

PRAYER + FASTING

WHERE YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS

CONNECT



JANUARY 9 - JANUARY 29

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NORTH
CHURCH

CONNECT TWENTY-ONE

From Pastors George & Carol Houston

Dear Reader,

What is in store for the year ahead? Only God knows! However, with **Connect 21**, our 21-day experience of prayer and fasting, Linked UP North is sculpting a lifestyle, and through the creation of the Connect 21 Devotional, God has guided us to focus on the Holy Spirit, faith, and grace as we pray. In January, we will seek God and hope in Him to fulfill His purpose in our lives and the life of our church in 2023.

How do we prepare to hear from God more clearly, so we have a foundation of understanding to carry us throughout the year? During Connect 21, we endeavor to subdue the flesh by fasting and using the time we would have spent eating to pray and glorify God with a spiritual resolve to express His presence and power in our lives.

Prayer is essential for maintaining faith and never losing heart. Your testimony may NOT occur during the Connect 21 Challenge, but you can trust God to bring it to pass at His appointed time. Genuine spiritual breakthroughs are impossible without concentrated, targeted, and constant prayer. Are we willing to unite in prayer, permitting the Holy Spirit to move and have His way in our lives?

This book provides techniques, topical prayers, and helpful advice for achieving spiritual success during this season of focused prayer and fasting. If all success

begins with prayer, why not get a head start on your endeavors? Take the time to learn the art of prayer and review the instructions beforehand. Allow the Holy Spirit to provide you with a fasting strategy. Lastly, remember to utilize the journal before and throughout Connect 21.

God seeks an open heart to fill and occasions to demonstrate His strength on behalf of people who desire Him. We believe greater engagement will result in greater manifestation. Please join us and commit to Connect 21 as we shift our emphasis from ourselves to God and others.

We excitedly anticipate what the Lord will do for us, in us, and through us throughout these 21 extraordinary days. Everything changes when you pray!

The graphic consists of four vertical panels, each with a title and a list of events. The panels are: 1. IMPORTANT CONNECT 21 DATES, listing 'C21 Kick Off' (January 8) and 'C21 Finale Communion Water Baptism' (January 29). 2. WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER 201, listing '7 PM | Online Only' and dates January 11, 18, and 25. 3. SATURDAY MORNING PRAYER, listing '9 AM | In-Person | Online' and dates January 14, 21, and 28. 4. SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE, listing '8:30 AM & 10 AM In-Person | Online' and dates January 15, 22, and 29.

IMPORTANT CONNECT 21 DATES	WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER 201	SATURDAY MORNING PRAYER	SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
C21 Kick Off January 8	7 PM Online Only	9 AM In-Person Online	8:30 AM & 10 AM In-Person Online
C21 Finale Communion Water Baptism January 29	January 11 January 18 January 25	January 14 January 21 January 28	January 15 January 22 January 29

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All the scriptures in this book reference the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

PRAYER AS A LIFESTYLE

Prayer is most effective when it is not just something we sometimes do but a lifestyle we cultivate. As we pursue a prayer lifestyle, we can look at the example Jesus provided during His life on earth.

Here are three things that scripture tells us Jesus did for His time in prayer.

*Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. **Mark 1:35 NKJV***

A CERTAIN TIME

Jesus got up very early in the morning to spend time with His Heavenly Father. For prayer to work, we should do the same. Make a daily appointment with God and keep it.

A CERTAIN PLACE

Jesus had a prayer place. Your prayer place needs to be an undistracted environment where you can pray out loud and perhaps have some worship music playing in the background.

A CERTAIN PLAN

Go into your prayer time with a plan. If it changes, that is fine. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He gave His disciples a prayer outline.

The prayer models outlined later in this book can help you practice different ways to pray, which can help you find a deeper purpose and connect to God through your prayer time. Select a prayer model or topic, and as you pray, focus on the process the model reveals, giving yourself time to pray intentionally. The goal is for prayer to become more natural, effective, and enjoyable.

While prayer does take commitment and requires discipline to develop into a daily habit, we also want to remember that it is a privilege to come to God in prayer.

WHY FAST?

We encourage our church family to consider fasting corporately for 21 days during Connect 21. The fast is part of this season of high-intensity prayer as a church family.

You may also fast at other times during the year for your spiritual development. It is typical to fast a single meal, a whole day, or three days or more. The timing of your fast or what you choose to fast is not as important as your focus on God as you fast.

The purpose of fasting is to draw closer to God. Biblical fasting always has to do with eliminating distractions - such as eating three times a day - for a greater spiritual purpose. It causes us to shift our focus from outside in to inside out. It also enables us to celebrate the goodness and mercy of God and prepares our hearts for all the good things God desires to bring into our lives.

Your fast should be challenging to turn your attention to God in moments of hunger, but you must know your body and your limits. The most important part of the fast is to seek God in prayer and follow the Holy Spirit as He leads you, not simply deny yourself food.

PARTIAL FAST

This fast is sometimes called the "Jewish Fast" and involves abstaining from eating any type of food during specific periods of the day.

COMPLETE FAST

In a complete fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.

CONNECT 21 FAST

At Linked UP North, we encourage a combination of the **Partial** and **Complete** fasts by fasting for at least six (6) hours each day for the entire duration of the 21 day fast.

Depending on your schedule, please choose a time that works best for you by drinking only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.

Suggested periods of the day are:

6:00 AM - 12:00 PM

12:00 PM - 6:00 PM

6:00 PM - 12:00 AM

12:00 AM - 6:00 AM*

**For night shift workers*

HOW TO FAST SAFELY

As you begin your fast, be assured that fasting will be a spiritual and physical blessing when done correctly.

If necessary, consult your doctor before you begin your fast. But, be aware that many doctors have not been trained in this area, so their understanding is limited. If you are taking prescription medication, talk to your doctor before changing your regimen. Prudence and caution are in order.

PRAYER MODELS

A.C.T.S. Prayer Model

The A.C.T.S. prayer model is an excellent and effective way to focus our hearts on who God is and what He has done for us before we turn our hearts to ask Him for His continued blessings.

Prayer is simply talking to God, and He is not concerned with how many words we use when we pray or if we can eloquently quote scripture. Use the A.C.T.S. acronym to enrich your conversation with God.

- A**doration Focus directly on God, honoring Him for Who He is in our lives.
- C**onfidence Find out what His Will is for your life and pray the Word of God confidently, believing all His promises.
- T**hanksgiving Thank Him in advance for what you believed Him for in prayer.
- S**upplication Pray for the specific needs of others and yourself.

Read the scriptures associated with each acronym and let the verses inspire your thoughts to become His thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-11). Praying scripture allows us to use God's Word to gain more confidence and enjoyment in our prayer time.

A DORATION

During this time, focus directly on God, adoring Him for Who He is. His names, His character, His roles, etc. Worship and praise God with your heart, mind, and voice.

*Therefore David blessed the Lord before all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.¹¹Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, And You are exalted as head over all.¹²Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all. ¹³"Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name. **1 Chronicles 29:10-13***

*O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens! ²Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger. ³When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, ⁴What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? ⁵For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, ⁷All sheep and oxen— Even the beasts of the field, ⁸The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas. ⁹O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth! **Psalm 8:1-9***

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. ²Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. ³There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. ⁴Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the

end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race. ⁶Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. ⁷The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; ⁸The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; ⁹The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer **Psalm 19:1-11,14**

O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. ²So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. ³Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. ⁴Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.

Psalm 63:1-4

Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! ²Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. ³Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. ⁴Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. ⁵For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations

Psalm 100:1-5

*Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! ²Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! ³Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! ⁴Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! ⁵Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! ⁶Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord! **Psalm 150:1-6***

CONFIDENCE

You should always pray confidently. All of us who live for Jesus Christ have the Holy Spirit living inside of us. If we believe this, then how could we not be confident about coming boldly before the Lord? God's Word instructs us to do so in the following scriptures.

*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. **1 John 5:14-15***

*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. **Hebrews 4:14-16***

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. **Hebrews 10:23***

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. **Hebrews 11:6***

Every time you pray, you should be confident that God will listen and answer your prayers according to His good Will, which is His Word. If He gave you eternal life through His Son, you know He will answer your prayers.

T HANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a time for prayers of thanks for what God has done. Thank Him for salvation, the many blessings in your life, protection, provision, open doors, opportunities, and anything He has done for you.

*Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. **1 Chronicles 16:34***

*Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18***

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. **Philippians 4:6-7***

SUPPLICATION

Supplication is a specific prayer request which can be oral or written. This is the time to ask God for His divine help to meet needs, solve problems, work in another believer's life, etc.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints;

Ephesians 6:18

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; **Philippians 4:6***

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

As God blesses you and answers your prayers, now it is your time to act. Be willing to obey God as He may lead you to share your time, resources, or testimony with others.

*Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. **Acts 4:32***

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give,

willing to share, ¹⁹storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. **1 Timothy 6:17-19**

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. **Revelation 12:11**

PRAYER MODELS

A.C.T.S PRAYER MODEL

Adoration | Confidence | Thanksgiving | Supplication

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S PRAYER MODEL

PRAYING FOR

**Authority Figures | All Believers |
The Lost | The Body of Christ**

1 Timothy 2:1-2 NKJV

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence."

The Apostle Paul's Prayer Model

The Word of God is one of the most valuable tools for building a dynamic daily prayer life. Scripture brings power, truth, and encouragement to our prayer time. We can make a difference when we spend time praying for others. Pray for those with whom you interact and connect. In 1 Timothy 2:1-2, the Apostle Paul encourages us toward the following prayer points.

Pray for those in authority

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Pray for those in natural authority

- . President
- . Vice President
- . United States Senate
- . United States Congress
- . United States Supreme Court
- . U.S. Government Departments
- . Presidential Advisors
- . All U.S. Military Branches
- . Governor
- . Lieutenant Governor
- . State Senators
- . Senate Representatives
- . State Courts
- . State & County Board of Education
- . State Elected Officials
- . Mayors
- . City Council Members
- . County and Municipal Courts

Pray for those in spiritual authority

- . **Linked UP North Overseers:**
 - Pastors Joel & Patricia Gregory
- . **Linked UP North Pastors:**
 - Pastors George & Carol Houston
- . Linked UP North Ministerial Staff
- . The Dream Team and Connect Groups
- . More wisdom and greater discernment to lead God's people

Supplication for other believers

- Answered prayers
- Manifestation of breakthroughs and miracles
- Great wealth for God's people
- Obedience with our finances as it relates to tithes and offerings
- Spiritual growth and development
- Strong marriages and families
- Successful singles
- Thriving jobs, careers, businesses
- Spiritual growth as individuals complete their NEXT STEPS classes

Interceding for the lost

- Win souls for the Kingdom
*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise. **Proverbs 11:30***
- Clear soul-winning strategy
*Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law. **Proverbs 29:18***
- Pray for more laborers
*Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. ³⁸Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." **Matthew 9:37-38***
- Pray to reach the lost
*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. **2 Peter 3:9***

Pray for the Gifts and Offices in the body of Christ

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracle, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 1 Corinthians 12:28

Pray for Linked UP North's Dream Team and Connect Groups

- God will send the right people with the right heart to fill all Dream Team needs within our church
- Holy Spirit will empower each Dream Team member and leader to Love God, Love People, Pursue Excellence, and Choose Joy
- Dream Team members and their families are abundantly blessed for their commitment to our ministry
- God will raise new Connect Group leaders for the Winter/Spring, Summer & Fall Semesters
- God will expand the influence of Connect Group leaders within their neighborhood and community
- The life of each Connect Group leader and that they will be incredibly blessed because of their sacrifice and obedience to God

Pray for the vision of Linked UP North

- Our purpose of reaching people with the message of Jesus Christ by connecting them to God, a church family, their purpose, and a community is fulfilled
- Continued favor with city and county officials in Woodstock and the surrounding area.
- Resources to purchase land and property to house the vision
- Pray for new and effective ways for Linked UP North to serve the community
- Impactful Connect 40 spiritual concentration in the Fall

Additional Prayer Strategies

Prayer is not only communion with God but a confrontation with the enemy. These prayer strategies can strengthen us and help us triumph in our spiritual battles.

THE ARMOR OF GOD

Ephesians 6:11-18

Knowing that we are in a spiritual battle, God provides spiritual armor and equips us to take a stand when conflict arises.

*Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— **Ephesians 6:11-18***

Acknowledge that you are in a spiritual battle. Then, claim the protection God has given you by praying through the different pieces of spiritual armor described above in Ephesians 6.

PRAYER

Thank You, Lord, for my salvation. I receive it in a new and fresh way from You, and I declare that nothing can separate me from the love of Christ and the place I have in Your Kingdom. I wear Your righteousness today against all condemnation and corruption.

Cover me with Your holiness and purity and defend me from all assaults against my heart. Lord, I put on the belt of truth. I choose a lifestyle of honesty and integrity. Expose the lies I have believed and show me the truths I need today. I choose to live for the gospel in every moment. Show me where You are working and lead me to it. Give me strength to walk daily with You. I believe that You are powerful against every lie and assault of the enemy. You have good in store for me. Nothing is coming today that can overcome me because You are with me. Holy Spirit, show me the truths of the Word of God that I will need to counter the traps of the enemy. Bring those scriptures to mind today. Finally, Holy Spirit, I agree to walk in step with You in everything as my spirit communes with You in prayer throughout the day.”

THE WEAPONS OF WARFARE

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

We can actively pray through spiritual warfare when we are aware of it. God has given us victory and power through the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ **2 Corinthians 10:4-5***

You can take authority over anything that comes against the truth of the Word of God and command it to bow in the Name of Jesus. Take a bold stand, praying specifically and confidently by God's power and His Spirit.

PRAYER

"Father, Your Word says that no weapon formed against me shall prosper (Isaiah 54:17). Therefore, I declare that no weapon formed against me prospers this day or any day to come, in Jesus' name. Your Word says that trouble will not arise a second time (Nahum 1:9). Therefore, I declare that Satan cannot make trouble for me again, in this manner, as he did in the past, in Jesus' name. I declare all these prayers accomplished and brought to pass by trusting you through faith and expectation, in the name of Jesus.

I stand on Your Word. The enemy is driven out from before me, above me, around me, and below me; from my home, workplace, church and its ministries, children, and loved ones; from my works and labors, land, and my presence. I declare that he is not able to stand against me, and his works are taken captive and destroyed. No weapon formed against me will prosper, for the Spirit of the Lord shall raise a standard against them. I declare all of these things accomplished by Your Word. Jesus, my Lord, I give You thanksgiving, praise, glory, honor, and worship for Your righteousness and holiness given to me by Your Word on my behalf."

PROTECTION PRAYERS

Corinthians 6:14-7:1, 10:3-5; Romans 12:1-2

We often worry about our safety and protection. When we feel this way, we can immediately come to God in prayer, pouring out our hearts to Him, casting down anything contrary to the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Share your thoughts and concerns with God. Ask Him for His supernatural protection. He says He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways (Psalm 91:11). Claim this promise and lay everything down before Him trusting His good plans and His power to protect you and those you love.

PRAYER

“Heavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before You. I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to You. I submit myself only to the true and living God and refuse any involvement of the enemy in my life. I choose to be transformed by the renewing of my mind. I pull down every thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ. I pray and thank you for a sound mind, the mind of Christ.

Today and every day, I ask for protection over my spouse, children, immediate family members, relatives, friends, acquaintances, and myself. I also ask today for protection during our travels, for our provision, finances, possessions, health, safety, and welfare. I put all of these things under the covering of Your precious blood and declare that Satan cannot touch them on this day or any day to come.”

PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

2 Corinthians 7:10, Romans 2:4, Romans 12:1-2

After we are saved and born again, God has forgiven us and cleansed us from all sin and unrighteousness. After salvation, when we miss the mark, what God desires is our repentance. Repentance means to think differently and change our behavior. This process is about discovering what God’s Word says about the area where you need growth, renewing your mind, and then obeying the Word of God so that the behavior can change.

*For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. **2 Corinthians 7:10***

PRAYER

“Lord Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God. You are the Messiah who came in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil. You died on the cross for my sins and rose again on the third day from the dead. Because I have faith in the finished works of Jesus Christ, I receive Your forgiveness and thank you for cleansing me of all sin. Sin no longer has dominion over me. Thank You for redeeming me, cleansing me, justifying me, and sanctifying me in Your blood.”

RECONCILIATION PRAYER

Matthew 6:14-15; Leviticus 19:18

Forgiveness and reconciliation can feel challenging, but God makes it clear in the Bible that He freely forgives us, and we are expected to do the same for others.

*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. **Matthew 6:14-15***

Come before the Lord with humility, honesty, and sincerity. Share the areas in your life where you need to forgive others. Even if you cannot settle a situation with that person, you can settle it with the Lord by forgiving them. As you choose to forgive those who have hurt or offended you, you can also praise and thank God for forgiving you when you did not deserve it.

PRAYER

"Lord, I have a confession to make. I have not loved but have resented certain people and have unforgiveness in my heart. I call upon You, Lord, to help me forgive them. I do now forgive (name them). I also forgive and accept myself in the name of Jesus Christ."

PRIDE PRAYER

1 Peter 5:5-7, Proverbs 11:2, 16:18, 26:12

The Bible tells us that pride comes before the fall. Pride can be a genuine issue in our lives, but we have the power to overcome it through Jesus.

When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.

Proverbs 11:2

Practicing humility requires overcoming pride in our lives. As you acknowledge other sins when necessary, acknowledge your pride to God. Submit it to Him, asking Him to help you walk in humility, free of pride and self-absorption. If you feel pride is an issue that continues to surface in your life, humble yourself before God and make Him the authority over your actions and attitude. One of the best ways to humble ourselves is to combine prayer with fasting.

PRAYER

"Father, I come to You in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know pride is an abomination to You. I renounce anything that would cause me to feel pride in dealing with others. I renounce these and turn away from them. I humble myself before You and come to You as a little child."

HEALING PRAYER

1 Peter 2:24; Psalm 103:2-5; Luke 1:37

Our God is a God of miracles. As we read about in the Bible, we still see Him perform miraculous healing today. He is our Healer, and we can confidently approach Him, asking for healing for ourselves or someone we know.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: ³Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, ⁴Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, ⁵Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. **Psalm 103:2-5***

In faith, receive your healing from God. Proclaim His power and goodness, believing and trusting Him to care for you and those you pray to be healed.

PRAYER

"Father, in the Name of Jesus, I come before You for healing (name yourself or someone you are praying to experience healing). My hope is in You as our Healer. I believe You can do this. Your name is Jehovah Rapha, the God who heals, and I believe every knee will bow to You, including the name of (name disease or disorder). Thank You, Jesus, for dying on the cross so we can receive healing. You say that You forgive our sins and heal our diseases, and I praise You for this. Thank You that the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us. I stand in faith, believing for healing for (yourself or someone you are praying for). Nothing is impossible for You, God! Give us peace and direction as You work in our lives. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

MARRIAGE PRAYER

Ephesians 5:25-30

God created marriage, and His design for it is good. In marriage, as in any human relationship, we must strive to love well. We cannot do this successfully in our power. We need God, who is love Himself, to give us His Holy Spirit and to guide us in our marriage. Marriage is a picture of Jesus Christ and His bride, the Church. As Christian husbands and wives, we have the honor of representing Christ's love and commitment to the Church through our love and commitment to each other.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

Ephesians 5:25-30

Thank God for your marriage. Start by asking Him to help you be the best spouse you can be. Ask Him to help you love well and to see your spouse as He sees them.

Then, pray for your marriage, asking God to use your marriage to impact the world for Him. Ask Him for protection physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Pray for unity in your marriage and wisdom from Him about how to live your lives as one. Bring to Him anything in your marriage that concerns you, and trust Him to work on your behalf.

PRAYER

“Thank You, God, for loving us and creating marriage to illustrate Your love for us here on earth. Help me, God, to love my spouse (call them by name) the way You love me. Help me to listen to my spouse, give honor, and put my spouse before myself. Protect us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We ask You to build greater unity between us, make us stronger as a couple, more devoted to one another, and to You. Use us, God, and build us up to exemplify how Godly marriage can look. Use us together to do more than we could ever do apart. We ask for greater influence and more impact on the people around us. We invite you to work through us in the lives of our friends, family, and even those far away. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and move through us to bring those far from You closer so that they can encounter the Living God, who seeks and saves the lost, sets us free, and gives us purpose.

We choose as a couple to love You first, God. We put our relationship with You before anything and everything else. We confess our need for You. Thank You for bringing us together. We choose to love one another today and every day. Thank You for our marriage. We ask You to bless our marriage, build it, and be present in it always.”

RACIAL RECONCILIATION PRAYER

Ephesians 4:3-6; Mark 12:28-31; Psalm 139:23-24

God created every person in His image on purpose and for a purpose. We are all unique and have value in the eyes of God. As Christians, we love who God loves and seek to serve others, so we need to see each person's value to the world. We need to do our part to foster reconciliation, advocate for equality, and work to ensure that every person is treated with dignity, respect, and honor.

As followers of Jesus, we are commanded to do everything we can to promote peace. We are all one in Christ, called to serve Him and others with a spirit of unity.

*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. **Ephesians 4:3-6***

Recognize the presence of racism in our world and bring it before God today. Thank Him for creating every person in His image for a purpose. Ask Him to help you embrace your unique design and the uniqueness of others. Pray for eyes to see how inequality is at work in the world around you, and pray for boldness to uphold peace, love, and unity in the face of injustice. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you recall any ways you have not promoted equality and Unity (thoughts, words, actions, etc.) or people towards whom you have not shown the love of Christ. Ask for forgiveness, trust God to help you grow, and become an advocate for reconciliation.

PRAYER

“Father, I recognize that You created every person in Your image and have a great purpose for each of us. I ask You to help me see every person as You see them. Help me to love others with the unconditional love of Jesus and to make every effort to promote peace, unity, and equality for all people. Forgive me for the times that I have not valued others or spoken up for what is right. Give me the boldness to confront inequity when I see it and to honor others in my thoughts, words, and actions. Help me to love my neighbor as myself and to be an ambassador for reconciliation, as You have called me to be. I ask You to break the spirit of racism and division off of our nation, in Jesus’ Name. Thank You for making us one by the blood of Jesus and the power of Your Spirit.”

PRAYER + FASTING

DEVOTIONALS

WEEK ONE

CONNECT TWENTY-ONE

Day 1 | Monday, January 9, 2023

You Are Not Alone

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.

John 14:16-17 NLT

The word advocate also means comforter, encourager, or counselor. The Greek word is *paraclete*. It comes from two words, *para* and *kleous*, which when combined, mean "called alongside." The Holy Spirit has a specific assignment, or a calling, to be a Helper, Mentor, Coach, Intercessor, Partner, Comforter, and Counselor alongside us.

Jesus had frequently forewarned the disciples that He would be leaving them, and now as they were spending their final hours in the Upper Room, He was reminding them that the time He had spoken of had arrived. Can you even fathom how devastated the disciples must have felt? I'm sure the disciples were in a state of sadness and anxiety. In fact, John 14:2 tells us that Jesus was aware of their disturbed hearts.

Imagine having walked with Jesus for three years. You saw the miracles He performed. You heard Him teach in parables to the world, but He shared the inside secrets with you. You had intimate knowledge about God's Kingdom and were considered part of Jesus' inner circle. He trained you for three years in the ministry, and his voice was the only one you had followed. Jesus was the person you depended upon entirely, and you had become accustomed to His physical presence. How would you feel?

Think about it this way...you are getting ready for the Super Bowl, the National Spelling Bee, or some other important event, and the person who taught and coached you along the way, the person who kept you on the right track is no longer going to be with you. Your desire to win the game, the spelling bee, or even succeed in that important event did not disappear. But you wonder how you will get through it without your coach, mentor, or teacher.

Instead of focusing on the events that would happen in a matter of days: being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, tried six times within eight hours, falsely accused, beaten beyond recognition, denied by a disciple, exchanged for a guilty person, despised and rejected by those who earlier cried, "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," and crucified with sinners, Jesus took the time to teach the disciples about the Holy Spirit. He wanted the disciples to know that everything they believed he had been to them would not be lost; they would never be left alone. The disciples needed to know that Jesus was sending them another Comforter, Coach, Teachers, Mentor, Helper, and Advocate.

Just think about how significant the Holy Spirit's ministry must have been to Jesus! Consider how He spent his last days with the disciples and the importance of the subject matter. He knew neither the disciples nor the church thrives without the Holy Spirit's assistance. And since Jesus prioritized this subject, we must also give it as much weight.

Reflect

Do you value your relationship with the Holy Spirit as Jesus intended? Do you realize that you are never alone? Whatever your answers, make it your priority in the days ahead to learn how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit's work in your life on a deeper level than you ever have before!

Day 2 | Tuesday, January 10, 2023

The Prayer of Agreement

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. Matthew 18:19 NKJV

Let us begin by looking at the word cacophony, which is like a hodgepodge of sounds without any harmony. You may hear dogs barking, TVs playing, vehicles being driven on the road, people talking, and music playing simultaneously. However, with a symphony, it is the opposite. A symphony is a musical composition designed for a full orchestra, meaning there will be various instruments with a plethora of sounds. Still, all will play their parts to create a melodic sound of harmony. The ability to play, sing, or work in harmony suggests there must be a sense of agreement.

When two or more believers agree, powerful things can happen. Supernatural things can happen. Think about Paul and Silas, who were imprisoned, but they began to pray and sing around midnight. Scripture tells us that suddenly an earthquake shook the foundation and the prison walls, the doors came open, and their shackles “magically” fell off. This was no magic. This was a supernatural manifestation because of the power of prayer, specifically, the prayer of agreement (Acts 16:16-40 NLT).

Amos 3:3 asks, “Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?” Have you ever taken the time to ponder how well the human body works? There are so many moving parts, some seen and some unseen, but each part works with the whole so that we can walk, talk, see, hear, breathe, and such. The power of unity is so vital that Jesus asserted that the Father would resolve whatever situation believers prayed about through the prayer of agreement.

We can learn from Paul and Silas' imprisonment that the Bible chose to share what these two believers did in the face of a trial. Often, believers take their social cues from the media, nonbelievers, past negative experiences, or something else. I am sure that being beaten and thrown in jail for the sake of the gospel could not have been a pleasant experience. Also, they prayed to and praised God at midnight, and God acted on their behalf during what may have seemed like the darkest hour in their lives. In those tough times, we should not only get in agreement with another believer but also refocus and agree with the Word of God.

The prayer of agreement reminds us of the supernatural power made available to us through unity. When we pray corporately during our prayer services on Saturdays and before services on Sundays, we add our faith to the prayer points listed. We add our faith to the body of believers as we stand in the gap and cover the needs of one another. Psalm 103:20 reminds us that the angels excel in strength and perform God's will as they hear His Word through our prayers. I encourage you to find a fellow believer who can pray in agreement with you when you need divine intervention. Pray aloud, and pray in the Spirit, but above all, be in harmony. When God hears this, you may count on Him to start moving mountains to grant your prayers.

Reflect

What do you need today? For whom can you pray? What situation can you take to the throne of grace? Find another believer who will agree with you and begin to pray over that situation or for that person. Expect to see a supernatural movement because you have touched the heart of God.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I want to express my gratitude to You for the incredible power You have made available to us so that we may pray together. Because of this, I will make it a priority to pray in this manner with another believer whenever I am

Day 3 | Wednesday, January 11, 2023

Don't Stop Praying

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.

Colossians 4:2 NKJV

When God? When? How long is this going to take? Why is this taking so long? Have you ever asked God these questions because you were going through a period of fasting and praying, or just praying and it seems like the answer is stalled, or you believe it's not coming? Have you ever been tempted to give up or throw in the towel because you have felt it is taking too long for the answer to come? If we were honest, we all have experienced times like this, or perhaps, you are experiencing such a situation right now. You wonder whether you have done something wrong; you question how long you should pray about the situation or whether your request is in the will of God.

As we wait for God to answer our prayers, Paul emphatically urges us to keep an ongoing dialogue with God and not treat prayer like a singular, isolated event. Personal communication with God should be part of our lifestyle. He also urges us to be vigilant or watchful – keeping a careful watch – for possible dangers or problems. Prayer is not some thoughtless act; it should be specific and deliberate. Lastly, Paul reminds us that thanksgiving should be a part of prayers. We should have an attitude of gratitude when we approach God with our prayers. If we believe God will grant our requests, we should be prepared and willing to thank Him for the answers.

Your willingness to yield to God and make the changes He requests is essential when seeking His blessing, as there may be places in your life that are now preventing Him from doing so. If there is anything in your life that needs to be given to God, the Holy Spirit will convict your heart as you get closer to God. If

you give in to His prodding and repent, the things that have been standing in the way of your prayers will go, and the answers to your petitions will come swiftly. God desires an intimate relationship with you in which you give Him control of every aspect of your life. In exchange, God assures you that your prayers will be answered.

Have you ever participated in a 10K race or another athletic event? Many times, runners and walkers will dash from the starting line with exuberant energy, but as the race continues, some people begin to run out of gas, slow down, question why they signed up in the first place, or even have thoughts of not finishing. Sometimes we take the same attitude toward prayer. We begin with enthusiasm in anticipation of a quick answer, but as days, weeks, months, or even years go by, we lose our zeal. We lose our enthusiasm, and our desire to persevere wanes. This is the very thing Paul warns us not to do. We must keep pressing! We must be watchful for the answers because, more than likely, they may not look like the box in which we put God. We cannot grow weary.

The Christian's prayer habit should be as regular as breathing, but all too frequently, it's the first "obligation" set aside when the pressures of life mount or time becomes scarce. A lack of daily prayer is often the first step toward spiritual apathy, worldliness, and a weakened Christian witness.

Unless we learn to be persistent and devote ourselves to praying, we risk being lazy, indifferent and compromised in our faith. Prayer is how we sustain an unbroken relationship with our heavenly Father. All our spiritual protections should be fastened with prayer, which is what prayer devotion is about. Ephesians 6:18, "Pray always with all petition and supplication in the Spirit, and be on the lookout in prayer, with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints."

Praying is more than just closing your eyes and folding your hands in front of your chest. Prayer is the instrument God has given us to get ready for the work He has given us to accomplish and to ensure we are prepared for any crisis that may arise. You should not put off praying until you need to. We must cultivate a mindset of constant prayer, as it is our connection to the Lord.

Reflect

Have you ever been so discouraged in your prayer life as you waited for an answer that you thought about giving up because the answer did not come as quickly as you had desired? If so, do not throw your hands up in frustration and walk away! If you keep your faith and remain vigilant, you may be on the verge of receiving your long-awaited response. And, while praying, do not forget to include thanksgiving.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I have concluded that my level of zeal in prayer needs to increase! I will pray with dedication and perseverance until every obstacle is eliminated and the solution becomes apparent in my life. To exercise my faith, I am keeping a vigilant eye on the answer I have requested from You. Right now, I am raising my voice in faith and am beginning to thank You in advance and consistently for the things I have asked. In Jesus' name, I pray.

Day 4 | Thursday, January 12, 2023

You Have a Prayer Partner

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning's which cannot be uttered. Romans 8:26 NKJV

Tell me, has there ever been a time when you faced a difficult situation and didn't know what to pray for or how to pray? Have you ever had more tears than words? Perhaps you had more questions than scriptures. Have you ever gone through something so heart-wrenching that you just pleaded with God, "I don't know where to start or what to say. Please help me!"

Today's passage of scripture reminds us that we have a prayer partner who helps us in our time of weakness, whether physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. No matter the weakness, we don't have to face it alone. There is not one situation we could experience whereby the Holy Spirit is not making Himself available to assist us. Paul is making the point that we all get weak at some point, which is why we need to pray.

The term "helps" appears in today's scripture and the New Testament. Someone is carrying a considerable weight, and another person comes alongside to take the other end of the load and share the burden with him. The word "help" is also used in Luke 10:40, when Jesus visits Mary and Martha. Mary sat at Jesus' feet, but Martha was preoccupied with her preparations. "Lord, do You not care that my sister has abandoned me to do all the serving?" she exclaimed. Then tell her to help me." She wanted her sister to share the responsibility of dinner preparation and serving.

The term emphasizes that the Holy Spirit does not do everything while we do nothing. Instead, we are to continue praying and, if necessary, working or obeying or doing whatever the Bible instructs us to do in our situation. But the Spirit urges us when we pray, "Let Me hold the other end. Allow me to assist you by lifting your load and bringing it before the seat of the Father. When you don't know what to pray for, I do." So, the Spirit assists us by praying for us in our times of need. What a source of inspiration!

Have you ever driven by a car accident or had someone share unfathomable news with you? Many times, you may not know how to begin praying for these situations. According to this scripture, it's unclear "what" kind of prayers we should offer. Our understanding of the situation we're praying for is limited; we are unaware of critical factors. When we're on our own, it's impossible to get the whole picture. We lack the expertise to handle every conceivable aspect of this circumstance, together with all the difficulties and obstacles it may provide. However, the Holy Spirit knows what is necessary.

Lastly, "The Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings that are too deep for words," the Bible concludes. A groan is an unspoken expression of distress or agony. When the groanings God causes in our hearts are inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit, the ultimate aim of the Kingdom is realized. God is praised because the Father listens to and carries out the requests of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, who is everywhere and knows everything, can intercede on our behalf for things our human intellect cannot perceive.

Reflect

Have you yielded to the Holy Spirit in your heart so that He can help you in your prayer life? Do you know what it means to pray in the Spirit or tongues? If not, contact us at [**wecare@linkedupnorth.com**](mailto:wecare@linkedupnorth.com), and we can assist you.

Day 5 | Friday, January 13, 2023

Praying in Harmony with God's Will

Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8:27 NKJV

If God already hears our prayers, why do we need a mediator? For the simple reason that we do not know how to pray "as we ought" (v. 26)! Do you, for instance, know the true yearning of your soul? You might agree that there is a hidden need in your heart that you are not even conscious of right now, even if you think you know what it is. So, the Holy Spirit thoroughly investigates your mind and soul to gather the information He needs to intercede on your behalf in prayer. He searches for clues you would not think to seek and, therefore, would not be able to find on your own. And "...knows what the mind of the Spirit is..." (He who searches the heart knows). (v. 27).

The Greek term for "thought" in this passage refers to an individual's way of thinking. Because He is searching and probing your mind, the Holy Spirit is aware of the thoughts that pass through it. He is looking for where God's will is buried within your innermost thoughts. Whatever God has placed in your heart as a dream or desire, the Holy Spirit is looking for you to fulfill them. And when He does, He begins to pray about them in accordance with God's desire since He knows they were mapped out in advance for you on the inside.

Even if you have some background knowledge on the subject, you cannot possibly know everything there is to know about those strategies at once. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, probes and explores your mind and soul and is equipped to intervene effectively on your behalf in light of whatever He discovers there. You can now comprehend the significance of the Holy Spirit's

participation in your supplications. He alone can perform this intercession; hence He must be in charge of it.

It appears that the Holy Spirit corrects our petitions if they are not directed under God's will, as stated in the final sentence of Romans 8:27. Our inability to discern God's sovereign will (in the sense of His decree) until after the fact is a significant limitation on our prayer life. Because His moral intent is clearly stated in the Bible, we can have confidence in ourselves. Praying for things not in line with the Bible is a sin. You do not have to consult God on whether to steal to make ends meet, whether or not to have sexual relations outside of marriage, or whether or not to marry an unbeliever. All the time, they are completely incorrect.

Because God investigates and knows every heart, we should pray from the heart. Spiritual-sounding prayers may impress others, but they do not please God. Pour out your heart to Him completely. But you could think, "What if my prayers are not aligned with God's will?" However, there is a mystery here that defies our explanation. Let's look at some biblical examples:

- 1) Both of Samson's parents advised him against wedlock with a Philistine. Samson's enemies were unaware that God planned to exploit his sinful motivations to punish the Philistines (Judges 14:1-4). Jeremiah was on the right track in asking God to protect His people from the Babylonians so long as they praised God's name. However, it was God's perfect will to punish them (Jer. 14:19-15:2). Or
- 2) Satan pleaded for permission to separate the wheat from the chaff by persuading Peter to deny Christ. In response to hearing such a demand, I would have prayed that Peter would be protected from sin. But Jesus, who had perfect knowledge of God's will, did not pray that Peter would not transgress; instead, he prayed that his faith would not completely falter and that, once restored, he would strengthen his brethren (Luke 22:31-32).

As far as we can tell, Paul is saying that we should make every effort to pray according to God's will, but that if our petitions do not match God's predetermined plan, the Holy Spirit will adjust our supplications to conform to God's ultimate purpose. So even if it appears like God is not listening to us, rest assured that whatever you are praying for will be granted in God's perfect timing.

Reflect

Understand that you may not know how to pray as you should, but God has established prayer as a method for us to collaborate with Him in carrying out His sovereign will. He comforts us with the knowledge that the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us, compassionately receives our petitions and guides them according to God's desire before His throne.

Prayer

Father, I repent of all the times I chose not to pray because I did not have the words, nor did I know for what to pray. Thank You for reminding me that the Holy Spirit helps me to pray in agreement with Your Will. I will persevere in prayer so that Your Will can be carried out in my life and the lives of others. In Jesus' name, I pray.

Day 6 | Saturday, January 14, 2023

Don't Move!

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. James 1:6-7 NKJV

When faced with a difficult issue, it is no secret that the devil will try to shake you off your faith. However, at this critical juncture, when he is exerting maximum effort, you must be conscious that you are at a fork in the road. You must make a critical decision: You can either give up or stand up and say, "I refuse to get pushed from my stance of faith! The Bible is true, and I am not backing down!"

Do not feel ashamed if you have previously struggled to maintain your faith in the face of the enemy's pressure. If the devil has knocked you off your feet, get back up and try again. Suppose you want to experience a breakthrough in a challenging circumstance or predicament with which you have struggled for a long time. In that case, you must adopt a courageous position of faith and then stay motionless.

Yes, your response may take some time to appear. Even though your request agrees with God's Will, the answer may not always arrive immediately or without a hiccup. There is a devil that does not want you to know God's will for your life. You may also have to deal with your lack of faith. Faith is clear about what it desires. It does not sway. It is immobile. Faith is frozen in place. So, make your audacious faith declaration: "God, this is Your promise, and I want Your will for my life. I'm going to stay right here until I get it!"

James gives the believer some specific instructions: "ask with confidence and in faith." We must be so confident in the appropriateness of our request that we

pray assertively and firmly believe that we shall receive what we ask. Our faith must be unwavering. You cannot be in doubt, meaning your lips say one thing while your heart believes another. You are not asking in faith if what you speak with your mouth and what you believe in your heart disagree.

James says that if we waiver in our faith, we will not receive anything from the Lord. Have you ever prayed for something and found your prayer changing over time? Maybe you began praying for God to make you a millionaire, and the manifestation took too long as God gave you wisdom for a witty invention that would change the world. You stopped believing for millions and then began asking God to meet your basic needs.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons your prayer request has not been fulfilled. Maybe you have never put your faith in that particular need. Do you change your mind or waver in doubt about what you have asked God for every few days - or perhaps every year? Certain answers to prayer can often take years to appear. That is why it is critical to concentrate and stay committed to your faith. You must stand motionless and proclaim, "This is it!"

"Faith stands still." I recommend you say this aloud. Repeat it until the truth is firmly implanted in your heart. Moving around and vacillating in your faith all the time makes it hard for God to bless you. However, when you decide, "I believe God for this answer, and I am not changing my posture of faith about it," the answer will come. So, based on God's promises in His Word, decide what you desire and need today. Then, recite a prayer of faith and resolve not to move until you see that manifestation. No matter how long it takes, remember that faith stands still!

Day 7 | Sunday, January 15, 2023

Be Bold

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16 NKJV

When we approach the Lord in prayer, we never have to worry about being too direct, too brave, too straightforward, too honest, too loud, or even too blunt in baring our souls to Him or requesting His help. We should never be irreverent, but we should also not be ashamed to say what is on our minds. When you go to the Lord, He wants to hear exactly what you have to say! As the scripture continues, it exhorts us to "...approach boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may get mercy, and find grace to aid in time of need."

We have tremendous comfort in Christ Jesus, our Lord, because He is our Great High Priest and mediator in heaven. He is both the all-powerful God and the merciful Redeemer. He is all-knowing, but He also possesses enormous compassion and goodness. He is the eternal Son of God, who created the universe, and the loving Son of Man, who died and rose again so that we may approach the throne of grace through trust in Him.

This verse fills our hearts with joy, for the Throne of Grace is the eternal throne of the Lord of heaven and earth, whose mercy throne has forever covered our sins. By His grace, the veil of the temple, which separated man from God, is ripped in half from top to bottom, granting access to the presence of our Heavenly Father. Through Christ, we have been graciously invited to approach God's Throne of Grace in times of need.

Jesus is seated at the right side of the Father in heaven, and we are asked to approach Him confidently: "Let us therefore approach with boldness the throne of grace." We should not quiver in fear before His majestic presence. Instead, we are encouraged to approach Him and continue approaching His throne without fear or uncertainty. We are to approach Him in an unrestrained, continual, relentless, and persistent manner.

He is not a faraway deity before whom we must cower and grovel. He merits our respect, adoration, and gratitude since He is our wonderful God and eternal Creator. No living creature in heaven or on Earth can hide from His searching gaze. In His omniscience, He is aware of everything. He reads our innermost thoughts. He studies our mental motivations. Everything is exposed to His pure gaze and holy presence.

In Christ, we have been asked to confidently enter the heavenly throne room and boldly approach God's throne, so that we may gain mercy and find the grace we need to assist others in times of need. But we must never allow our familiarity with the gospel of God to weaken our appreciation for the immense privileges that flow to each of His children like a torrent. This incredible privilege is granted to EVERYONE who the blood of the Lamb has redeemed; no one is excluded.

This kind invitation has not been issued based on our merit or worthiness. This God of grace and love is also a God of righteousness and justice. He is the God whose redemptive purpose stipulated that ALL sin must be punished. And by His grace, Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself so that we may be redeemed by grace. Only through faith in Christ are we justified, absolved of sin, and clothed in the complete righteousness of Christ.

We possess this incredible right because of the merit, worthiness, greatness, and virtue of Christ's sacrificial offering of Himself on the cross for our sake. We

have no trust in ourselves. Our trust is based on what Christ has already accomplished for us. Our assurance rests on His triumphant cry: "It is completed!" We are welcomed by God, in the Beloved, across time, and throughout eternity because of the worth of God's only-begotten Son.

We are not commanded to enter the throne-room of heaven with fearful trepidation but to approach His throne of divine power and majesty with the confidence of a child approaching his beloved Father, knowing that the sacrificed Lamb of God, offered by the High Priest of God for our sin, is sufficient. We are saved by God's favor through trust in His death, burial, and resurrection. Christ, the Lamb of God and magnificent, heavenly High Priest, has thrown open the golden door to the Most Holy Place for those who believe in His name.

Reflect

Can you think of somebody who needs some assistance for healing, salvation, finances, peace, or deliverance? Be bold and willing to go to God's throne on their behalf and for your own needs.

Prayer

Father, I come boldly to You with the needs I face (or the needs of someone else). I have erroneously lacked confidence and failed to be truthful with You about these issues, but I now understand that You want me to be upfront, forthright, and direct with You about them. Today I approach You confidently, anticipating that You will battle in my defense! In Jesus' name, I pray.

PRAYER + FASTING

DEVOTIONALS

WEEK TWO

CONNECT TWENTY-ONE

Day 8 | Monday, January 16, 2023

Are You Using Your Gifts?

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 1 Peter 4:10 NLT

The Bible contains grave warnings about living in the end times. As Christ's return for His church approaches, we are cautioned to maintain clarity of thought and self-discipline. We are urged to be sober in action and vigilant in prayer. We are to have sincere love for one another, understanding that love covers a multitude of faults, and we are to extend gracious hospitality to all with whom we come in contact without grumbling.

One more caution is to use our spiritual gifts with diligence and discernment. Each gift is a sacred stewardship that Christians receive from the Lord for the edification of the saints and God's glory. Everyone has God-given gifts that they did not earn -- gifts given to them by God's grace. Whether we know it or want to agree with it, this is a truth from the Bible. These gifts are not given so that people can brag about them. Instead, they are given, released, and turned on so that people can see God. And these powerful gifts are already inside you, waiting for you to claim them and use them.

Christians are endowed with spiritual gifts to serve a particular purpose within the body of Christ. Each member receives at least one spiritual gift, and Peter encourages us to be faithful stewards of everything the Lord gives us. Our gifts vary based on the grace God bestows on each of us, and we are instructed to use them in proportion to the amount of faith we have received.

Peter explained that the spiritual gifts we get from God should result in a joyous outpouring of His grace to others. The purpose of gifts is not our enjoyment but the improvement of the body of Christ. Grace should become a conduit for God's bounty, which is gladly poured forth in service to others for His greater glory and acclaim.

If you have believed and acted like so many others, waiting for the appropriate time to use your God-given talents, you have been employing the incorrect strategy! It is time for you to realize the gifts God has placed inside you and to begin using them as God intends. You have been expecting God to do something extraordinary, but He has already done so by blessing you. You must begin releasing them immediately for the benefit of everyone around you!

Based on my personal experience and my ministry-related interactions with others, I can tell you this: Those who wait for a dream-like opportunity to apply their talents are typically disappointed. They wait forever, even though God, who gave them the gifts, has already permitted them to use them for Him. In fact, as stewards of His grace, He has directed them to manage these resources and use them to satisfy the needs of others. Even those with the lowest self-esteem are greatly gifted by the Spirit of God, albeit they are simply unaware of their presence. The Holy Spirit within you has already enabled and equipped you, so start utilizing your heavenly tools waiting to be activated. There is no need to procrastinate any longer; you have access to a wealth of heavenly resources within you, and it is time to start putting them to use!

Can you imagine the impact we could have on the local vision of Linked UP North if every person would get involved somehow? There are more than 10 Dream Teams. If every person were to serve in some capacity, most members would have to protest against serving once a month. Some say there are not any Connect Groups that interest them. I say, "Why don't you start a Connect Group based on your interest and help disciple others?"

Day 9 | Tuesday, January 17, 2023

I Won't Deny My Faith

I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Revelation 2:13 NKJV

There are myriad pressures today to persuade believers to live by the norms of this age rather than by the Word of God. Daily, opportunities arose for early Christians to deny their religion. Nevertheless, even in the face of these enormous external forces, there has always been a core group of individuals who have refused to waver in their dedication to Christ, and the same is true today. This group of believers simply refused to yield to the relentless intimidation they faced. Jesus proclaimed, "And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith...."

During the latter decades of the First Century, as persecution escalated, some Christians chose to deny Jesus and leave their faith to avoid persecution. Fear of the opinions and scorn of others, dread of persecution, and even fear of death lead to this choice. In Revelation 2:13, Jesus chose not to address these defectors. He instead lifted His voice to affirm the core of genuine believers who did not disown Him during their time of difficulty. When Jesus said, "Thou hast not denied," He effectively stated, "When you had the chance to violate your commitment and flee, you did not."

Students are constantly pressured by their peers to engage in behavior that does not honor Christ. Music, movies, television, and other forms of media glorify wickedness. The laws of the land are turning toward the perverse, and

believers are bombarded with opportunities that encourage and seemingly coerce them to deny their faith to fit in.

Not only does the gospel originate with Christ, but it is also firmly in His possession. Jesus is the Creator, Giver, and ultimate Overseer of faith; consequently, it is exceedingly valuable to Him. We are the recipients of the tremendous advantages of the gospel's truth, but Christ is the one who purchased it with His blood. What one dies for, another lives for; Christ sacrificed His blood for the truth of which we participate freely.

We must communicate the faith in its most unadulterated form, even when the spirit of our age tries to convince us to modify the message of the gospel to suit the ever-changing whims of our culture. We cannot change the faith because we did not create it.

Reflect

Being a Christian means that you are counter cultural. Provide some examples of how your life stands in stark contrast to the norms that the world promotes.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, Your Word has never changed, and neither will I. In these last days, I desire to be a part of the remnant who refuses to give in to the ill-conceived ideas of society and its ever-changing culture. I declare that Your Word sets the standard for my life, and I will remain faithful to the teachings of the Bible. In Jesus' name, I pray.

Day 10 | Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Abundant Grace

God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant.

Romans 5:20 NLT

Adam's ONE sin resulted in condemnation for all, whereas Christ's ONE act of righteousness resulted in righteousness for all via faith. As a result of being born with Adam's sin, we became sinners by association with him. In contrast, our rebirth via faith identifies us with Christ's righteousness, and as a result, we have become righteous by association with Christ. Because of Christ, God has pronounced us to be righteous. How awesome!!!

Even though we all became sinners because of the single sin of one man, we all have the opportunity to become righteous because of the single sacrifice of One Man - Jesus Christ the righteous - and anyone who believes in Him will have eternal life. "Because God so loved the world, He gave His one and only Son, so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

So WHY did God issue the Law more than two thousand years after Adam's sin? The Law was introduced so that transgression would increase. The Law was provided for fallen man to recognize his sin. The Law was God's standard of righteousness, which we were incapable of attaining, but after it was given, it revealed the extent of our horrible guilt. As a result of receiving the Law, man began to recognize his great need for a Savior.

Paul, for instance, would not have recognized covetousness as a sin if it had not been stated in the Law. Without understanding God's standard, we could not compare ourselves to God's flawless holiness standard. The more we identify

our faults and weaknesses, the more the Law is performing its planned duty, which is to cause each of us to recognize that we are sinners so that we will cry out to Christ for salvation, knowing that He paid the price for our sin - which is DEATH.

But when sin increased (through the giving of the Law), grace increased exponentially more (through faith in the sacrifice of Christ). Once we acknowledge that we are sinners, we begin to comprehend the awe-inspiring love of God, the forgiveness of sins, and His abundant grace, which are ours through trust in the atoning death and glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Once sin is exposed in our lives, God's grace and the redemption we get through faith become more valuable. When we recognize the magnitude of our sin, God's grace and unmerited favor become abundantly apparent. But His grace continues to be bestowed onto a race of sinners. Grace upon grace is bestowed upon everyone who, through faith in Christ's sacrifice on Calvary, is not only pardoned of their sins but also declared righteous before a holy God. Glory to His holy name!

Reflection

God does not want you to live a sin-conscious life. Instead, He wants you to dwell on the finished work of the cross and the grace made available to you. How is abundant grace working in your life?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, the more I recognize how often I miss the mark, the more I understand the incredible grace being poured on me and all humanity. Thank You for Your amazing grace that has been bestowed on me - and on all who have trusted Christ for salvation, for the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting. Thank You in Jesus' name.

Day 11 | Thursday, January 19, 2023

Let the Spirit Lead You

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Romans 8:14 NKJV

The eighth chapter of Romans begins without judgment and ends in glory. In this precious passage, we are slowly brought into a greater knowledge of the marvelous ministry of the Holy Spirit that occurs in the life of a believer.

First and foremost, we rejoice that He has delivered us from the Old Testament Law and the inner flesh. Next, we discover that the work of the Spirit in our lives is at odds with our old, carnal, fleshly nature, forcing the believer to choose between walking after the Spirit or the flesh—a choice that we all must make in our Christian lives.

All believers are God's children (teknon), having been born from above into God's family, and will one day be molded to the likeness and image of the Lord Jesus Christ. We develop in grace and understanding of the Lord Jesus as we mature in the Spirit. As we grow in grace and learn the teachings the Spirit wishes to teach us, we grow into adulthood and develop into sons (huis) of God: "For as many as are guided by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (huis) of God."

However, as a child of God, you need to know your place and learn to walk in it, which is behind the Holy Spirit. For the extraordinary outcomes God intends for you, you will have to overcome every obstacle your flesh throws in your way.

There is no way to avoid it if you are serious about living a supernatural, Spirit-led life. Your flesh is something you must conquer! Mortifying, or otherwise

subduing, the flesh is making space for the Holy Spirit to rule in one's life. Being a Christian is not easy, but it is the only way to truly bear fruit.

In Christianity, immature believers and those new to the faith are still considered children. They can choose to be led by the Holy Spirit or not. Some may choose to be led by their fleshly nature and walk through much of their Christian life in the flesh, but all children of God who have developed in the faith will have chosen to be led by the Spirit of God at some point: "And those who are led by the Spirit of God are called SONS of God."

Unbelievers choose to believe in Christ, and by God's mercy, those who believe in Him become children of God. Then they must mature in their faith. All believers are God's offspring and those who the Spirit of God leads grow in their faith and become God's sons.

As we pursue God's plan, we must heed natural counsel. Still, we must never forget that the guiding of the Holy Spirit is essential in producing supernatural fruit and achieving a heavenly conclusion.

Reflection

Have you ever been led by the Holy Spirit to perform something that seemed contradictory to your rational mind? If so, when was it? Which path did your reaction take? After doing as He commanded, what did you find to be the outcome?

Prayer

Dear Father, Your salvation plan, by grace through faith, is fantastic. Your ongoing sanctification plan, by grace through faith, as we submit to the Holy Spirit, is amazing. Help me to constantly be willing to submit to Your Holy Spirit and be led by You, maturing in faith to Your praise and glory. I pray in Jesus' name.

Day 12 | Friday, January 20, 2023

Faith Makes the Impossible Possible

Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Mark 9:23 NKJV

By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus of Nazareth went about doing good, curing every disease, and freeing everyone under the devil's control. His goal was not merely a "quick-fix" physical remedy for the moment but a "long-term" spiritual healing with eternal ramifications. The cure of the boy tormented by demons is a remarkable illustration of when Jesus was contacted by those desiring healing, and he also made sure to address the "faith" issue.

The Lord Jesus had just been transfigured in front of three awestruck disciples on a mountaintop. Then He descended to a valley where a distraught father had unsuccessfully sought treatment for his child tormented by demons. These three individuals had witnessed the celestial realm but returned to the harsh reality of a groaning universe, life's seemingly endless troubles, and their inadequate comprehension, which devastated their spirits.

A distressed father requested Jesus to heal his son. All Christ's followers had been granted the power and authority to heal the ill and cast out devils, but when they attempted to treat this man's kid, they were utterly unsuccessful. In their hearts, they rejected God's capacity to cure and weakened this man's faith, causing him to doubt Christ's healing power.

Christ descended from the glory of the transfiguration to the desperation of a failed healing and the wavering confidence of His chosen disciples. As Jesus approached, the saddened man rapidly recounted everything that had

transpired. The man emerged from the crowd and approached Him: "Teacher, I have brought my kid to you," he implored. It is his spirit that prevents him from speaking. Wherever it seizes him, he has spasms, falls to the ground, foams at the lips, clenches his teeth, and becomes rigid. So, I requested Your followers to expel it, but they were unable to."

What a sight! "But if You can do anything, have mercy on us and help us," pleaded the father in a heartbreaking plea. The same men who were to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and who were empowered to do mighty miracles in the name of Christ and preach the gospel of the kingdom were unable to cast out this dumb spirit, and so their Master rebuked them severely for their lack of faith.

But Christ's sympathetic heart instantly turned to the man and his silent son, and Jesus gently picked up on the man's shaky confidence and cautious prayer: "If You can?" "Whoever believes, ALL things are possible" was His mild reprimand.

Christ's capacity to cure was not an issue, as He created all things, and all things are held together by Him. The man's faith in CHRIST had been badly compromised. His faith was what Jesus needed to repair. By God's grace, however, he was able to cry out, "LORD, I believe; help my unbelief," and as a result, his kid was healed, and his faith grew.

Whoever is ready and willing to trust Him in all circumstances, surrender to His plan, and not allow mountainous issues or seemingly impossible situations to diminish their faith in God's abilities will experience wonderful things in their lives.

Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and His capacity to heal the brokenhearted, cast out demons, set captives free, make the lame walk, the deaf

Day 13 | Saturday, January 21, 2023

The Faith Fight is Good

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called, and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12 NKJV

Many people erroneously believe that walking by faith entails arriving at God's plan for their lives without obstacles or difficulties. In contrast, First Timothy 6:12 teaches the exact opposite. The apostle Paul writes in that verse, "Fight the good fight of faith." According to this scripture, the path of faith frequently demands a struggle to reach its conclusion.

Being the leader of a Christian community in the first century under Roman rule was not easy. Paul's letter to his "son in the faith," Timothy, was filled with personal encouragement, many warnings, and wise instruction. Paul encouraged Timothy on how to deal with a wide variety of theological and practical issues that Timothy was likely to face as he shepherded the little flock of believers on their spiritual journey through life.

Paul defines the Christian life as a "good fight" even though it is a difficult struggle rife with dangerous pitfalls. "Battle the good fight of faith," he encouraged Timothy, "and seize the eternal life to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

It is not a battle against God but a partnership with Him against our mutual foe. It is a spiritual war in which we stand firm in the truth of God's Word and fight against the world, the flesh, the devil, and our ego. Fighting the good battle of faith is not so much aggressive combat against a physical adversary as it is rising

to the challenges of our Christian life or firmly seizing the eternal life that is ours through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Each enemy is destructive to the soul and detrimental to our spiritual development; therefore, each must be resisted with courage and resolve. Christ's victory on the cross has already won the war, and we are to face all of life's obstacles by retaining unwavering faith in Him—relying on His sufficiency to see us through.

We are to fight the good battle of faith by seizing every chance, believing in His all-sufficient grace to carry us through by faith, rather than wilting in the face of a problem's enormity or giving in to temptation.

When we fight the good fight of faith, we trust God in all circumstances, thereby seizing eternal life. Eternal life is not just about surviving eternally in the next life but also about having a victorious life in this life. It is about growing in grace and understanding of the Lord Jesus and creating a precious intimacy with Him as we firmly abide in His love.

Timothy had previously demonstrated that he was a soldier for Christ. Paul had voluntarily enlisted him in the army of God, but this Christian youth had also answered the call on his life, much like Isaiah, who said, "Here am I; send me." This passage tells us that the Lord called and selected Timothy to carry out this crucial ministry. It finishes by recalling Timothy's profession of faith in the presence of numerous witnesses.

Timothy appears to have been a modest, unassuming young man, but he was steadfast in the faith because he gave a courageous and beautiful testimony in front of many witnesses. And Paul wanted to remind Timothy that the cause of Christ was worth fighting for and that his young companion and co-laborer in the gospel needed to press on toward the prize of the high calling he had in

Christ Jesus. Each of us must realize that we must persevere until the very end so that, along with Paul and Timothy, we may seize the eternal life that Christ Jesus desires for each of His children.

Like Paul and the other disciples, Timothy followed the same route as Jesus. He walked the route of the Cross. Christ traveled the same path before us, and He patiently endured the Cross, loathed the disgrace, and humbly submitted to His Heavenly Father's plan. And like Him, our lives are to be a testimony to His faithfulness, for as we run the race set before us with patient endurance and a determination to do all for the glory of God, we will also fight the good fight of faith and seize the eternal life to which we have all been called; so that, along with Timothy and a great cloud of witnesses, we may also make a good confession before many witnesses.

Reflect

How long have you been fighting the good fight of faith? What do you have to lose if you decide to stop trying? God implores you to stand up and fight, devoting your concentrated efforts to defending your beliefs. Fight in a manner that is honorable, admirable, and deserving of the upcoming prize. Continue to fight until you can proclaim, "The battle is over, and I have won!"

Prayer

Dear Father, I know that You understand my situation. I am not alone! The Holy Spirit empowers me to overcome any obstacle to Your plan. Today, I yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to fill me with His power that fights every opposing force and endures strong to the end so I can stay in this struggle until I win. In Jesus' name, I pray.

PRAYER + FASTING

DEVOTIONALS

WEEK THREE

CONNECT TWENTY-ONE

Day 14 | Sunday, January 22, 2023

Can Your Faith Stand?

That your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2:5 NKJV

Human nature is to trust oneself, but Paul was humbled by the majesty of God and immediately realized that the worldly wisdom so esteemed by humankind is foolishness in God's eyes. Compared to the all-knowing power of our holy and just God, our physical talents, human wisdom, and cerebral capacities are of no consequence.

So, when Paul first arrived in Corinth to preach the Word, he did not dazzle or astound them with his eloquence or superior oratory. Paul's persuasive words did not convince them. But, driven by the Holy Spirit, he resolved to share nothing other than the gospel of Jesus Christ, who was killed for their sins and risen to eternal life for all who believe.

Paul, who was so accomplished in every facet of human wisdom and understanding, did not rely on his academic prowess and oratorical brilliance to emphasize the futility of worldly wisdom. Paul approached them in a state of weakness, trembling, and terror.

The Lord Jesus renounced His heavenly splendor to express only what He heard from His Father. In the same way, Paul abandoned his human accomplishments and oratory talents to speak only what he received from Christ's indwelling Spirit.

He sought to demonstrate that there is godly wisdom that comes from above and that God's servants should only express those things that come from Him—

secret wisdom that is unavailable to the world and heavenly truths that are only revealed to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul was concerned that these Corinthian Christians, and those who would follow them in the faith, would not be persuaded to base their faith on the smooth-sounding, seductive words of worldly knowledge or the eloquent rhetoric of some great orator—as was the custom in those days.

The clear message of the gospel of Christ was basic and direct so that the confidence of these Christians and those who would follow them would not be based on man's wisdom but on God's power.

Paul was aware that the world viewed the wisdom of God as foolishness, but that did not prevent him from retaining his trust in the power and wisdom of God and his ready submission to the Lord's authority as he preached the simple gospel message.

Paul's message may have been unimpressive from a human standpoint. Still, the message of the gospel is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes, and Jesus Himself promised that if He were exalted, the gospel of God would be propagated, and the Holy Spirit would draw all men to the Lord Jesus.

The salvation of another person's soul is not contingent upon us or the stunning words we employ. Simply, we are tasked with proclaiming the Word and the magnificent gospel of Christ in all its reality. It is not our duty to "rescue" another individual. The responsibility for their salvation rests with the Holy Spirit's work of conviction in their life. However, we who God's grace has rescued through faith in Christ have a responsibility to communicate the good news with others—as guided by the Holy Spirit—so that their faith, as well as ours, rests only on God's power.

Day 15 | Monday, January 23, 2023

This is Just the Way I Am

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 1 Corinthians 15:10 NKJV

Do you know an exceptionally critical person? They consistently fabricate something unpleasant to say, regardless of the circumstances. Unaware of their negativity, they live with little happiness and tranquility, wandering aimlessly through life with a "glass half-empty" mindset.

What is the reason for this pessimism? Why can't negative individuals see beyond specks of imperfection and emphasize the positive aspects of existence?

Typically, this defeatist attitude stems from a negative self-image. People who are overly critical and pessimistic will frequently project their bad traits and identical sentiments about themselves onto others. Unfortunately, this mentality of inadequacy permeates their spiritual life, impeding the development of good connections with God by causing people to perceive Him falsely.

Paul sets the standard for self-image in 1 Corinthians when he humbly claims, "I am the least of the apostles and do not deserve the title of apostle because I persecuted God's church. By the grace of God, though, I am how I am" (15:9-10). Paul recognizes that he is a sinner on the one hand, yet simultaneously realizes that God's grace makes him a new creation—forgiven and conforming with the image of Christ.

What are the characteristics of a healthy sense of self? A person with a positive self-image is aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities is open and honest, and can confidently say, "I love you." They can express their views without fear of criticism or retribution. Most importantly, they accept themselves, their scars, blemishes, and all because God initially accepted them (1 John 4:19).

Conversely, someone with a poor self-image lacks trust in themselves or others, questions their ability, suffers from a "persecution complex" (e.g., "Everyone is after me! "), is afraid to be vulnerable, and always hides their weaknesses behind a "mask." Such a person typically believes that God assesses their worth based on how good they are which results in a "workaholic" attitude.

Now that we know the various external manifestations of self-image, both negative and positive. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having an unhealthy perspective of ourselves?

Sin is the first item on the list. Frequently, sin causes us to slip into a "guilt trap." We examine our weaknesses and ask, "How can God assist me with this sin throughout my life?" Guilt initiates a self-deterioration process that will gradually deteriorate the mind over the long haul.

The "over-achievement trap" is an additional cause of a poor self-image. This individual believes he must prove his worth to others and God by utilizing works. He feels that to be worthy to God; he must achieve something "remarkable." When and if he accomplishes this milestone, he continually raises the bar till he eventually burns out.

Our hesitation in accepting constructive criticism impedes our mobility toward a pleasant sense of self. A man with a divine view of himself chooses whether he desires God's approval or the world's. From there, he selects to live for the Lord

and settles the matter. As long as we live, someone will always criticize us. We cannot be everything to everyone (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Lastly, one of the most detrimental reasons for low self-esteem is a wrong interpretation of scripture. In Philippians 2, Paul exhorts believers to "die to self." This does not mean we should no longer value or have worth inside ourselves. This scripture text is frequently misinterpreted, making some Christians consider themselves as having no value.

Philippians 2 simply instructs us to consider ourselves from God's perspective. Paul urges Christians not to use others as stepping stones for their advantage but simultaneously attempt to demonstrate Christ's humility. This is one instance of how the incorrect interpretation of scripture might result in a low self-image.

So how do we establish a positive self-image, abandon negative self-perceptions, and rid ourselves of the excess baggage that burdens us?

Overcoming a poor self-image requires the following:

- **Salvation:** Begin by accepting Jesus' forgiveness and the finished work of the cross. Without it, we will never see ourselves accurately because, from an eternal perspective, we have nothing apart from Christ.
- **Saturating yourself with scripture:** The more you study God's Word, the more it will permeate your mind, and the more you will fill your thoughts with God's perspective on that objective. You are deserving of unconditional love, forgiveness, and acceptance.
- **Obtaining pardon:** Ask the Lord for forgiveness for specific transgressions you have kept within your heart (John 3:16).
- **To stop bargaining with God:** Do not try to trade good deeds for God's favor or approval. You can do nothing to make Him love you more or less than He already does, regardless of your actions. His love for you is already

flawless; He cannot love you any more than He already does (Galatians 3:13-14).

- **Extending yourself:** The happiest guy goes with his heart wide open. Permit others to enter your life; share your thoughts and emotions with those surrounding you (Proverbs 20:7).
- **Not dwelling on the past:** Concentrate on what God is doing in your life now rather than yesterday's shortcomings. Be in the current moment, and God should direct your steps into the future (Isaiah 65:17). Until you build a positive self-image, you will never realize the good plans the Lord has for your life.

Reflect

Take some time to think about who you are in Christ. Find two supporting scriptures and write them down. Make a point to meditate on these throughout the week.

Prayer

Lord God, help me see myself through the lens of Your love. Let me continue to acknowledge the grace that's on my life. May I continue growing in my faith and transforming into Christ's likeness. May everything I do bring honor and credit to You. In Jesus' name, I pray.

Day 16 | Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Accept and Embrace Your Grace

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 1 Corinthians 3:10 NKJV

Do you ever find yourself at odds with God's grace? When you look at yourself, do you see the person God created you to be, or do you see someone else? In fact, a lot of Christians have problems with this. The grace God has bestowed upon their lives is not enough for them, and they long for the grace of someone else.

For instance, there may be a stay-at-home mom who has spent years making a pleasant environment for her family. She home-schooled her children and was able to train them up in a godly manner. Yet, she has weekly play dates with other moms who seem to be doing it all, and she begins to wonder whether her life has meaning. That college athlete was good enough to garner a full scholarship after his high school graduation, but he isn't the star of the team. He questions whether he is good enough and is never satisfied with his performance because the coaches keep comparing him to his pro-athlete brother.

A pastor leading the same local congregation week after week can easily become weary of seeing the same faces in the congregation. Soon, he begins fantasizing about life on the road, either as a teacher or an evangelist who travels to far-flung locations to spread the Good News. Conversely, an itinerant preacher or educator may long for the pastoral grace that would finally allow him to plant roots anywhere. To be happy and content, one must accept and embrace the person God created them to be.

Now imagine Paul, an apostle called by God, who was also a Jew with Roman citizenship, being called to the city of Corinth—one of the most corrupt cities at the time. It was a hotbed of immorality, wickedness, and sexual perversion. Like many of us, he could have shrunk back from his calling or wished he could be like some other apostle or be in another place. He could have been envious of the grace on somebody else's life.

Like many of us, Paul had difficulty accepting God's grace. But he reached a point where he stopped resisting God's anointing on his life and instead welcomed it with open arms. He marched into this evil city with such conviction that the grace on his life practically pushed the forces of evil aside. And because of the apostle's tenacity and resolve, the church in Corinth was born and would eventually become one of the largest churches of the first century. He would also meet Aquila and Priscilla in this city, who would become his most influential ministry associates.

Apostle Paul confronted principalities and powers, demonic manifestations, and pagan temples to establish new Christian communities in each place he visited. He accomplished this in other places, including Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, and many others. He embraced his grace. Upon the completion of each new church, the Holy Spirit would instruct him to hand the reins over to a successor.

Knowing and welcoming your grace is a source of great happiness. There comes a moment when you no longer feel frightened by or envious of someone else's grace. "This is my grace!" will flow easily from your lips." "Because of their grace, no one else can do what you or I do, and we don't have to compete."

Praise God that everyone is not the same. The talents and skills we each possess are invaluable. You are a vital part of the Body of Christ, whether you serve as a

Day 17 | Wednesday, January 25, 2023

Diligent Seekers

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6 NKJV

Much of the New Testament epistles are incorrectly believed to be written to unbelievers when they are written to Christians. Hebrews is an example of a biblical book that instructs mature Christians on how to live by faith—how to live a God-pleasing life. While the first, most evident step in pleasing God is being rescued by faith in Christ's redemptive work, it is the continual, active faith of a believer that pleases God in the daily practice of life.

Only believers are acceptable to God. We please God by being justified (initial salvation) and living a holy life (ongoing salvation). We can ONLY please God by the imputed righteousness of Christ, for "without faith, it is impossible to please Him." However, after we have been rescued, we must please God by living by faith. Once we have trusted in Him, we are instructed to believe that He rewards those who seek Him. Having been rescued via justification by faith, believers must continue to trust Him by believing His Word, living by faith, and seeking His face daily with diligence.

As stated in the Bible, once we have trusted in God's rescuing mercy through faith in Christ, we must also believe that "He rewards those who seek Him." When a sinner believes, there is rejoicing in heaven, but we genuinely please God when we LIVE by faith. We delight Him when we are not affected by the difficult conditions of life. To please our Heavenly Father, we must LIVE by faith, not by sight.

Those who begin their Christian walk by faith frequently abandon their reliance on the reality of scripture. They lose focus on Jesus and start to mistrust God's Word. They often become negligent in pursuing God, and some even abandon their first love. Some individuals resort to carnality and indulge in fleshly living. Some attempt to appease God by performing good deeds and worldly works. Others adopt legalism and seek God's approval by performing acts of the law.

Christians who attempt to live in their strength or rely on their good acts do not please the Lord because they do not rely on His Word; faith is the evidence of things that are NOT seen. It is faith in God's Word that pleases God. We please Him when we are saved, but we must continue to please Him throughout our Christian lives by believing His promises are true and that He rewards those who seek Him—via faith.

Although our union with God is unbreakable once we are adopted into His family, our fellowship with Him can be severed if we abandon a life of faith in God and dependence on His Word in favor of self-reliance. God is aware that without Christ's leadership and guidance, we will ultimately fail, for He stated, "Without Me, you can do nothing." But all too often, we exhaust every possible option before admitting our incapacity and seeking His assistance.

Too frequently, we forget that those who faithfully seek God are blessed with sufficient grace to overcome life's difficulties. Those who actively pursue Him bear the lovely fruit of the Spirit, maturing in grace and faith, pleasing our Heavenly Father. When we rest in His strength, then we believe it is sufficient. However, how often do we forego the total peace He promises because we put ourselves before our Savior or live according to what we see instead of what God says?

The more a Christian trusts God's Word, believes everything He says, has faith in His promises and believes He is a rewarder of those who earnestly seek to

know Him, the more they will grow in grace, mature in the faith, walk in Spirit and truth, and please Him. For those who have much, more will be given.

As we actively seek Him and rely on His Word, let us resolve to conduct our Christian lives pleasingly to the Lord. Let us keep our confidence in God and never question the authenticity of the gospel message, even when His truth is obscured from our view, or the reality of His Word does not correspond with our life experiences,... "because without faith it is impossible to satisfy Him."

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, for it is impossible to please Him apart from saving faith and sanctifying faith. But let us never forget that God stated, "I AM everything you require, and I AM a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Me."

Reflect

In what areas of your life do you lack diligence, and what are you willing to undertake to improve these areas? Be willing to do whatever the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

Prayer

Father in heaven, I know how quickly and readily I may shift from trusting You to doubting Your Word when things do not go as planned. I pray that, like Hebrews' men and women of faith, my faith in You will not waver. Help me to seek You earnestly each day, for I know that I can please You only if Christ lives in and through me through faith. In Jesus' name, I pray.

Day 18 | Thursday, January 26, 2023

You Have a Teacher

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

John 14:26 NKJV

Christ's departure from the earth was rapidly nearing. Jesus had previously told His followers that He would ask the Father to send them another Counselor, a Helper like himself - the Spirit of truth, who would advocate for them before the Father. He stated that the unsaved would be unable to receive Him because they do not know about Him, but that the Spirit of Whom He spoke would remain with them forever and that in the future, this Holy Spirit of truth would take up residence within them and be there forever.

Here, the Lord Jesus elaborates on this point by assuring them that the Holy Spirit will be their great Teacher and teach them everything, as well as bring to mind all that Christ himself had taught His devoted disciples so that they, in turn, may teach others. The Holy Spirit has assumed the Teacher position, just as Jesus did for the disciples. The Holy Spirit is now our instructor, and we are His students. He is our Master Instructor while we are His apprentices. Moreover, the total scope of the Holy Spirit's teaching is profound and diverse. He shows us how to live our Christian lives with wonderfully artistic skill. As Christians, we are instructed by the Teacher who resides within us as we spend time in the Bible, prayer or any of our many life experiences. If we are listening, the Holy Spirit is continuously instructing us. We must listen, follow, assimilate, and apply the principles He teaches us.

This beautiful person about whom Christ spoke is none other than the Third Person of the Triune Nature of God, who is in every way equal to the Father and

the Son, and who is worshipped and praised eternally alongside the Father and the Son. This magnificent person about whom Christ spoke presently resides within my body and yours and the hearts of all who have placed their faith in Christ as their Savior.

We have constant access to the Holy Spirit because He is with us wherever we go and has vowed to never leave or abandon us. Each of us has the almighty, omniscient, everlasting, wonderful, and gentle Holy Spirit abiding in our hearts as our Advocate and Counselor, our Teacher and Instructor, our Comforter, and our ever-present Help in times of trouble.

Never forget that the Holy Spirit is within you and is facing your current challenges alongside you. In the name of Jesus, to Whom all power and authority in heaven and on earth have been delegated, He will never leave you to face adversity alone.

Therefore, brace your mind and trust Him today. He will take care of all your tomorrows.

Reflect

Have you experienced the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit? Share your experience(s) with another believer.

Heavenly Father, I admit that I have relied on my understanding too often and for far too long. Your precious Gift, the Holy Spirit of God, dwells inside me, teaching me the truth of Your Word and directing my steps. Thank You that my body has become a temple where He now resides eternally. Open my mind to the immeasurable riches of Your grace toward me as I always remember that my Teacher, Your Holy Spirit, lives within me. Thank You, in the name of Jesus, I pray.

Day 19 | Friday, January 27, 2023

Overflowing Grace

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8 NKJV

Christians are not subject to the Law but to grace. God has saved us by His grace and given us all things to enjoy richly because of His overabundant kindness, so we are encouraged to be generous in our gifts and giving not because it is mandated by law or because a certain percentage of our income must be set aside to satisfy the demands of a church body or the proclamations of a denomination, but because it pleases Him.

As sinners saved by grace, we understand that God's grace has been lavishly poured on all who trust in His name, for though we were dead in our trespasses and sins with no hope in the world, God sent His Son to die for us on the Cross and gave us a gift at enormous cost to Himself: a free gift of grace to all who believe; a gift with eternal consequences.

In context, this verse explains a God-given truth found throughout His Word. According to Proverbs, a giving person will succeed, and whoever refreshes others will also be refreshed, whereas Job tells us that those who sow discord and cultivate evil will reap the same. And in Galatians, Paul writes the famous phrase, "A person will reap what he sows." In these concluding comments to the church in Corinth, Paul once more contrasts the wisdom of charity with the foolishness of selfishness.

We are not to cultivate an unbiblical "prosperity gospel" mentality but to give judiciously. We ought to offer gladly and without reluctance; it is preferable not to give at all than to have bitterness in our gifts. Giving should also be a personal decision made in the stillness of our hearts rather than a response to the expectations of others. It should be a deliberate decision and not an action performed for the praise of men, but rather to glorify our Father in heaven, for God loves a cheerful giver: "And He is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in every way, you will always have everything you need to excel in every good work."

Reflect

Think about your attitude towards giving. Are you cheerful or reluctant? If you are not prompt to do it, hilarious giver, repent. Decide to take this positive attitude toward future giving.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, because of my love for You, grant me a giving heart that gives gladly and willingly to others. I could never be as generous as you but let me try as I am presented with opportunities to sow and be a cheerful giver. Thank You for the free gift of salvation and everything that You have abundantly and freely poured upon me by Your grace. In Jesus' name, I pray.

Day 20 | Saturday, January 28, 2023

Abide and Ask

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. John 15:7 NKJV

A few short verses call and challenge the believer to abide in Christ, in the Vine, in His love, and in Him. In the Old Testament, the vine was a significant symbol, and Isaiah referred to Israel as "the finest vine." God chose Israel to be a productive vine, and they were expected to produce wonderful fruit for His glory. However, Israel produced wild grapes that had to be destroyed.

Eons later, we are introduced to the Lord Jesus Christ, the exact brilliance of God's glory, and the real Vine of God. Christ's life is the complete fulfillment of these Old Testament types in which God the Father continues to be the heavenly Vinedresser, tending to the genuine Vine to produce righteousness through Him. Indeed, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, against which there is no law. This fruit is only developed as we abide in Christ and He in us.

As members of Christ's body, our mission is to carry out His work on Earth and produce the fruit of righteousness. And as branches on the genuine Vine, we are also one with Christ, and we are repeatedly reminded that it is not by our efforts that we produce the fruit of righteousness but because we remain in HIM, and His Word abides in us. Christ merely spoke what He had heard from the Father. Christ only did those things that He heard from the Father, and in every instance, Christ's prayer was translated into the Father's wish, for He prayed, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

We were also assured that provided we remain in Christ and His words remain in us, we can ask for anything, and it will be granted. Not only will we produce the fruit of righteousness, but our perseverance is intimately tied to the virtuous man's prayer and maintaining close fellowship with the Lord. But the words of our mouths, the thoughts of our minds, the meditation of our hearts, and the prayers that we present to the Lord should be centered on Him and reflect His will and His more significant intentions.

We are not "fruitful" due to our performance, ability, or merit. God is the one who not only designs our fruitfulness but also causes us to be fruitful—as we dwell in Him and He in us—which will eventually be translated into rewards for the faithful at the judgment seat of Christ. We are to live, move, and have our being in Christ while the old, egotistical self stays nailed to the cross and the lovely mind of Christ is developed in us more and more.

The Lord empowers us to be prolific as we carry out the excellent deeds He has set for us to perform. God works in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit, and He helps us to produce exceptional fruit for His honor. But the path to fruitfulness in the Christian life is abiding in Christ, abiding in the Vine, abiding in His love, abiding in ME and I in you.

To abide in the genuine Vine and for Him to abide in us are the same. Only when we surrender to God and allow Him to accomplish His good work through us can we live as He did, carrying out the Father's purpose and producing much fruit for His glory. We see that we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to carry out the good deeds that God Himself predestined for us to perform.

Christ's presence in us is contingent upon our presence in Him. This personal contact and mutual relationship are contingent upon each of us dying to ourselves and living solely for Him. And when we are enabled to abide in Him and He in us, we can ask whatever we desire, and it will be granted. When our

Day 21 | Sunday, January 29, 2023

Pray for Other Believers

*Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:
17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the
spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.*

Ephesians 1:16-17 NKJV

Paul is a man who knows the value of praying for one another to the Father so that we may all grow in our knowledge of who we are in Christ and the work He has done for us. That we may all increase in grace and knowledge is Paul's constant and fervent prayer for all God's children. He prayed that we would be enlightened with a more profound knowledge of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again on the third day to give us His abundant life according to His overflowing grace bestowed upon us.

Paul exemplifies the godly principle of constant worship, unceasing supplication, and unceasing gratitude, which are God's will for His children. As the Spirit daily transforms us into the likeness of the Lord Jesus, we can give thanks for all He has done and pray for all He will do.

Unlike us, Paul does not pray for material things. He prays that we have a greater knowledge of what is already ours in Christ. Faith in Christ Jesus is a gift from God, and Paul understood the spiritual significance of appreciating that fact. So, he hopes that we will let the secrets of the Church era, which God revealed to us through the apostle Paul, shape who we are and how we live so that our lives bring glory to God.

God began revealing His splendor and power to fallen man through His creation, and He began revealing His gracious character through the sacred

scriptures, but in these final days, He has spoken to us through His Son, whom He designated heir to all things. Furthermore, we are situated in Christ and connected with Him.

God is the source of all spiritual illumination, and He is the topic of all spiritual revelation, yet the indwelling Spirit of Christ is how the Holy Scriptures are revealed to us. The eyes of our hearts are enlightened by the Holy Spirit when we gladly submit to His leading and guidance and rely on Him in all things. Paul realized that believers should continue growing in their knowledge of God, and he used the most appropriate response to any issue or need: prayer.

Reflect

Ask Holy Spirit to reveal the name of a new believer or someone who needs to grow in God. Take the time to pray for that person this week.

Prayer

Father, I pray that I may cultivate an attitude of continual praise, ceaseless prayer, and tireless thanksgiving for all You have done in my life and in the lives of all others who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior. I pray that You will continue to bless the lives of all Your children. To Your credit and glory, may we depend on You in all things, grow in grace, mature in the faith, and manifest Your love in all we say and do. In Jesus' name, I pray.

PRAYER + FASTING

PERSONAL PRAYER

CONNECT TWENTY-ONE

PRAYER TARGETS

God has put us on earth at this specific time for a reason. He says in Acts 17:26 that He determined when and where we would live. Knowing this, we can look at those around us at this specific time in history and take personal responsibility to pray.

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Pray for those in authority and those under your authority. Pray for those in your family and your circle of influence (anyone you are connected to).

Write down the names of specific people and pray for them.

MY GOVERNMENT

President _____

National Leaders _____

State Leaders _____

City Leaders _____

MY FAMILY

Spouse _____

Children _____

Parents _____

Extended Family _____

MY CHURCH

Pastors _____

Overseers _____

Dream Team Lead _____

Connect Group Leaders _____

Connect Group Members _____

MY LIFE

Employer _____

Colleagues _____

Employees _____

Teachers/Professors _____

MY FAMILY

Spouse _____

Children _____

Parents _____

Siblings _____

Extended Family _____

THOSE I INFLUENCE

Close friends

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

THOSE WHO NEED GOD

God desires everyone to know Him. He says in His Word that He would leave the ninety-nine to go after the one who does not know Him. As followers of Christ, we are called to partner with Him, praying for those who do not know Him to come to know Him.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

1. PRAY THE FATHER WOULD DRAW THEM TO JESUS

God draws people to Him. It is not something we can make happen out of our efforts, so we must be faithful in praying that the Father would draw those He's placed on our hearts to Jesus.

*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. **John 6:44***

Think about the people you know who are far from God. Let your heart be open to God and anyone He may bring to your mind. It may help to write their names in the space above as you pray for them.

PRAYER

"Father, I pray for the people around me (list specific names) that You would supernaturally draw their hearts to You. Send Your Holy Spirit to them and give them the desire to give their lives to You. Help them to recognize their longing for more in life as a spiritual thirst only You can quench. Open their ears to hear Your voice."

2. PRAY GOD WILL FREE THEIR MINDS FROM BONDAGE

The truth can be right in front of some people, and they still cannot see it because something is blocking their view of God.

*Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. **2 Corinthians 4:4***

We can pray against whatever is in their way so that they can see the light of God. We can pray that they know the truth without any obstacles or distractions interfering.

PRAYER

"Father, in the name of Jesus, I pray that all unbelievers would be able to see clearly, to recognize who You are, and to give their hearts to You. Remove all hindrances the enemy would use to distract them from Your truth. Open their eyes, Lord, that they might see Jesus."

3. PRAY THAT THEY MAY HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Many people think Christianity is just another religion. They only see God through the lens of the organization and the institution of the church. They may even feel frustrated, angry, or betrayed by people in churches they have encountered or by religious legalists and their hypocrisy. But God did not

come to build an organization. He came to have a relationship with His children.

*For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." **Romans 8:15***

God wants His beloved sons and daughters to come home. Praying for people to have personal encounters with the living God makes a huge difference.

PRAYER

"Father, I pray that people will understand how much You love them. Loose the Spirit of adoption for the people around me so that they come into a meaningful relationship with You. Stir in their hearts a longing to come home, to hear Your voice, and to see You welcoming them with open arms. Let them know You are always running to meet them and hold them close."

4. PRAY OTHER BELIEVERS WILL CROSS THEIR PATHS AND ENTER INTO POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEM

This is twofold: we can pray for other Christians to positively influence the people around them and look for opportunities to influence others positively. God's plan to reach people is worked through those who already know and love Him. Jesus asked us to pray for people to go into the world to be salt and light. He came to bring the good news of the gospel to all people, and He desires that everyone would know and love Him.

*Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." **Matthew 9:38***

As His "spiritual farmers," we should be attuned to opportunities to plant spiritual seeds in the lives of the people we encounter daily. We may have no

idea who has already been praying for them, and the culminating impact our kind word, compassionate act, or loving attitude can have to draw someone to Christ.

PRAYER

"Father, I pray for the lost around me to meet believers who will positively influence them. Lord, let my life shine so that people want to know the God I serve. Let others see my genuine love and concern for them in everything I say and do. Let me be Your hands and feet to serve them and show them how much You love them."

5. PRAY THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION ON THEM SO THEY MAY KNOW GOD BETTER

It is that "eureka" moment, that "aha!" when it finally clicks. The most critical moment to have this kind of revelation is when the lights come on spiritually. People need to see their sins, see what Jesus did on the cross, and see the hope that results from giving their life to God.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Ephesians 1:17

People need wisdom, not just knowledge, of spiritual things and insight into how spiritual realities directly impact them. We can pray for this kind of supernatural revelation that only comes from God.

PRAYER

"Father, I pray for the people around me to experience the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. I pray they genuinely understand their spiritual condition and see all that Jesus did for them through His death, burial, and resurrection. Help

them to have the information and experiences needed to come to You, so they can understand all You have for them.

PRAYER RESOURCES

CONNECT 21 DAILY DEVOTIONALS

These devotionals can help provide consistency and structure to our prayer and study time.

Scripture | Devotional | Application | Prayer | Notes

PERSONAL PRAYER JOURNAL

Use the prayer journal to write down the names of specific people and pray for them.

WECARE@LINKEDUPCHURCH.COM

*Submit your prayer requests
Share your testimony*

”

MY NEEDS

Write down the needs that you want to focus on during Connect 21.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Request Prayer

We would love to pray for your needs. We have intercessors who connect their faith with yours as we believe that God answers every prayer.

THANK YOU

Thank you for joining the Connect 21 movement. Our prayer for you during these 21 days was that God would overwhelm you with His goodness as you seek His presence, power, and provision. God is ever faithful! We can count on Him more than we can rely on ourselves. When we set aside time to pray and dedicate extra focus on Him and His Word, we can expect to experience His faithfulness.

Do you have a testimony? How did you see God move in your life during the past 21 days of prayer and fasting? Do not keep your testimony to yourself! Share how Connect 21 has impacted your life. Email info@linkedupnorth.com to submit your testimony.

Be encouraged to keep praying and developing your prayer life. Know that God is better than good, and He enjoys His time with you. You can trust Him with your prayers, fears, desires, and anything else you may struggle with.

We believe 2023 will be an amazing year for you, your family, and our church! Thanks for joining us!

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now is the time to fulfill your commitments and grow your relationship with God. We did not spend the past 21 days in prayer and fasting to go back to life as usual. Get connected at Linked UP Church—a forward-thinking and upward-moving ministry connecting people to God, family, purpose, and community.

BECOME A MEMBER

If you believe the Spirit of God is leading you to become a member of Linked UP Church, then we invite you to take your Next Steps classes to become a part of our family.



Next Steps is a series of three classes that help you grow and thrive in the life God created for you. Upon completing each class, you will become a member of Linked UP Church. Anyone from anywhere can take the classes offered in person and on demand.

NEXT STEPS 1 - Connect to God	NEXT STEPS 2 - Connect to Family
Connect to God Learn habits to develop spiritual maturity and stay passionately in love with God.	Connect to Family Learn about the purpose, mission, and vision of Linked UP North and our hope for you within the ministry.
NEXT STEPS 3 - Connect to Purpose	NEXT STEPS 4 - Connect Community
Dive into the details of your personality, discover your gifts, and see how your design reveals your purpose in life.	Connect to the opportunities available at Linked UP North and within your community to live out your purpose and serve others by using your God-given gifts.

JOIN A CONNECT GROUP



Life is better in a group. We believe God wants every person to experience abundant life here on Earth, and He designed us to find freedom and healing in relationships with others. Discover how lives are changed in Connect Groups and how you can get involved.

Connect Group Expo	<i>Sunday, January 29</i>
Winter/Spring Semester	<i>starts Sunday, February 5</i>
Summer Semester	<i>starts Sunday, June 4</i>
Fall Semester	<i>starts Sunday, September 3</i>

Scan here to join a group.



JOIN THE DREAM TEAM *(Membership Required)*



Discover your gifts and passions and join the team. The Dream Team is a group of incredible people that love God, love people, pursue excellence, choose joy, and make an eternal difference to build the body of Christ.

Scan here to see where you can serve with the Dream Team.





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