



a 21 day

DEVOTIONAL

Every day, we're bombarded with messages to "Do this!" "Be that!" "Get ahead!" It's exhausting. Jesus offers us something simpler. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28, 30) Through the next 21 days we will discover how to rest in the finished work of Jesus to rename, rescue and restore us.





day 1 ADOPTION

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. GALATIANS 4:4-5

It's clear from Scripture God has been thinking about us for a very long time. In fact, He loves us so much He made a way for us to be officially adopted into His family. God's family began with the Jewish people of Israel. It was to them He gave His laws, customs, promises, forgiveness and presence. Anyone else was considered a Gentile and unclean.

Through Jesus, Gentiles who believed were given the same family rights Jews had since the beginning of time (Romans 10:12). Scripture calls this "adoption to sonship." Imagine being looked at as unclean one day and clean the next. What a drastic difference adoption makes. Everything changes.

It was true for the Gentiles, and it's true for us today. When we believe in Jesus, everything changes. We are adopted! We get a new family called the Church with different customs, promises, ways of thinking and behaving. We even get a new eternal residence. Best of all we get a new name...Child of God (1 John 3:1)!

questions

- What does it mean to you to be adopted by God?

- What benefits of being adopted into God's family do you enjoy the most?

P R A Y E R

Father, thank You for making a way for us to be adopted into Your family. Thank You for sending Jesus to give us a new life, name and way of being. Without You, we are unclean, but with You, we are chosen and adopted. Thank you!





day 2 ALLEGIANCE

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. GALATIANS 3:26-29

Our teams have our allegiance. We identify with them. "I'm a Tiger, Laker, Dodger, Viking, Packer or Bronco." We proudly wear the logoed shirts and hats. We spend money and time watching our teams compete. It's fun! There's pride in the name and being able to identify with it. If you're fortunate enough, you may get to meet someone from your team and get their autograph or picture. It's truly a memorable and impactful experience!

When we step over the Faith Line and become a Christian, we have a similar experience. We are now part of a body called the Church, and we follow a leader called Jesus. We sometimes wear the gear and go to events where our allegiance to Jesus is cultivated and celebrated. It's fun!

We get to identify with a name above all names (Philippians 2:9). We get more than an autograph; we get the presence of our leader continually with us (Ephesians 1:13-14). The best part is we are guaranteed to win (2 Timothy 1:9-10).

questions

- What excites you the most about being associated with Jesus?

- What analogies come to mind as you consider the body of Christ, the Church, as teammates?

P R A Y E R

Father, thank You for choosing us to be a part of Your family. Thank You for promising to be with us at all times. Please strengthen us and give us the faith we need to stay close to You. You have guaranteed one day we will be with You forever, and we are grateful. Help us not take Your grace for granted. Amen.





day 3 GOD'S NAMES FOR US

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! 1 JOHN 3:1

What is the meaning of your name? Is it something noble like warrior, strength or wisdom? Or perhaps something practical like wagon maker, ship owner or gardener? A quick Google search will get you the answer. As exciting or boring as the meaning of your earthly name, it pales in comparison to what God calls you because His love for you is so great. Take a moment to look at these names, read the verses and consider their meanings.

FRIEND • God shares with you His personal thoughts. (John 15:15)

HANDIWORK • God has specific jobs prepared in advance for you to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

RIGHTEOUS • God took care of your debt. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

HEIRS • What belongs to God also belongs to you. (Romans 8:17)

LIGHT • You are God's illumination to a broken world. (Ephesians 5:8)

CITIZEN • You have a permanent place to stay in God's house. (Philippians 3:20)

questions

➤ As you read through this list of names, what reactions do you have?

➤ Which name listed above do you need to meditate on more? Why?



P R A Y E R

Father, You are good to us and faithful in keeping Your promises. Thank You for how You see us and call us Your own. Because You so freely give Your love, we could never earn it. Please continue to remind us You are present and will never leave us. Amen.





day 4 LIES

...Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." JOHN 8:31-32

Stupid. Failure. Bad. Not good enough. Unwanted. Useless. Defective. Shameful. Ever call yourself any of those names? How about actually believing it's true? Even worse, behaving as if it were true? This destructive thinking and behaving might come from something you've done, something done to you or as a by-product of living in a broken world. Regardless, you have an enemy who wants to use it against you, keeping you trapped in it and making you believe it's who you are.

God has a different plan for you. Because He made and knows you, He calls you loved, forgiven, chosen, purposed, holy and blameless (Ephesians 1)!

Our brokenness and Satan's tactics often threaten to sabotage our lives by having us believe lies about who we are. When you start believing how God sees you is true, the lies gradually lose their grip. Trust God's perspective of you, and let it set you free.

questions

- What lies do you tell yourself about who you are?

- What does it look like for you to start believing God's perspective of who you are (Romans 12:2)?

P R A Y E R

Father, thank You for meeting us in our brokenness. We couldn't manage the difficulties of this world without You. Please continue strengthening us as we grow in our faith and battle the lies threatening to sabotage our lives. Remind us of who we truly are in Christ. Amen.





day 5 NICKNAMES

The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. ISAIAH 62:2

God sometimes changed people's names in the Bible because He wanted their names to reflect their new identity or new role. Sarai to Sarah which means "Princess" (Genesis 17:15-16)

Abram to Abraham which means "Father of Many" (Genesis 17:4-5)

Simon to Peter which means "The Rock" (John 1:42)

James and John to Boanerges which means "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17)

Think of it as a nickname from God that represents His unique call on someone's life. God made a promise to Abraham he'd be the father of many nations. He promised Sarah she'd bear a child in old age and kings would come from her. He promised Peter He would use him to impact the world. Jesus calling James and John "Sons of Thunder"? Well, that just might have been Jesus having fun. He knew the tenacity and zeal that existed in those two and wanted to call it out.

Sometimes when we encounter the living God, our name gets changed. That certainly happened to Saul of Tarsus who became the Apostle Paul (Acts 13:9). He went from persecutor of Christians to writing a large chunk of the New Testament. Do you think God has a nickname for you? If He changed your name, what would it be? Regardless of how you answer that question, rest assured God has changed your name. He calls you son, daughter, beloved and worthy just to name a few.

questions

- Did you grow up with any endearing nicknames? What did they say about who you were?

- Have you experienced the hurtful side of nicknames? What does it look like for you to rest in the name God has given you instead?

P R A Y E R

Father, thank You for calling us Your own. You call us many endearing names representing Your love for us. Help us rest in the assurance You provide. Help us believe we are loved, valued and enjoyed by You. Amen.





day 6 SALVATION

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 PETER 2:9-10

If you have stepped over the Faith Line, you are someone who believes Jesus died on the cross for your sins and you've confessed your need for a savior. Did you know you were called a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), child of God (John 1:12), chosen, royal priesthood, holy nation and special possession? When we are in Christ, our descriptors change. God gets to define and describe us! He decides what to call us solely based on the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Redeemed, restored, saved, purposed and loved are a few more of the many ways in which God thinks of us.

At times, it's difficult to fathom why a perfect, holy and sovereign God would think so highly of us. I mean, does He see what's happening here on earth? Does He really know the thoughts running through our minds? Yes, He does, and it doesn't change a thing. His love and provision for us is a gift. It's not based on our hard work or good behavior (Ephesians 2:8-9). It's not based on following the rules. All we do is accept it and then receive a host of new names describing our new reality in Christ. What a blessing God made the Gospel message simple. Believe in Jesus, confess your sins and you get a new name. It's that simple.

questions

- Are there ways in which you try to earn God's love?

- What does it look like for you to rest in the freedom of God's love?

P R A Y E R

Father, thank You that we can't earn or work our way into Your heart. You have loved us from the beginning, and nothing changes that. We can trust and rest in the assurance Your love is forever. Thank You that even when we slip into working for Your love, You graciously remind us through the Bible it can't be earned. Amen.





day 7 TITLE

The name of the LORD is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

PROVERBS 18:10

God has titles that say a lot about who He is. "Alpha and Omega" (Revelation 21:6), "I Am" (Exodus 3:14) and "Most High" (Psalm 7:17) to name a few. "Alpha" is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and "Omega" the last. He is the beginning and the end. Everything originated with Him and will end with Him. "I Am" is a title for God synonymous with Yahweh which was considered so holy it couldn't be spoken for fear it would be said in vain. It encompasses all God is and defies explanation. "Most High" reminds us nothing is higher than God nor has more authority than He does. We all have titles that formally or informally say something about who we are. It's common practice to meet someone new and ask, "What do you do?" How we answer that question has a lot to do with the titles we've given ourselves. "I'm a ____." The titles we give ourselves can often become our identity, sense of self and how we fit into the world. That's why it can be so disorienting when someone loses a job, retires or becomes disabled and unable to work. Their title is gone, and their sense of who they are is in question.

Regardless of what title you hold or have lost, you can trust in the faithfulness of a God whose titles never change. He will never lose His job or retire from loving and providing for us. He has the desire and power to sustain His love for us. That's why Paul refers to Him in 2 Corinthians 1:3 as the "Father of compassion and God of all comfort." He was, is and will always be available for us. Trust Him.

questions

- Are there ways in which you try to earn God's love?

- What does it look like for you to rest in the freedom of God's love?

P R A Y E R

Father, thank You for being the same yesterday, today and forever. You are great, powerful and able to sustain us. We love You and trust You will provide regardless of our circumstance. Help us trust more in You than in our titles and own strength. Amen.





day 8 FROM DARKNESS

For (God) has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. COLOSSIANS 1:13-14

God rescues you from the dominion of darkness. God's Good News calls us out of darkness and into the light. When someone steps over the Faith Line—they recognize their sin, turn away from it, look towards Jesus and step towards Him in faith—they are brought by God out of the dominion of darkness. Deliverance, in this case, is a rescue from dangerous captivity to sin and Satan.

Along with rescue comes a transfer into something greater. God doesn't just rescue us from darkness, He brings us into the light. With the light comes a new nature—the ability to love and obey God forever. How often have you been too distracted by the sin still existing in your life to appreciate the new nature you've been given? By God's grace, you'll increasingly love and obey Jesus for the rest of your life. As you do, you'll need to rest in the work God has already accomplished by delivering you out of darkness. Spend less time beating yourself up for the work you haven't completed and more time thanking God for the work He's already done.

questions

- Why is it too easy to focus on ourselves and what we have or haven't done instead of focusing on what God has done?

- How could focusing more on the accomplished work of God bring rest to our lives?

P R A Y E R

Father God, You're kind to us. Not only have You already delivered Your people, but now You often watch us live as if You haven't. Forgive us for focusing too much on ourselves and not enough on You. By Your Spirit who lives in me, keep my mind and heart focused on what You've done for me. Amen.





day 9 FROM UNBELIEF

Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." "'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" MARK 9:21-24

Jesus rescues you from unbelief. The father in this story gives one of the most vulnerable and authentic examples of prayer in Scripture. He knows he probably doesn't believe as much as he should. Rather than faking it or giving up, he gets honest with Jesus, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Like it or not, everyone is an unbeliever (yes, you too). Everyone, whether they've crossed the Faith Line or not, has areas of their life in which they do not believe God. You have spaces of your heart and mind that do not trust Jesus or take God at His Word. You believe your past is too great to be forgiven. You feel shame because of who you used to be. When you don't believe Jesus' work is sufficient for your sins, doubts, fears, problems, sufferings, past or life, you expose areas of unbelief. Jesus rescues you from your unbelief, just as He rescued the boy and his father in Mark 9. Fight back against your areas of unbelief. Rather than hide in shame, admit to Jesus, "I believe but probably not enough—help me!"

questions

- What initially comes to mind as you think through areas of your life where unbelief still exists?

- How can you fight back against unbelief in your life?

P R A Y E R

God, I confess—I believe but probably not enough. Would You please help me? I know I've already been rescued from my unbelief, but help me live it out. I don't want to hide from You in shame or pretend You don't already know my doubts. You see me for exactly who I am and love me anyway. As always, God, I need You. Help me. Amen.





day 10 FROM SIN

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11

Jesus rescues you from the power of sin. "That is what some of you *were*." In other words, Jesus rescued the church in Corinth from the power of sin. They were washed from the wreckage of their sins. They were put on the journey of becoming more like Jesus. They were made right before God. All of this was accomplished for them by Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

When you step over the Faith Line, you're rescued from the power of sin. Does that mean you'll live a life completely free from sin? Heavens no! What it means is you are now free to fight back. Temptation doesn't have to result in sin any longer. In fact, even your temptations will begin to look differently over time. By God's grace, Jesus rescuing you from the power of sin will result in a life of less sin and more obedience. The call to arms is not to pull up your bootstraps and fight sin. Instead, recognize what Jesus has done for you and rest in His accomplishment. Then, fight sin as a No Matter follower who already knows the power of sin has been defeated.

questions

- What kind of sins were tempting to you when you first stepped over the Faith Line? How about now?
- Take some time to remember how far Jesus has brought you in your fight against sin. What has He rescued you from? How can you find joy and gratitude in those victories?

P R A Y E R

Jesus, thank You for rescuing me from sin. Thank You for washing me of my sin and making me more like You. Help me rest in my justified state before God. I couldn't earn Your rescue by being perfect, but I do want to play my part in fighting sin. Help me. Amen.





day 11 FROM FEAR

Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" MATTHEW 8:23-27

Jesus rescues you from living a life of fear. Imagine being one of the disciples in that moment. In case you're thinking otherwise, yes, you would have been even more terrified than they were, which makes it hard to understand Jesus' reaction to their fear, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Shouldn't He have been at least a little bit empathetic to their fear? Instead, Jesus got up and shouted at the wind, and it obeyed Him. The disciples were completely and utterly amazed—just like you would have been.

When Jesus questioned the disciples, He wasn't discrediting their fear, but He was calling their attention to how quickly they forgot who was with them in the middle of the storm. God has never said you won't face storms, and to believe otherwise is putting yourself on a trajectory towards a faith crisis. What God has promised is to be with you in your storms. He doesn't always give a way out, but He always gives you Himself. Jesus is with you in your fear. He sees you, He is near to you and He isn't going anywhere. Fear is not the problem—forgetting who's with you is.

questions

- What moments have brought you the most fear and doubt? Are you facing any of those storms now?

- How does knowing Jesus is with you change the way you face those fears?

P R A Y E R

Father, thank You for a Savior who isn't distant from me or annoyed with my constant fears. Thank You for a Savior who is present, near and committed. I confess I often let storms in my life blind me to the fact that Jesus is with me. Forgive me, Father. Help me remember who is with me and be comforted by that truth. Amen.





day 12 FROM DEATH

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:55-58

Jesus rescues you from sin and death. There is no way around it: “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), all deserve the just punishment of death. Check out verse 57 though, “But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” All who have stepped over the Faith Line are now free from the fear of death, praise Jesus!

The Apostle Paul goes on to encourage the Corinthians—now that you’ve been reminded sin and death are defeated, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Once you truly rest in what Jesus has done for you, you can actively stand firm as you face the remnants of sin and death. You live in what is often called the “already but not yet.” Jesus already defeated sin and death, but you are not yet free from some of their lingering tyranny. You will face death in this body. You face temptation and fall into sin. God’s encouragement to you through Paul remains—stand firm in your victory and remain unmoved.

questions

- How would you characterize your experience of living in the “already but not yet”?

- What does knowing the future outcome do for you as you face the remnants of sin and death in your life and the world around you?

P R A Y E R

Father, You’ve already freed me from the sting of death, but continue freeing me from my fear of it. I too often avoid thinking of my inevitable ending, but because of Jesus, I can look towards my end in victory. Help me fight my sin, stand firm and believe there will be no sting in death. Amen.





day 13 FROM WASTING YOUR LIFE

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. EPHESIANS 2:8-10

Jesus rescues you from wasting your life. No one lays on their death bed wishing they had watched more Netflix, sent more emails or worked longer hours. On the contrary, loads of people spend their final days regretting the parts of life they left on the table. Jesus saves His people by grace through faith in Him. Upon coming to saving faith, you are unleashed to do the good works God prepared in advance for you. Yes, Jesus saves you from your sin. Among a multitude of other ways saving faith impacts you, it also saves you from wasting your life.

If you’ll rest in what Jesus has done for you, you’ll embrace the good works He has called you to. Not so you can earn His love or acquire forgiveness for continued sin. Instead, you can do the works He calls you to out of the abundance of a reoriented life. Hard work done unto the Lord never goes unnoticed. Does that mean you can’t watch Netflix or enjoy a lazy Saturday? Of course not. It means by living a life of grateful obedience, you don’t have to fear wasting your life because obedience to God will never end in vain.

questions

- Have you experienced the difference between doing hard work out of gratitude or love as opposed to doing something begrudgingly? What was your experience like?

- How does resting in Jesus go hand-in-hand with completing good works?

P R A Y E R

God, I confess I either find myself trying to earn Your love with good works or selfishly living a life focused on me. Forgive me. Help me see what I’ve been given the opportunity to do alongside You, and give me the grace to be obedient with gratitude in my heart. Amen.





day 14 FROM SELF-CENTEREDNESS

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4

Jesus rescues you from self-centeredness. Philippians 2 goes on to describe how Jesus is the greatest example of others-centeredness there has ever been. The One who spoke humanity into existence took on full humanity to bring His people into right relationship with God. The Creator of water became thirsty. The mind which brought forth trees died after being nailed to one. When God asks you to do nothing out of selfishness but in humility to count others above yourself, He does not ask it from a place of misunderstanding or privilege.

Jesus rescues you from self-centeredness for your sake and the sake of the world. Jesus knows a truly good life is lived for the sake of others. Until you experience it for yourself, you'll constantly default to your own wants and needs at the expense of others. Selfishness takes at the expense of others. Humility gives at the expense of self. Will a life lived this way be difficult? Absolutely. Will it be good? Without a doubt. If you want to live a truly good life, embrace Paul's charge as you follow the example of Jesus.

questions

- In what ways have you lived life out of self-centeredness? How about just in the past hour?

- With Jesus' example as your fuel, name a few practical ways you can be others-centered this week.

P R A Y E R

Jesus, You are amazing. I can't begin to comprehend what it took for You to rescue me, but I can thank You. I know life is best when I'm not at the center of it, so help me embrace a life of others-centeredness. I need and trust You. Amen.





day 15 TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING

**Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.
For you, Lord, have delivered me from death, my eyes from
tears, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the Lord
in the land of the living.** PSALM 116:7-9

When we believe God has renamed us as His child and rescued us from the curse of death through our risen Savior Jesus Christ, He begins restoring us to the land of the living. Living for God. Living for others because of God. Living with love, joy, purpose, hope and a faith that reflects Jesus to the world around us.

When Jesus rescued us, we moved from the land of darkness and death to the land of the living. John 1:4 says in Jesus was "life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." Jesus' life is the beacon cutting through the darkness of this world. We will never be able to walk with Jesus perfectly, but when we study the Word of God, imitate the life of Jesus and learn how to follow Him, we begin to heal from pain, turmoil, physical and emotional anguish and unrest. As we follow this light, our lives are restored. We live differently with hope, love, faith and a renewed purpose. God gives us rest in Him, His promises to love and always be with us, to guide and give us purpose, and in an unchanging hope, love and faith in the One who created us for new life in Him.

questions

- How has God restored your life since you stepped over the Faith Line? If you do not have an exact date or time, when did you take a step in your faith that changed your life?

- What does it mean to move from the darkness of this world into the land of the living?

P R A Y E R

Lord, thank You for renaming and rescuing me from the darkness of sin and death into life with You. Teach me to walk in Your light. Give me a hunger for spending time with You, and help me rest in Your presence. Amen.





day 16 MY LOVE FOR GOD

Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them. JOHN 17:25-26

Jesus prayed this prayer with His disciples toward the end of His earthly life. He was explaining He was sent to reveal God the Father's love by dying for them so He could be "in them." Did the disciples understand what Jesus was praying? Probably not; they all deserted Him when He was betrayed. Did Jesus stop loving them? Did He condemn Peter when he denied he knew Jesus? No. He restored him. After His resurrection, Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love me?" (John 21:15-17) and gave Peter a chance to be redeemed and proclaim his love for his Savior.

When you give Jesus your life and proclaim Him as your Savior and Redeemer, you are restored into right relationship with God. You are not condemned for your past non-love or hatred toward God or others. He knows all about your past; that is why He sent Jesus—to rescue you. He loved you before you were born. Through all the ups and downs of your life, God has loved you with an unquenching, unchanging, all-consuming love. Let go of any hurt or shame you may feel about ways you have treated or thought of God in the past. He has redeemed you. You are His. Let Him teach you how to love Him.

questions

- How would you describe Jesus' love for you? If you could picture that love, what would it look like?

- How can you rest in God's love today? Spend some time alone with God and reflect on the ways He has shown you love in your past and current circumstances.

P R A Y E R

Father God, thank You for sending Jesus to teach me about You. Thank You for loving me so much You sent Your one and only Son to die for me so I can be with You forever. Draw me into Your presence and teach me through Your Word. Help me show people in my life Your unchanging love. Amen.





day 17 MY PURPOSE

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

When we cross the Faith Line and trust Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are given a new life and purpose. As we grow in faith, our desires change and, along with them, our attitudes and behaviors toward the world around us. Our mission slowly evolves as we draw closer and closer to living in and through Christ.

You may have lived all your life as a Christ follower, or you may be beginning your faith journey. One thing is the same for all of us—the faith journey is scary and exhilarating at the same time! As our faith grows, God opens new paths and gives us new passions. We find new ways of using the gifts God has given us, or we discover gifts we never knew we had! This is a process of restoration; God is restoring you to the person He created you to be. The closer we walk with Christ, the more we reflect His character and the more our lives and our missions reflect Him.

questions

- Think of one passion you know has grown because of your relationship with Jesus. How have you used that passion to show Jesus' love to your Little Iowa?

- Think of one person you know who has a renewed purpose because of his/her relationship with Jesus. How has this purpose changed his/her life?

P R A Y E R

*Dear Jesus, help me live for You. Give me Your passions, love and purpose in my life.
Help me reflect You in all I say and do. Amen.*





day 18 MY HOPE

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. COLOSSIANS 1:21-23

The Gospel is our hope. It is the best news ever proclaimed! Jesus came a baby, lived among us, taught us about the Father, died and rose to set us free from sin and death so we could be with Him forever in Heaven. All we have to do is believe! This is our hope—THE hope of mankind that has been restored to us through the Gospel.

We rest in the hope of the Gospel. It sets us free from sin and death and breaks the chains of idolatry and worldly passions. It gives us hope in a life that will glorify God and lead others to Him. It saves us from ourselves. Someday, we will be presented as holy in God's sight if we continue in our faith walk, "established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel." Hold firm in the Gospel!

questions

- Describe what hope looks like in your life. Is it an action, thought, symbol or an experience?

- How would you show this kind of hope to someone who is hopeless?

P R A Y E R

Lord, thank You for loving me and giving me hope in a future life with You. Help me show this hope in all my actions with others and my attitude toward You. Please let me be a humble example of hope in my community. Amen





day 19 MY FAITH

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. GALATIANS 2:20

God restores our faith when we trust in the love Jesus showed us when He willingly gave up His life for us. When we give up our lives for Christ and sacrifice our needs and wants to live for Him, we begin our faith walk. So what is faith?

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Faith looks a little different for everyone, but it comes down to having confidence God loves us, even when we cannot see or comprehend what might be in front of us. He is there, leading the way. Our heroes of faith, listed in Hebrews 11, show us God uses imperfect people with great faith to fulfill His purposes: Abraham, Moses, Rahab, Joseph and many others. We live by faith in Jesus and through this faith lead others to Him.

questions

- Study one of the heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11. How can you demonstrate that kind of faith in your life?
- Think of one area of your life where you need to demonstrate more faith. Write a prayer to God about this struggle and use it as your prayer for this week.

P R A Y E R

God, thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to save me from my sins and rescue me from death. Help me live a life of faith with confidence You are with me and will guide me through all my trials and triumphs, highs and lows, joys and sorrows. Give me a restored faith in You. Amen.





day 20 MY JOY

**Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit,
to sustain me. PSALM 51:12**

God restores our joy through our faith in Christ! Joy and happiness are not the same. Happiness usually comes from an external experience, but spiritual joy, the kind written about in this verse, comes from the Holy Spirit. This kind of joy does not depend on our circumstances or feelings; it does not rise or fall with the stock market. The Holy Spirit stirs our hearts as we think about and worship the One who saves us from our sins, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Our willingness to lean into our salvation, faith in Jesus and how He died and rose again to redeem us from our sins will sustain us through hard circumstances when there is no happiness in sight. Joy from the Spirit is immovable, unshakeable, reliable and always available for those who put their trust in the salvation of their souls through Jesus Christ.

This kind of joy is not something we create within ourselves; it is not man-made or man-conceived. It comes from the Holy Spirit when we allow Him to dwell in and through us. When we are willing to let go and allow the Spirit lead and sustain us, He gives us His joy, a deep, calming peace that spreads from our innermost part into our everyday lives.

questions

- Think of a person in your life who always seems to be filled with joy despite their circumstances. If you were to ask them where they find their joy, what do you think they would say?

- Take some time today to pray for holy joy!

P R A Y E R

Holy Spirit, lead and guide me. Let Your joy flow through me, even in the difficult times of my life. Let me reflect the light of Jesus with joy to those around me. Amen.





day 21 MY RELATIONSHIPS

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4

When we are united with Christ, comforted by His love and filled with His Spirit, we are transformed from the inside out. No longer are we battling to be the center of everyone's attention (or the center of our own attention). We can see people who need the love of Christ just as we need His love. We learn to see people through God's eyes.

God begins restoring broken relationships when we put our family, friends and coworkers before ourselves, not seeking their attention or approval but to honor them and look to their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. It may take a while to unravel the messiness of some relationships, but through faith, love and patience, many can be restored. We have to remember relationships take time to build just like they take time to tear down. We can't control the responses of others toward our desire for restoration, but God honors it and will send us His Spirit to comfort and guide us.

questions

- Think of one relationship you are struggling with. How can you apply the verses above in a practical way to show that person you love them?

- Make a list of ways you can (or do) show the people in your life you seek to put them before you.

P R A Y E R

God, thank You for sending Jesus to save me and show me how to live a selfless life. Help me model Jesus' humility and unchanging love in my relationships. Let me think less of myself and more of the people You have put in my life. Amen.



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