus abide in us, our prayers have great power.

What is meant by Jesus’ words abiding in us? It is more than just reading a scripture, and even agreeing with it, and then going about our day. It means being saturated with His words. Letting them transform us so that His desires, His understanding, His affections, His will becomes our



own. David says in Psalm 37:4, “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” That is to say, when you delight in him, filling your heart with his words, he will implant his desires for you into your heart. And when you then ask him for those “desires” in prayer, he is delighted to give them to you, for you have come to desire for you, what he also desires for you. Those are prayers that are “according to his will.”

1 John 5:14 says, “And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” His will is found in his word! Surrender to the vine, fill your heart with his word, and learn to pray according to his will. God promises to move!

**Respond in Prayer:** Lord, let me be saturated with Your words! You alone are the delight of my heart. Holy Spirit, thank you for revealing the Father’s heart when we ask! What areas of my heart are not aligned with Yours? How can I put aside my own desires so that You may be preeminent? I desire to walk in deeper friendship with You today. Stir up faith and desire in my heart to see Your will be done in my life, my family, my community, my workplace, and my ministry.

## Day 9 Ask to Behold His Beauty

**Come Before Him in Worship:** Take a few moments to still your heart before the Lord. Surrender the hurry and worry of the day as you turn your gaze on Him. Imagine the Father’s smile as He looks at you and receive His pleasure over you as His beloved child. Meditate on His character and on His glory and majesty that we read about in Scripture and praise Him for who He is. He alone is worthy!

**Daily Scripture:** “One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.” Psalm 27:4

**Devotion:** David wrote this Psalm in the midst of great turmoil. In the verses just before this statement, he speaks of evil-doers, adversaries and foes, and then states that his confidence is in the Lord, “though an army encamp against me.” Yet, he doesn’t ask for deliverance, safety or victory. The “one (and only) thing” that he asks is to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to hear from Him.

David understood that, no matter his circumstances, the Lord was his safety and his hiding place (vs 5). To gaze upon His beauty, is to remind himself of the faithfulness, holiness, power, and goodness (Zech 9:17) of the Lord, who holds and loves His people. In Luke 10, Jesus says to Martha, who was upset that her sister, Mary, was not helping her serve and host Jesus and his disciples, “you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary (who was sitting at the feet of Jesus being with Him and listening to Him) has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her” (vs 41-42).

To sit at His feet, beholding His greatness and glory, listening for His direction, is the place to start each day. From that posture, we can enter our day, and rise above all that would distract or trouble us. If we keep His presence, power and love before us throughout the day, we can trust that, not only will we experience the fullness of His presence, but we will be transformed ever-increasingly into His image, from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18).

**Respond in Prayer:** Show me Your beauty today, Lord! No matter what my circumstances may look like today, keep my gaze fixed on Your face. What are the areas of my life where I have looked to someone or something else for answers, comfort, or deliverance? I repent for looking for others to satisfy the desires of my heart that You alone can fulfill. May Your radiant splendor captivate my heart afresh today, my King!

## **Day 10 Ask in Accordance with God's Promises**

**Come Before Him in Worship:** Enter into this time with an expectant heart as you meditate on the steadfast, unchanging nature of God. He has never failed and He never will! Remember the ways the Lord has shown His goodness and faithfulness in your life and thank Him for that. Ask Him to increase your faith and trust in Him today.

**Daily Scripture:** "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God." 2 Corinthians 1:20

**Devotion:** Two days ago, we talked about praying in accordance with God's will. One way we can be sure we are asking in accordance with God's will, is to pray for the fulfillment of, or the receiving of His promises to us. This verse tells us that all the promises of God were sealed and confirmed by the revelation and work of Jesus Christ, to which our response can only be a full and confident "Amen!"

In the past week, we've spoken of the promise of His love for us, His forgiveness of our sins, His powerful presence in us, and many other things. But there are many other promises as well. Promises of protection, guidance, the supply of all our needs, etc. In Him, we have everything we need. In fact, in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3), and all divine gifts. We have only to go and to ask for that which we need. (James 4:2)

Sometimes, however, God makes us wait for the fulfillment of His promises to us. Abraham, for example, waited 25 years for the birth of Isaac after God had given him the promise of an heir through whom his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. But Romans 4:20-21 tells us that, "No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised." It is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:12) So let us stand firm, trusting that God is faithful to fulfill all that He has promised!

**Respond in Prayer:** Lord, You are trustworthy and You keep every promise You make! How can I stand in agreement with the many promises given in Your word today? What specific

promises have You spoken over my life that I need to receive with a wholehearted “AMEN”? Father, strengthen my faith as I wait to see the fulfillment of the things you have promised. Don't let me waver in doubt and unbelief, even if the promise seems impossible or if it is taking far longer than I ever expected. I believe that You will come through in every area of my life where You have promised!

## Day 11 Ask for Others

**Come Before Him in Worship:** Pause and reflect on the wonderful privilege it is to be called a royal priest unto the Lord! Thank Jesus for His costly sacrifice that gives us unfiltered access to the Father. Do you feel a sense of awe and wonder that the almighty King of the universe listens to and cares about our requests? Let your heart rejoice at the good news that you have been called out of darkness into the kingdom of light and given a position of authority to intercede on behalf of others.

**Daily Scripture:** “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

**Devotion:** We have spent the last 3 days focused on how to pray for ourselves. But we have also been given the awesome responsibility to pray for others. Peter tells us in this verse that we, as Christians, are now a royal priesthood. Unlike the priesthood of the Old Testament, because of Christ's once-for-all perfect sacrifice for our sins, we have direct access to God. Jesus is our great high priest (Hebrews 4:14) and because of our union with Him, we share in His priestly status.

As priests, we have been given a ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18) We are to minister to others in ways that lead people in the church and in the world to be reconciled to God and to each other. Like Jesus, who ever-lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25), one of the most important ways we perform this duty is by praying for the people around us and in the world. 1 Timothy 2:1 says that believers should offer prayers, supplication and intercessions for all men, particularly for rulers (we will talk about that on Day 13). Jesus actually meant for prayer to be the great power by which His Church should do its work. Through this intercession, we are also given the power to impart spiritual blessings to others, asking for and receiving heavenly gifts to carry to men.

As we abide in Him and pray for our world, He will open doors around us both to minister to fellow believers and for the gospel to go forth! (Colossians 4:2-4) Charles Spurgeon said, “Prayer moves the hand that moves the world.” The world needs for us to pray! That kind of priesthood pushes back the darkness that encroaches all around us!

**Respond in Prayer:** Father, what a gift it is to have direct access to You! Jesus, thank You for Your example as our perfect high priest. Teach us to follow Your lead and devote ourselves to

interceding on behalf of others. Who have You placed in my life that I can pray for today? What do they need from You in this very moment? Holy Spirit, give me wisdom and discernment to know how to pray! Help me to see those around me through the lens of Your love.

## **Day 12 Ask for Fellow Believers**

**Come Before Him in Worship:** Praise God for His wondrous love! What a mystery that He says we are to know His love that is too great to understand! And not just to know about it, but to comprehend its boundless height and width and depth. We are empowered in this by His Spirit in us, strengthening us and rooting us more and more deeply in His love. Take a moment to ponder this miraculous gift and ask Him to let you feel the depth of His love for you today.

**Daily Scripture:** “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith--that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:14-19

**Devotion:** Paul’s prayers for believers are sprinkled throughout his letters to the churches. He understood that prayer is what brings the Spirit of God down upon the Saints, as he asks for here.

He begins this amazing prayer by asking that the people would be strengthened with power through His Spirit. Paul’s language is reminiscent of Isaiah 40:29, “He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.” Verse 17 speaks of faith as the doorway through which Christ enters to dwell within us! But we must give Him room by understanding that our “self” hinders His entry. Our self-confidence, self-dependence, self-pleasing, self-control robs us of His increasing presence. The kind of faith that is needed to put down our “self,” is one that is rooted and grounded in God’s powerful love for us! He wanted them (and us) to experience, or “know” this love (verse 18-19), not just have head-knowledge of it. This is the soil out of which our love for Him and others will grow. It is into this environment, that the fullness of God can come!

Let us, like Paul, commit to pray for our brothers and sisters in all ways, but especially that they would be filled with the fullness of God!

**Respond in Prayer:** Father, how can I grow in love for other believers today? Am I delighting in the fullness of Your presence so that I am overflowing with desire for others to also experience Your love more abundantly? Search me and know my thoughts, Lord! Rid me of selfishness and self-centeredness. Strengthen the hearts of my brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those who feel weary and overwhelmed.

## Day 13 Ask for Our Country

**Come Before Him in Worship:** How great and mighty is our God! All rulers and powers both seen and unseen (in this earthly realm and in the spiritual realm) are subject to Him. Are you anxious or troubled when you look at the world around you? Take a moment to reorient your heart to this truth—He has overcome the world! Tell Him your fears and worries and allow Him to speak truth over every area of your mind. Ask Him to give you His perspective today.

**Daily Scripture:** “I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:1-4

**Devotion:** Daniel 2:21 says that God “removes kings and sets up kings.” Romans 13:1 says, “there is no authority except that which God has established.” We see often in the Old Testament that God has a purpose and plan in raising up and bringing down kingdoms. But we also see that, when His people are in distress, and repent and cry out to Him, He comes in power to save! King Jehoshaphat, for example, prayed in 2 Chronicles 20:12, when many were coming against him, “O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.” God came and delivered Jehosaphat (and God’s people) in a mighty way in response to that prayer!

We see in 1 Timothy 2 above, that government which allows Christians to live peaceful and quiet lives, pleases God. So Paul urges us, therefore, not to complain or to fret, but to pray for leaders that will allow us to do that. In our country today, much seems dark, divided and hopeless, and we sometimes feel like Jehoshaphat, who did not know what to do. But let us place our eyes on our heavenly Father, who holds all in the palm of His hand, humble ourselves and pray, seek His face and turn from our wicked ways. For, when we do that, our Father promises that He will hear from heaven, forgive our sin and heal our land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

**Respond in Prayer:** O Lord, Your throne is established from before the foundations of the earth and Your kingdom is eternal. Do I trust Your sovereign authority? Do I trust that You have allowed our leaders to be placed in these positions according to Your will? Father, give them wisdom as they lead! If they know You, give them courage to lead boldly in ways that honor You and glorify Your name. If they have not come to know You yet, would You reveal Yourself to them? Surround our leaders with godly men and women who will give wise counsel.

## Day 14 Ask for Revival

**Come Before Him in Worship:** Who is like the Lord? Is there anyone who can compare to Him? Take a moment to reflect on the astonishing power and holiness of our God. Ask Him to fill you afresh with His Holy Spirit and receive this gift with faith and expectation. Let Him stir up a holy fire in your heart, a burning desire to see the Lord move in power in our time!

**Daily Scripture:** “Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence-- as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil-- to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.” Isaiah 64:1-4

**Devotion:** Isaiah foresaw a time in which Jerusalem would be desolate, the temple burned, and the land laid to waste, with many carried away into captivity. The call for God to “rend the heavens” implies a sudden and powerful descent to execute vengeance on their foes, in a manner that would cause the nations to tremble at the obvious power and might of God.

We see such a movement of the Lord at Pentecost in Acts 2, where God poured His Spirit out on the early church and 3,000 people were saved in one day. Since that day there have been many times, both in the United States and abroad, in which God has poured out His Spirit in a powerful and unusual way to awaken His people and bring many to Himself.

Do you see our great need for revival today? The darkness is accelerating, there is precious little belief in God, His word or the judgment to come. The culture has so infiltrated the church that at times it’s hard to tell the difference between believers and unbelievers. But God is our hope! He alone is able to rend the heavens and come down! Let us pray like the saints of old and ask God to come in power to awaken His slumbering church. Let us remember and trust that there is no God like our God, who acts for those who wait for Him!!

**Respond in Prayer:** Lord, what does revival look like for us today? May it begin first with me! Are my hands clean? Is my heart pure? Revive in me a burning, wholehearted adoration for You, Lord. Restore my delight in You! Pour Your Spirit out in our churches and cities. Wake up Your bride, the church, to remember her first love.

## **Day 15 Abide and Follow**

**Come Before Him in Worship:** Take a moment to fix your eyes on the Teacher. Relax your mind and allow every other voice to pass away. Remember that you are his sheep, and the sheep know the sound of the Shepherd’s voice. Sit for a moment in the assurance that His commitment to your wholeness is unwavering. Thank Him for the promise that every work He begins, He will finish! And as you step into the truth of this devotional, receive it from the mouth of your loving Teacher.

**Daily Scripture:** *“Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”* 1 John 2:6

**Devotion:** Jesus was our perfect example and He calls us to follow His lead in every way. This verse tells us that, if we abide in Jesus, then we will look like Jesus. Now, not perfectly, but there’s forgiveness and grace for that (1 John 1:9). However, progressive transformation into the image of Jesus is a proof, if you will, of the reality of our relationship with Him. Certainly, this can seem overwhelming (and, more often than not, we can only see how we are not measuring up), but as we learned on Day 2, it is only our connection with Jesus, the vine, that enables us to accomplish anything in the Christian life! And, as this verse points out, it happens as we “walk” with (or in the same way as ) him.

This implies that the Christian life is a moment-by-moment, day-by-day, journey of putting one foot (spiritually speaking) in front of the other as we follow after Christ. A life of continuous abiding does not happen all at once, but we come closer and closer to it as we set out to follow Jesus step-by-step at the beginning of each day. 2 Corinthians 5:7, tells us that this is also a walk of faith (see Day 3). So, if we start our days seeking to abide in Jesus (as we talked about in week 1), at any point in our day, we can, in faith, remind ourselves that we are in Him and that He is keeping us and that, by faith, He who began a good work in us, will carry it on to completion (Phil. 1:6). So, it’s not about emotion, or a feeling of well being or of strength, but agreeing and believing in that moment that our place is in our Lord, for as Amos 3:3 says, “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?” Let us agree to walk with Jesus! And, as we do, let us go about our day believing that He is holding us and looking for ways that He wants us to join Him in His Kingdom work and purposes. For we’ve agreed to walk with him!

This coming week we will look at several of the ways Jesus calls us to follow Him, and how we should look to Him to perfect these ways in us, as we abide step-by-step with Him.

**Respond in Prayer:** Father, I desire today to walk as your child in step with Your Spirit. I want to see what You are doing, and commit my ways to these things. How can I look for You and enjoy Your tangible presence as my day moves along? How can I know your heart in the moment to moment? Oh faithful Father, reorient my ways and structure my days to prioritize this.

What lies have I believed that could lead me away from the purity of following You? What complications have been added that need to be removed? I praise You for your steadiness in leading me! I praise You for your patience over me! Oh what a glorious King I have!

## **Day 16 Pick Up Your Cross and Follow**

**Come Before Him in Worship:** We step into today with the assurance that we have a High Priest who has gone before us. Whatever the day brings, our King has faced it first. His commandments are not burdensome, for He Himself carried the burden we could not. It is His example that sets the context for us to imitate. It is His Spirit that empowers us to do so. Thank

Him for the treasure it is to simply know Him. Pause, even before you read on, to allow your heart to be moved by His greatness and His beauty. He is the treasure in the field that makes all else worth turning aside from. Don't move into more content before giving your heart a chance to be captivated afresh.

**Daily Scripture:** "Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Matthew 16:24-25

**Devotion:** Jesus was our example of what it meant to deny "self." Jesus and the Father are one and Jesus left heaven to come to earth to make us one with each other and with Him and the Father, through the sacrifice of his life, the ultimate denial of "self" (John 17:21,23). This divine union was the glorious purpose in the heart of God for His people from the foundation of the world! It is for the purpose of bringing His people into the personal and actual experience of this oneness that our Lord calls us so earnestly and repeatedly to abandon ourselves to Him.

Maybe you have given up much to follow Jesus. You have believed in Him, and worked for Him and loved Him! But maybe there are still two wills, two interests, two lives warring within you: His and yours (your "self."). Jesus offers us a life lived in His power and strength and love, a life of abundance and freedom, but it's only into an empty heart that His streams of living water can flow. He can't come and fill us if we are full of ourselves.

We live in a world that trains us to focus on and live for ourselves (our goals, our happiness, our time, our sexual ethic, our money, our glory, etc.). Can we not see that this has led us to a place of confusion, depression and darkness? Jesus said "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). He holds out that life to us here. Will you say "yes, Lord," trust that He will enable you to put down your "self," and then pick up your cross to follow Him?

**Respond in Prayer:** Jesus, what an incredible leader You are! Thank you for modeling for me the life I'm to live. Thank you for showing me how to do it before calling me to do it. Who is like You, my Lord and God, that You would lay aside glory to instruct me in my weakness?

How can I pick up my cross today? What are you calling me to lay down, that my hands would be open? How can I walk just as You walked? When my soul wants to say "No," but I hear You say, "Yes," teach me how to take the first step into obedience. May my will and dreams be absorbed into the delight of following You. Your kingdom come, my King. Your will be done, my Lord. And when this leads me into unexpected spaces, bend me to believe. For you are worth it all.

## **Day 17 Listen and Follow**

**Come Before Him in Worship:**



Start today with an acknowledgment of this truth: Our Father *wants* to be heard. He speaks because there is a message for His children. Ask Him today to give you ears to hear. Pray this simple prayer as we begin: “Father, I want to know You. I want to follow you. Let every other voice fade away in the presence of yours. I trust You to speak as I posture to listen.”

**Daily Scripture:** “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” John 10:27

**Devotion:** Jesus addressed these words to the Jews in the Temple when they asked Him to tell them plainly if He was the Christ. He told them that they did not believe, because they were not part of His flock. But those of us who do believe hear His voice, and know (and are known by) Him, and we follow Him. As we seek to abide, to pray according to God’s will, and to follow, we must earnestly listen for the voice of our Shepherd.

Let’s just stop and be in awe for a moment over the fact that the God of the universe cares enough to come and meet with us personally, to comfort us with His love, and to fill us again for the day ahead! This is the heart of our Father towards us! In order for Him to be able to do this, we must stop our busyness and let Him have the time He needs to speak. We must learn to be still, to quiet the noise of our own efforts and thoughts, and wait for God to reveal Himself. In Psalm 62:5, David says, “For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from Him.”

As we learned on Day 2 of this journey, we are dependent upon God for everything in the Christian life. When we come to the scriptures in the morning, we come not just for education or to check something off our “to-do” list, but for what He would say to us in and through them. As we pray, surrender, confess, and seek His direction, we are waiting for Him to prompt us, to show us what we have not yet given Him, any sin that stands between us, any way He wants us to move. We are waiting for Him to do His work of transformation in us. Isaiah 30:15 tells us that “In quietness and in trust shall be your strength.” Throughout our day, as we cultivate a quiet heart that trusts that Jesus is abiding, holding and guiding us, we will be better able to hear His voice and discern His activity in our lives!

**Respond in Prayer:** Jesus, your words are a treasure to me. The wisdom of this world is of dull beauty compared to the truth on Your lips. I confess and embrace the inability to walk in your ways without knowing Your words. Would you grant me, this day, a deeper hunger for your voice? Would you grace me with a detachment from the lesser things? When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. When my mind is inundated with every single thing that seems unfinished, lead me to the voice of my Keeper. It is You who start, you who sustain, and you who settle it.

## **Day 18 Follow and Bear Fruit**

### **Come Before Him in Worship:**

Let’s choose gratitude today as we become aware of His presence all around us. For He did not leave in the darkness of the night, but kept you as the apple of His eye as you slumbered. The

day set before you is a gift from Him, hallelujah! Be reminded of this truth: We have JESUS. Without Him, we have nothing. And with Him we have all things. High praise to the worthy King! Pray this simple prayer as we begin: "I'm grateful for Your leadership. Teach me afresh today. Be glorified by how I trust You, by the power of Your Spirit."

**Daily Scripture:** "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:4-5

"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." John 15:8

**Devotion:** There are many references to "fruit" in the scriptures. There is the fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:11), fruit that leads to sanctification (Romans 6:21-22), fruit of good works (Titus 3:14), but perhaps the most familiar is the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). When we bear all of these fruits, we prove that we are Jesus' disciples and God is glorified!

The good news is that Christ, by His Spirit, bears these different kinds of fruit through us! In other words, we don't have to do this in our own strength! In fact, we can't! Sometimes Christians think that, once we are saved by grace, it's now our job to bear the fruit. But it is only as we abide in the vine who is Jesus and His life begins to flow through us, that we bear fruit. Think of a branch that has been cut off from the vine. There is nothing on earth that can enable that branch to now bear fruit. It is the same with us. Cut off from the vine, we are incapable of bearing any fruit for the Kingdom.

Sanctification, the process by which we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness, is the work of God's free grace (Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 35). Our job is simply to stay connected, by abiding in Jesus as described throughout this study and cooperating with Him as He makes everything in our lives and circumstances subservient to the one great purpose of causing us to grow in grace, and conforming us, day by day to the image of Christ (doing his work, manifesting his character). Let us trust that as we abide and follow, He will cause us to bear fruit and be a blessing to the world!

**Respond in Prayer:** What a miracle that I am attached to the Vine. It is You who keeps me, and I receive Your instruction today to remain. In a culture that moves so quickly, teach me how to follow Your pace. When I feel the need to prove myself, teach me how to wait on You. Give me opportunities today to stay in step with Your Spirit. I want to bear fruit through You and for You. Thank you my King, that Your abiding in me empowers me to do the same. What do You want to do today?

**Day 19 Follow in Love**

**Come Before Him in Worship:**

Today we celebrate that the mystery of God has been revealed in Christ Jesus. The whole of the earth groaned for an answer, a savior—and the Father sent the Son. Let your heart be glad in the eternal saving of God. He also saved us by showing us how to live and teaching us about the Father. We love Him, in return, with adoration and imitation. We regard Him as worthy to be praised and worthy to be followed. Whisper to Him sweetly today, “I look to your example Jesus. This day, and the many to come, you are worthy of my following.”

**Daily Scripture:** “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Ephesians 5:1-2

**Devotion:** We have already pondered Jesus’ great love for us in these weeks, a love so extravagant that He would leave heaven to come to earth to reconcile us to the Father through His perfect sacrifice and death on a cross. But consider for a moment how Jesus loved the disciples and the other people He came into contact with while on earth. He patiently taught them, forgave them, and in great humility, served them. He went out of His way to heal, to comfort, to speak life to the least, the lost and the left out. He lived and acted out the love that was in God’s heart. And then he commanded us to do likewise! He tells us in John 15:12, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” In John 13:34-35, Jesus calls this a “new commandment” and tells us that our obedience to it will prove to the world that we are, in fact, His disciples. Just as Jesus showed God’s love to us, we must show His love to the world.

But, once again, this love is not something we can generate on our own. It is a love that the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts as we abide in Christ. (Romans 5:5) It is Jesus’ love in us that makes us able to love like Him. Let’s trust that, as we abide in Him and purpose in our hearts to live sacrificially, always seeking to bless others, to speak gently and kindly, to be hard to offend (instead of easy) and seek others’ honor above our own, that He will give us the grace and power to love more and more like He loves!

**Respond in Prayer:** Use me as your vessel today Spirit of God. I want to follow your words and your ways, would you lead me in this? Christ in me, the hope of glory—this is the hope that the world cries out for. Lead me in love today. Lead me in GREAT love today. Blow out the capacities of my kindness and tune my soul to sing your grace over every life I come in contact with today. All praise to You!

**Day 20 Follow and Serve****Come Before Him in Worship:**

We can only imagine the feelings that flooded Peter when Christ bowed low to wash his feet. How inappropriate it must have seemed for the Messiah to humiliate Himself in this way. And before we hear the instruction of Christ to serve as He served, we allow ourselves to stand in awe for a moment. Ponder the many ways that the Highly Exalted King of all things has served

you. Worship Him for considering His life an acceptable offering, that You would know Him. You could thank Him by saying something like this, "I love you my Lord and my God. My feet were filthy, and you've made them clean. My hands were marred with unrighteousness, and you made them beautiful. Thank you for serving me in such extravagant ways."

**Daily Scripture:** "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10

**Devotion:** Just as Jesus came not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28), God has made us for service. On the night of the last supper, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, which was the job of the lowliest servant in that culture. Then he told them (and us), "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you." John 13:14-15

This can feel intimidating, as we picture in our minds all the places God might want us to go and all of the things He might want us to do! However, the good news of Ephesians 2:10 (above) is that we are not called to do everything! We're only called to do the works that He prepared beforehand (from eternity past) for us to do. As we abide in Him, we will come to recognize the works that He is pointing us to and sense a desire within us to do them!

And not just a desire, but a power, as He comes alongside us to give us what we need for the job. In fact, we even have to be careful when using the strengths God has given us, that we still recognize our need of Him to work through those strengths. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 12:9 that God's power is perfected in our weakness. Because God brings the fruit, we also don't need to worry about the results of our work. We pray for Him to guide, give wisdom, make our hands effective, and for the Holy Spirit to work through us and then trust that He will do what He wants with our service. Moreover, in John 12:26, Jesus promises us that, as we follow Him in service, we will find Him there with us, and the Father will honor us!

**Respond in Prayer:** Who am I that You are mindful of me? And yet, your thoughts for me our constant. All praise to the humble King! Thank you for the power in your words.

Jesus, I know the enemy wants no part in watching me serve the ones you love. And the flesh inside me wars against the new man. But I long to be like my Master in this way. I long to serve and love and pour out the way You did. I believe that the fickleness of my heart is no match for the power of Your Spirit. So empower me this day to serve wildly, love recklessly, and lay my dignity down for Your glory.

## **Day 21 Follow and Trust**

**Come Before Him in Worship:** Oh how freeing it is to be free of the deception that I am in control. It is a liberating existence when I throw my hands up and tangibly trust His power and providence.

Let's combat any accusations or fears today with a reminder of His faithfulness. How has He displayed His trustworthiness over your life? What was a time when He met you in your powerlessness and proved that He can be trusted? Once you remember a moment, you could speak these words to Him: "Thank You for always finishing what You start. Thank You for proving faithful time and time again. Teach me to trust You this day. I love You."

**Daily Scripture:** "Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." Hebrews 13:20-21

**Devotion:** The writer of Hebrews closes his letter to a people who, based on the contents of that letter, were far from perfect and in danger of denying the faith altogether, with a heartfelt and lofty prayer that they would be equipped with everything good so that they might obey the will of God and accomplish his work. In what or in whom did he find hope for such a transformation?

His hope rested in who God is. We began this 21-Day Prayer Challenge coming to Jesus to find rest for our souls. Here, the prayer is addressed to the "God of Peace." The God who "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" and swept away the alienation and enmity between us and God, by covering us with the righteousness of Christ! For us to experience the peace we crave, our relationship with God has to be set right through faith in Him.

However, peace also rests in us taking His yoke upon us and conforming our lives to His will. We have spoken in these 21-days of how to walk in that conformity; and yet, at times it still feels as if our hearts are too swept by the waves to be brought to that level of submission to his will. Thanks be to God, that he is powerful enough to speak "Peace, be still" into our hearts! (Mark 4:39) Trust Him, fellow Saints, to equip us with everything good that we may do His will, and to work in us that which is pleasing in His sight! The One who calls us is faithful and He will do it (1 Thessalonians 5:24)! To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen!

**Respond in Prayer:** Jesus. You are worthy of my full trust. I lay down the need to overachieve and outperform. I lay aside the lie that it's all up to me. I align myself with the truth today. You, who began a good work in me, will complete it. In You, all things consist, hold together, and work together for your glory and my good.

I choose to spend less time worrying and more time praising. Perfection is not my mark, it was Yours. And You alone achieved it. I revel in the work that You've done and the work that You're doing all around me. Teach me great trust, on the mountain and in the valley. And whatever today brings, may my tongue echo the words of my teacher, "Not my will, but Yours be done." For Your glory and great pleasure. Amen.