A YEAR IN THE WORD

365 Daily Readings
Through the Whole Bible



One page a day. The whole Bible in a year.

ANDREW DOMINGUEZ

TRINFINITY
Enterprises

A Year in the Word

365 Daily Readings Through the Whole Bible

Andrew Dominguez

A Year in the Word: 365 Daily Readings Through the Whole Bible

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A note before you begin. This book is written to teach the Bible and encourage faith. It shares my understanding of Scripture and is offered for study and spiritual growth. It is not counseling, medical, legal, or financial advice. If you are facing a crisis, a health problem, or a legal or money problem, please reach out to a qualified professional as well as your pastor and church family. To the fullest extent the law allows, Andrew Dominguez, Trinfinity Enterprises, and Andrew Dominguez's heirs, estate, successors, and assigns accept no liability for how this material is used.

A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

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Before You Begin

I have taught a lot of Bible studies over the years, and the question I hear more than any other is a simple one: “Where do I start?” People want to know God’s Word. They just do not know how to get into it, and they are not sure they can keep it up. This book is my answer. Read one page a day, read the passages listed at the top of that page, and in one year you will have read the whole Bible.

For a long time my Bible reading came in bursts. It only became steady when I stopped treating it like a box to check and started reading for what the text plainly says. That habit is what eventually led me to write a study on every book of the Bible and to translate the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). Work, family and everything else will always compete for that time. A simple plan, read a little every day, keeps you in the Word when life gets loud.

How Each Day Works

Most days in this book fill one page, and every day has the same parts.

- **Today’s reading.** The chapters to read that day from the One-Year Bible Reading Plan. The plan takes you through the Old Testament once, the New Testament once, and the Psalms and Proverbs once. Some days have three readings and some have one or two, because the plan is balanced by the number of verses, not the number of chapters. The full plan is in the back of this book as a checklist.
- **The key passage.** A few verses from that day’s reading, printed in full from the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB).
- **A short thought.** What the passage says, what it shows us about God, and what it means for the way we live today.
- **Think about it.** One question to carry with you through the day.
- **A prayer.** A few lines you can pray as written or use to start your own prayer.
- **Go deeper.** Where a free verse-by-verse study of that book is available, the page points you to it.

You Can Start Any Day

The days are numbered, not dated, so you can start on January 1 or on a Tuesday in August. If you miss a day, do not quit. Pick up where you left off. If you miss a week, pick up where you left off. The goal is not a perfect streak. The goal is to know God better a year from now than you do today.

You might ask, “Do I have to read all the chapters, or can I just read the page?” The page is meant to help you read the Bible, not to take its place. If you are short on time, read the key passage and the thought. But try to read the full chapters. That is where God does His work in us.

A Few Things I Believe

I state my convictions plainly in this book, and I want you to know where I stand before you start. I believe the Bible is God’s Word, true in everything it teaches. I believe Jesus Christ is God the Son, that He died for our sins, rose bodily from the grave, and is coming again. I believe He will come for His church before the seven-year tribulation, the event many call the rapture, and then return with His church to reign on the earth. When I refer to Jesus or to God, I capitalize He, Him, and His as a sign of respect.

You do not have to agree with me on every point to get something out of this book. Read the passages for yourself, test what I say against what God says, and let His Word have the last word.

> *A lamp to my foot **is** Your word, and a light to my pathway.* (Psalm 119:105)

Days 1 to 31

DAY 1

In the Beginning, God

Today's reading: Genesis 1-2; Matthew 1; Psalm 1

> *In **the** beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formlessness and emptiness, and darkness **was** over the face of **the** deep, and the Spirit of God **was** hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let **there** be light," and **there** was light.*
>
> Genesis 1:1-3 (SLB)

The Bible does not start with an argument for God. It starts with God. Before there was a sun, a planet, or a single person to ask questions, God was already there, and He spoke the universe into being. Everything else in the Bible stands on these first words.

Notice how He creates. He speaks, and it happens. No struggle, no rival, no raw material He had to borrow. The same voice that said "Let there be light" is the voice you will hear on every page of this book. That is why we read the Bible. It is not just old writing about God. It is God speaking.

Genesis 1 also tells us who we are. On the sixth day God made man and woman in His own image. You are not an accident or a cosmic leftover. You were made on purpose by a God who looked at what He had made and called it very good.

So as you start this year, start where the Bible starts. Before your plans, your worries, and your to-do list, there is God. Put Him first today, and let Him speak.

Think about it: What would change in your day if you really believed God made you on purpose?

Pray

Lord God, You made everything, and You made me. As I start this year in Your Word, open my eyes to see You, and give me a heart that listens when You speak.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 2

Where Are You?

Today's reading: Genesis 3-4; Matthew 2; Psalm 2

> *And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking about in the garden at the wind of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from before the LORD God among the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where **are** you?"*
>
> Genesis 3:8-9 (SLB)

Genesis 3 is the saddest chapter in the Bible. Adam and Eve had everything: a perfect garden, perfect work, and walks with God Himself. One command was all He gave them, and they broke it. Right away they felt shame, sewed fig leaves, and hid.

We still do the same thing. We hide behind being busy, behind excuses, behind blaming someone else. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. Nobody said, "I did it."

But look at what God does. He comes looking for them. "Where are you?" God was not asking for directions. He knew exactly where they were. He was giving Adam a chance to come out and own what he had done. That question is the first hint of grace in the Bible.

And before the chapter ends, God makes a promise. The seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15). That is the first promise of Jesus in Scripture. God also made garments of skin to cover them, which meant something had to die so they could be covered. The rest of the Bible is the story of God keeping that promise.

Think about it: Where are you hiding from God right now, and what would it take to step out?

Pray

Father, I have hidden from You more times than I can count. Thank You for coming after me. I step out today and own my sin, and I trust Jesus to cover it.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 3

Grace in a Dark World

Today's reading: Genesis 5-6; Matthew 3; Psalm 3

> *And the LORD saw that the evil of mankind **was** great on the earth, and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart **was** only evil all the day. And the LORD regretted that He had made mankind on the earth, and He was pained to His heart. And the LORD said, "I will wipe out mankind whom I created from the face of the ground, from mankind to livestock to moving things and to the flying things of the heavens; for I regret that I made them." And Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.*
>
> Genesis 6:5-8 (SLB)

By Genesis 6 the world had gone bad all the way down. God saw that "every inclination of the thoughts of his heart ***was*** only evil all the day." That is not a description of a few bad people. It is a description of the human heart left to itself. And God was grieved. Sin does not just break rules. It breaks God's heart.

Then one verse changes everything: "And Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD." That favor is grace, God's kindness given to people who do not deserve it. Noah was a righteous man, but he was not saved because he was better than everyone else. He found favor. The goodness in his life came after the grace, not before it.

In today's Matthew reading, John the Baptist tells the crowds to repent because the kingdom of heaven is near. Then Jesus comes to be baptized, and the Father speaks from heaven: "This is My Son, the beloved, in whom I was well pleased." The world is still dark, and the answer is still grace. Only now grace has a name and a face.

If you look honestly at your own heart, you will see some of Genesis 6 in it. Do not stop there. Read on to verse 8.

Think about it: Do you think of God's grace as a reward for being good, or as a gift to people who need it?

Pray

Father, my heart is not as good as I like to think. Thank You that my story does not end with my sin. I receive Your grace through Jesus, Your beloved Son.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 4

The Ark and the Door

Today's reading: Genesis 7-8; Matthew 4; Psalm 4

> *And the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen you **to be** righteous before Me in this generation.*
>
> Genesis 7:1 (SLB)

Noah's world was full of violence, and God's patience had run out. But before the rain fell, God told Noah how to build an ark, and Noah did everything God commanded. Hebrews 11:7 says he did it by faith, building a huge boat on dry ground for a flood no one had ever seen.

Notice what happens in today's reading. Genesis 7:16 tells us that once they were inside, the LORD shut the door. Noah did not have to keep the water out himself. God sealed him in.

The ark is a picture of salvation in Christ. There was one ark, with one door, and everyone inside was safe while everyone outside was lost. Jesus said, "I am the door" (John 10:9). Being saved is not about being a strong swimmer. It is about being inside.

In today's Matthew reading, Satan tempts Jesus in the wilderness, and Jesus answers every temptation with Scripture. Noah obeyed God's word and was saved. Jesus stood on God's word and won. Both readings point to the same lesson: what God says is enough.

Think about it: Are you trusting Christ to keep you safe, or are you still trying to keep the water out yourself?

Pray

Father, thank You for Jesus, the door to safety. I am inside because of Him, not because of me. Help me rest in that today.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 5

The Rainbow Promise

Today's reading: Genesis 9-10; Psalm 5

> *And God said, "This **is** the sign of the covenant which I am setting between Me and you and every living being that **is** with you, for everlasting generations: My bow I have set in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.*
>
> Genesis 9:12-13 (SLB)

After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah, his family, and every living creature. He promised never again to destroy the earth with a flood, and He set His bow in the clouds as the sign. A covenant is a binding promise. This one has no conditions on our side. God did not add any conditions for us to meet. He just promised.

Every rainbow since then has been a reminder. Genesis 9:16 says God Himself looks at the bow and remembers. That does not mean God forgets. It means He is faithful to what He said, every single time.

Genesis 10 then lists the nations that came from Noah's three sons. It is a dry chapter, but it shows something important: every people group on earth came from one family. There is one human race, made in God's image, and God has a plan for all of it.

Today's psalm (Psalm 5) is a morning prayer. David says, "***In the*** morning I set ***it*** in order for You, and I keep watch." That is a good habit for a year in the Word. Lay it out before God in the morning and watch for what He does.

Think about it: What promise of God do you need to remember today?

Pray

Faithful God, You keep every promise You make. When I see a rainbow, remind me that You do not change, and help me trust You in what I cannot see.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 6

Leaving Ur

Today's reading: Genesis 11-12; Matthew 5; Psalm 6

> *And the LORD said to Abram, "Go for yourself from your land and from your kindred and from the house of your father, to the land which I will show you. And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great; and be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who disdains you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*
>
> Genesis 12:1-3 (SLB)

God called Abram out of everything familiar: his country, his relatives, his father's house. And He did not give him a map. He said, "to the land which I will show you." Abram went, at seventy-five years old.

That is what faith looks like. It is not a feeling. It is getting up and going when God speaks, before you can see the whole road. Hebrews 11:8 says Abram went out not knowing where he was going.

Look at the promises. God would make him a great nation, bless him, make his name great, and through him bless all the families of the earth. That last line is the gospel in seed form. Galatians 3:8 says the Scripture "preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham." Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, is how the whole world gets blessed.

In today's Matthew reading, Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek. Abram left his comfort and was blessed. Jesus says the people who know they need God are the ones who are blessed. God's blessing rarely looks like what the world expects.

Think about it: Is God asking you to step out of something familiar? What is holding you back?

Pray

Lord, I want to trust You like Abram did. When You call, help me go, even when I cannot see where the road ends.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 7

Counted as Righteous

Today's reading: Genesis 13-15

> *And He brought him outside and said, "Please look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So will your seed be." And he believed in the LORD, and He counted it to him **as** righteousness.*
>
> Genesis 15:5-6 (SLB)

Abram was getting old, and he still had no son. He brought his worry straight to God, and God took him outside and said, "Please look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." That is how many descendants he would have.

Then comes one of the most important verses in the Bible. Abram believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness. Abram did not earn it. He had not been circumcised yet, the law had not been given, and he had not offered Isaac. He simply believed God's promise, and God credited righteousness to his account.

Paul builds his whole teaching on salvation on this verse in Romans 4. If Abram was made right with God by faith, so are we. Not by being good enough, but by believing what God has said about His Son.

Also notice that Abram brought God his doubt. "Lord GOD, what will You give me?" God did not scold him. He answered with a promise and a sky full of stars. It is okay to bring God your questions. Just keep listening for His answer.

Think about it: Do you think of being right with God as something you earn, or something you receive?

Pray

Father, I believe You. I cannot make myself right with You, so I trust what You have done through Jesus. Count me righteous, not because of me, but because of Him.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 8

The God Who Sees

Today's reading: Genesis 16-17; Matthew 6; Psalm 7

> *And she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You **are** a God of seeing," for she said, "Have I also here seen after Him who sees me?"*
>
> Genesis 16:13 (SLB)

Sarai got tired of waiting and gave her servant Hagar to Abram. It worked the way the world works, and it made a mess. Hagar got pregnant, the two women turned on each other, and Hagar ran away into the desert.

That is where God found her. Not in a temple, but by a spring in the wilderness. The Angel of the LORD spoke to her by name, gave her a promise for her son, and sent her back. And Hagar, a runaway slave woman from Egypt, gave God a name: "You ***are*** a God of seeing."

Some of us feel invisible. Overlooked at work, ignored at home, forgotten by people who should care. Hagar's story says God sees you. He knows your name and your situation, even when you are the one who ran off.

In Matthew 6 today, Jesus says the same thing about prayer and giving. Do it in secret, and "your Father who sees in secret will reward you." The God who saw Hagar sees the prayer you pray when no one else knows. Nothing done for Him is wasted.

Think about it: Where do you feel unseen right now? How does it help to know God sees you there?

Pray

God who sees, You know where I am and what I am carrying. Thank You for finding me in my wilderness. Help me trust that You see what no one else does.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 9

Is Anything Too Hard?

Today's reading: Genesis 18-19; Matthew 7; Psalm 8

> *Is anything **too** wonderful for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, when the time revives, and Sarah **will have** a son."*
>
> Genesis 18:14 (SLB)

Three visitors came to Abraham's tent, and one of them was the LORD. He promised that in a year Sarah would have a son. Sarah was ninety and laughed to herself behind the tent door. God heard her and asked, "Is anything ***too*** wonderful for the LORD?"

That question hangs over every impossible situation you will ever face. A barren womb, a broken marriage, a son or daughter far from God, a diagnosis, a debt. The answer is always no. Nothing is too hard for Him.

That does not mean God always does what we want, when we want. Sarah waited twenty-five years from the first promise. But He kept His word, and He was right on time.

Genesis 19 shows the other side of God's power: the judgment of Sodom. And yet even there, God pulled Lot out by the hand because He was merciful (Genesis 19:16). In Matthew 7 Jesus tells us to ask, seek, and knock, because our Father gives good things to those who ask Him. Bring Him the impossible thing today.

Think about it: What situation in your life have you quietly decided is too hard for God?

Pray

Lord, nothing is too hard for You. I bring You the thing I have stopped praying about. I trust Your power and Your timing.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 10

Only Say the Word

Today's reading: Genesis 20-21; Matthew 8

> *And the centurion, answering, said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof; but only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under myself; and I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does* ***it****." And Jesus, having heard, marveled and said to those following, "Truly I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.*
>
> Matthew 8:8-10 (SLB)

A Roman centurion came to Jesus because his servant was paralyzed and suffering. Jesus offered to come to his house. The soldier said there was no need. He understood authority. When he gave an order, it got done. He knew Jesus' word carried that kind of authority over sickness. "Only speak a word."

Jesus was amazed. The Gospels only tell us twice that Jesus marveled, once at this man's faith and once at the unbelief in His hometown (Mark 6:6). Here was a Gentile soldier who trusted Jesus more than the religious people did.

In Genesis 21 today, Isaac is finally born. God said He would do it, and He did, "at the appointed time which God had spoken ***of*** with him." Both readings make the same point. God's word is enough. The centurion did not need Jesus to show up in person. Sarah did not need a doctor's report. They needed God's word, and God's word did the work.

You have God's word in your hands today. Do you treat it with that kind of trust?

Think about it: What is one promise in God's Word you need to take at face value this week?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You have all authority. Speak into my life today, and give me faith like that centurion's, faith that takes You at Your word.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 11

The Lord Will Provide

Today's reading: Genesis 22-23; Psalm 9

> *And Isaac said to Abraham his father, and he said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, and where **is** the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "God will see to the lamb for Himself for a burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went together.*
>
> Genesis 22:7-8 (SLB)

God told Abraham to take Isaac, the son he had waited for, and offer him on a mountain in Moriah. It is one of the hardest chapters in the Bible. Abraham got up early and went. Hebrews 11:19 says he believed God could raise Isaac from the dead if He had to.

On the way up, Isaac asked the question every reader asks: "Where ***is*** the lamb?" Abraham answered, "God will see to the lamb for Himself." At the last moment God stopped Abraham's hand, and there was a ram caught in a thicket. Abraham named the place "The LORD Will See." In other words, the LORD sees ahead and provides.

Two thousand years later, on that same range of hills, God did what He would not let Abraham do. He gave His only Son. John the Baptist looked at Jesus and said, "Look, the Lamb of God" (John 1:29). God did provide the lamb. It was His own Son.

In Psalm 9 David writes, "Those who know Your name will trust in You." Abraham learned God's name on that mountain. When God asks for something hard, remember that He has already given more than He will ever ask of you.

Think about it: Is there something you are holding so tightly that you would struggle to give it to God?

Pray

Father, You did not spare Your own Son. Help me hold everything with an open hand, because You have already given me what matters most.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 12

A Servant's Prayer

Today's reading: Genesis 24; Matthew 9

> *And he said, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please make **it** happen before me this day, and do steadfast love with my master Abraham.*
>
> Genesis 24:12 (SLB)

Abraham sent his oldest servant back to the old country to find a wife for Isaac. That is a big job with no dating app. So the servant prayed a simple prayer at the well: "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please make ***it*** happen before me this day." Before he had finished speaking, Rebekah came out with her water jar.

I love how ordinary this is. The servant did not go on a forty-day fast. He asked God for help with the task in front of him, and he watched for the answer. When it came, he bowed down and worshiped right there (Genesis 24:26).

Prayer is not only for emergencies. It is for job interviews, hard conversations, buying a car, raising kids. God cares about the details of your day.

In Matthew 9 Jesus calls Matthew, a tax collector, to follow Him, and then eats with tax collectors and sinners. The religious leaders complained. Jesus said, "Those who are healthy have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." Whether it is finding a wife or finding a way back to God, Jesus came for people who know they need help.

Think about it: What ordinary task today could you bring to God in prayer before you start?

Pray

Lord, I bring You today's work, big and small. Guide my steps, give me success in what honors You, and help me notice Your hand when You answer.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 13

Selling Your Birthright

Today's reading: Genesis 25; Psalm 10

> *And Esau said, "Look, I am going to die; and what **is** this to me, a birthright?" And Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." And he swore to him, and he sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; and he ate and drank, and he arose and went. And Esau despised the birthright.*
>
> Genesis 25:32-34 (SLB)

Esau came in from the field starving and saw Jacob cooking stew. Jacob offered a trade: the stew for Esau's birthright, the double portion and the family leadership that belonged to the firstborn. Esau said, "I am going to die," and sold it for a bowl of red lentils.

The Bible's verdict is short: "Esau despised the birthright." He traded something lasting for something he could eat in five minutes. Hebrews 12:16 warns us not to be like him.

We do the same thing more often than we admit. We trade our integrity for a deal, our marriage for a few minutes of pleasure, our time with God for one more episode. In the moment, the hunger feels like an emergency. "I am going to die." He was not. He was hungry.

Psalm 10 today describes the wicked man who says in his heart, "He will never see." That is how temptation talks. It shrinks God and blows up the craving. The answer is to slow down, remember who you belong to, and refuse to trade forever for right now.

Think about it: What "bowl of stew" tempts you to trade away something that matters?

Pray

Lord, I do not want to sell what is precious for something cheap. When I am hungry, tired, or tempted, help me remember what You have given me and hold on to it.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 14

Sent Out Like Sheep

Today's reading: Genesis 26-27; Matthew 10; Psalm 11

> *Look, I send you out as sheep in **the** midst of wolves; therefore be shrewd as the serpents and innocent as the doves.*
>
> Matthew 10:16 (SLB)

In Matthew 10 Jesus sends out the twelve disciples for the first time. He gives them authority and instructions, and then He tells them the truth: it will not be easy. "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves."

Sheep do not survive among wolves by being tough. They survive by staying close to the shepherd. Jesus tells them to be wise, aware of how people really are, and to be innocent, with no tricks or double-dealing of their own.

Today's Genesis reading shows the opposite. Jacob, with his mother's help, dresses up in goat skins and lies to his blind father to steal Esau's blessing. Smart, yes. Innocent, no. It worked, and it cost him twenty years away from home and a brother who wanted him dead.

Christians are called to be sharp. Read people, read situations, do not be naive. But never cross the line into deceit. Jesus also said in Matthew 10:30 that the very hairs of your head are numbered. You do not have to lie or scheme to protect yourself. Your Shepherd is watching.

Think about it: Where do you need to be wiser this week, and where do you need to be more honest?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are my Shepherd. Make me wise without making me crafty, and keep me close to You when the wolves are near.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 15

A Ladder to Heaven

Today's reading: Genesis 28; Psalm 12

> *And look, I **am** with you, and I will keep you in all **places** where you go, and I will bring you back to this ground; for I will not forsake you until I have done what I have spoken to you." And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I, I did not know **it**."*
>
> Genesis 28:15-16 (SLB)

Jacob was on the run after stealing his brother's blessing. Alone, with a stone for a pillow, he dreamed of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with angels going up and down on it and the LORD standing above it.

You would expect God to scold him. Instead, God repeated the promises He gave Abraham and added a personal one: "I ***am*** with you, and I will keep you in all ***places*** where you go." Jacob woke up and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I, I did not know ***it***."

Many of us have had a stone-pillow night: on the run from our own mistakes, far from home, sure that God has given up. That is often exactly where He shows up.

Jesus later told Nathanael that he would see "the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John 1:51). Jesus is the ladder. He is the only way between heaven and earth. Jacob did not climb up to God. God came down to him. That is the gospel.

At 16 I tried to join the Air Force. I aced the testing, but they would not give me the computer job they had promised, so I walked away. I did not see God's hand in it then. Looking back over about 40 years of work since, I can see He was guiding my steps the whole time. God is often at work in the places where we think we are walking alone.

Think about it: Can you think of a time when God was with you and you did not know it?

Pray

Lord, You were with me even when I ran. Thank You that Jesus is the way to You. Open my eyes to see that You are in this place.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 16

Come and Rest

Today's reading: Genesis 29-30; Matthew 11; Psalm 13

> *Come to Me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke **is** easy, and My burden is light."*
>
> Matthew 11:28-30 (SLB)

Jacob's life in Genesis 29 and 30 is exhausting to read. He gets tricked into marrying Leah, works fourteen years for Rachel, and then lives in a home where two sisters compete for his love by having children. Everyone is striving, and no one is at rest.

Then you turn to Matthew 11 and hear Jesus: "Come to Me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." This is not a call to do more. It is a call to come to a Person.

A yoke is the wooden beam that joins two oxen so they can pull together. Jesus says His yoke is easy and His burden is light. He does not take away all work. He gets under the load with you, and He sets the pace. "I am gentle and humble in heart."

Psalm 13 today begins with "How long, LORD?" and ends with "I will sing to the LORD." That is the shift that happens when you bring your weariness to God instead of trying to fix it yourself.

Think about it: What are you carrying today that you need to bring to Jesus?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I am tired. I come to You now. Take my heavy load, teach me Your way, and give my soul the rest only You can give.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 17

Lord of the Sabbath

Today's reading: Genesis 31; Matthew 12; Psalms 14-15

> *But if you had known what this is, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."*
>
> Matthew 12:7-8 (SLB)

The Pharisees saw Jesus' disciples picking grain on the Sabbath and called it work. Then Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, and they began plotting to kill Him. They cared more about their rules than about a hungry disciple or a man with a disabled hand.

Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." God gave the Sabbath as a gift, a day of rest and worship. The Pharisees had turned it into a burden. And then Jesus made a staggering claim: "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." He was saying He is the One who made the Sabbath in the first place.

Religion without mercy is still a danger today. It is possible to be careful about every outward rule and cold toward the people in front of us.

In Genesis 31 Laban chases Jacob down, and God warns Laban in a dream not to harm him. Psalm 14 says the fool says in his heart, "There is no God." Whether it is Laban's greed or the Pharisees' pride, God sees the heart, and He protects His own.

Think about it: Is there any place where your rules have become more important than mercy?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are Lord of all. Keep me from cold religion. Give me a heart that loves mercy and cares for the people You put in front of me.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 18

Wrestling with God

Today's reading: Genesis 32-33; Psalm 16

> *And he said, "Let me go, for the dawn has come up." And he said, "I will not let you go unless you have blessed me." And he said to him, "What **is** your name?" And he said, "Jacob." And he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men, and you have prevailed."*
>
> Genesis 32:26-28 (SLB)

The night before Jacob was to meet Esau, he was terrified. He sent gifts ahead, split his family into groups, and prayed. Then, alone by the river Jabbok, a Man wrestled with him until daybreak. Jacob would not let go: "I will not let you go unless you have blessed me."

The Man touched Jacob's hip and put it out of joint. Jacob limped for the rest of his life. But he got a new name: Israel, which means "he strives with God." Jacob later said he had seen God face to face.

For years Jacob had won by grabbing and scheming. That night God broke his strength so he would learn to cling. Sometimes God's blessing comes with a limp. He has to weaken our self-reliance before we will hold on to Him.

The next day Esau ran to meet Jacob and hugged him. The fight Jacob feared never came. In Psalm 16 David says, "fullness of joys ***is*** with Your presence." Jacob found that out the hard way. The real battle was never with Esau. It was with God, and losing that one was the best thing that ever happened to him.

Think about it: What is God using to teach you to cling to Him instead of your own strength?

Pray

Lord, I do not want to wrestle against You. I want to hold on to You. If it takes a limp to make me depend on You, let it be so. Bless me, and change me.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 19

Back to Bethel

Today's reading: Genesis 34-35

> *And Jacob said to his household and to all who **were** with him, "Remove the gods of the foreigner that **are** in your midst, and purify yourselves, and change your clothes. And let us arise, and let us go up **to** Bethel, and I will make there an altar to the God who answered me in the day of my distress, and He was with me on the way that I have gone."*
>
> Genesis 35:2-3 (SLB)

Genesis 34 is an ugly chapter. Jacob's daughter Dinah is violated, and her brothers take revenge by wiping out a whole town. Jacob's family has drifted a long way from God.

In chapter 35 God calls Jacob back to Bethel, the place where He first met him on the run. And Jacob knows what needs to happen first. "Remove the gods of the foreigner that ***are*** in your midst, and purify yourselves." His household had been carrying idols. Jacob hid them under the oak, and they went up to worship.

Spiritual renewal often starts that way: going back to where God first met you and getting rid of what does not belong. It might be a habit, a relationship, a grudge, or something you have put ahead of God. You cannot carry your idols up the mountain.

Jacob calls God "the God who answered me in the day of my distress, and He was with me on the way that I have gone." Look back over your own life. God has been with you on the way you have gone, even the wrong ways.

Think about it: What needs to be put away under the oak for you to draw near to God again?

Pray

Father, call me back to where I first met You. Show me what I need to put away, and give me the courage to bury it and come up to worship You.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 20

The Seed and the Soil

Today's reading: Genesis 36; Matthew 13; Psalm 17

> *And the **one** sown on the good soil, this is the **one** hearing the word and understanding, who indeed bears fruit and produces, some a hundredfold, and some sixty, and some thirty."*
>
> Matthew 13:23 (SLB)

In Matthew 13 Jesus tells the parable of the sower. A farmer scatters seed. Some falls on the path and birds eat it. Some lands on rocky ground and dies in the heat. Some is choked by thorns. Some lands on good soil and produces a crop, thirty, sixty, or a hundred times what was sown.

Jesus explains it. The seed is the word of God. The soil is the heart that hears it. Some hearts never really listen. Some get excited and then quit when it gets hard. Some let worries and money crowd it out. And some hear, understand, and bear fruit.

This parable is a good one to hold up next to this year of reading. You are scattering seed in your own heart every day. The question is what kind of soil it lands on. Rushed reading is the hard path. Quitting when Leviticus gets dry is the rocky ground. Letting your phone take the time is the thorns.

Genesis 36 today lists Esau's descendants, the nation of Edom. It is a reminder that God keeps careful track of every family, even the ones outside the main story.

Think about it: Which kind of soil best describes your heart this week?

Pray

Lord, make my heart good soil. Clear out the rocks and thorns, and let Your word take root and bear fruit in me.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 21

Sold by His Brothers

Today's reading: Genesis 37-38

> *And Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, for he **was** a son of old age to him; and he made for him a full-length tunic. And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, and they hated him, and they were not able to speak to him in peace.*
>
> Genesis 37:3-4 (SLB)

Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons and made him a special robe. Joseph had dreams that his brothers would bow to him, and he told them about it. The brothers already hated him. Now they plotted to kill him, then sold him to traders headed for Egypt for twenty pieces of silver.

Favoritism in a family is poison. Jacob had grown up with it (Isaac loved Esau and Rebekah loved Jacob), and he repeated it. We tend to pass on what was done to us unless God breaks the pattern.

But watch what God does with this mess. The brothers meant to get rid of Joseph. God meant to send him ahead to save the whole family. You will see that by the end of Genesis.

Genesis 38 is an uncomfortable detour about Judah and Tamar. It is there for a reason. From Judah and Tamar's son Perez comes the line of King David, and Matthew 1 lists Tamar in the genealogy of Jesus. God works through the darkest family stories to bring about His promises.

Think about it: Is there a pattern from your own family that you need God to break in you?

Pray

Father, I bring You my family, the good and the broken. Break the bad patterns in me, and work Your good through my story the way You did through Joseph's.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 22

Faithful in the Pit and the Prison

Today's reading: Genesis 39-40; Matthew 14

> *And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD **was** with him, and all that he **was** doing the LORD **was** making successful in his hand.*
>
> Genesis 39:2-3 (SLB)

Joseph went from favored son to slave in Egypt. Potiphar's house is where we first read the line that repeats through his story: "The LORD was with Joseph." Joseph worked hard and God blessed it.

Then Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him day after day. Joseph refused: "How shall I do this great evil, and sin against God?" He saw sin for what it was, an offense against God, not just a risk of getting caught. When she grabbed his garment, he ran and left it behind. She lied, and Joseph ended up in prison anyway.

Doing the right thing does not always pay off right away. Sometimes it costs you. But again, "the LORD was with Joseph," and he was put in charge of the prison.

In Matthew 14 Peter steps out of the boat and walks on water toward Jesus. When he looks at the wind, he sinks. Joseph kept his eyes on God in Potiphar's house and in prison. Peter took his off and went under. And when Peter cried out, Jesus caught him right away.

Think about it: Where do you need to run from temptation, even if it costs you something?

Pray

Lord, be with me the way You were with Joseph. Give me the strength to run from sin and to stay faithful in hard places, and keep my eyes on You.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 23

From Prison to Palace

Today's reading: Genesis 41; Psalm 18

> *And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "**It is** not in me; God will answer **for** the welfare of Pharaoh."*
>
> Genesis 41:16 (SLB)

Two full years after Joseph helped Pharaoh's cupbearer, the man finally remembered him. Pharaoh had dreams no one could interpret, and Joseph was brought up from the dungeon, shaved, and dressed. Pharaoh said he heard Joseph could interpret dreams. Joseph's first words: "***It is*** not in me; God will answer ***for*** the welfare of Pharaoh."

After thirteen years of slavery and prison, Joseph could have grabbed the credit. He gave it to God. That humility is why God could trust him with power. By the end of the day he was second only to Pharaoh, in charge of all Egypt.

God's timing is not our timing. Those two extra years in prison felt like being forgotten. They were not. Joseph was not ready earlier, or Pharaoh was not. God had the day picked out.

Psalm 18 today is David's song after God rescued him from all his enemies. "He drew me out of many waters." Joseph could have sung it too. If you feel stuck in a prison season, God has not lost your file.

Think about it: How do you respond when people praise you? Do you point them to God?

Pray

Lord, it is not in me. Every good thing I have comes from You. Keep me humble, and help me trust Your timing when I feel forgotten.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 24

Faith That Will Not Quit

Today's reading: Genesis 42; Matthew 15

> *And she said, "Yes, Lord; for even the little dogs eat from the crumbs falling from the table of their masters." Then answering, Jesus said to her, "O woman, great **is** your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that hour.*
>
> Matthew 15:27-28 (SLB)

A Canaanite woman came to Jesus crying out for her daughter, who was tormented by a demon. At first Jesus did not answer her. The disciples wanted her sent away. Then Jesus said He was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. She kept coming, knelt, and said, "Lord, help me."

Jesus told her it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. Her answer is one of the best in the Bible: "Yes, Lord; for even the little dogs eat from the crumbs falling from the table of their masters." She did not argue that she deserved it. She trusted that even a crumb of His mercy was enough. Jesus said, "O woman, great ***is*** your faith!" and her daughter was healed that hour.

Jesus was not being cruel. He was drawing her faith out into the open. Sometimes God's silence is not a no. It is an invitation to keep asking.

In Genesis 42 Joseph's brothers come to Egypt for grain and bow before him, not knowing who he is. Joseph tests them too, to see if their hearts have changed. God's tests are always aimed at bringing out what is real.

Think about it: Have you stopped praying about something because God seemed silent?

Pray

Lord, help me. I do not deserve Your mercy, but I trust You. Even a crumb from Your table is enough. I will keep asking.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 25

Who Do You Say I Am?

Today's reading: Genesis 43-44; Matthew 16

> *He says to them, "But you, who do you say Me to be?" And Simon Peter, answering, said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*
>
> Matthew 16:15-16 (SLB)

Jesus asked His disciples what people were saying about Him. Some said John the Baptist, some Elijah, some Jeremiah. Then He made it personal: "But you, who do you say Me to be?"

Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ is the Greek form of Messiah, the Anointed One God promised. Jesus said Peter did not figure that out on his own. The Father revealed it to him.

That is still the most important question anyone will ever answer. Not what your parents believed or what your church says, but what you say. A good teacher? A prophet? Or the Son of the living God?

Right after this, Jesus told them He must suffer, die, and rise again, and that anyone who follows Him must deny himself and take up his cross. In Genesis 44 Judah offers himself as a slave in place of his brother Benjamin. The brother who once sold Joseph now gives himself up for another. That is a small picture of what Jesus would do for us.

Think about it: If someone asked you today who Jesus is, what would you say?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. I confess it with my mouth and believe it in my heart. Help me follow You, cross and all.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 26

God Meant It for Good

Today's reading: Genesis 45-46

> *And Joseph said to his brothers, "Draw near to me, please." And they drew near. And he said, "I **am** Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. And now, do not be grieved, and let it not burn in your eyes that you sold me here; because for preservation of life God sent me before you.*
>
> Genesis 45:4-5 (SLB)

Joseph could not hold it in any longer. He sent everyone out of the room and wept so loudly the Egyptians heard it. Then he said, "I ***am*** Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt." His brothers were terrified.

Joseph's next words show how God had worked in him. "Do not be grieved... for preservation of life God sent me before you." He did not pretend the betrayal did not happen. He said plainly, you sold me. But he saw God's hand above their hands.

Forgiveness does not mean pretending something was fine. It means you have handed the wrong to God and trusted Him with the outcome. Joseph had twenty years in which bitterness could have taken root. Instead, he named his sons Manasseh, "God has made me forget all my trouble," and Ephraim, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction" (Genesis 41:51-52).

In chapter 46 Jacob hears his son is alive and goes down to Egypt, and God tells him, "Do not be afraid." The family is together again because one man refused to stay bitter.

Think about it: Is there someone you need to forgive, trusting God with what they did?

Pray

Father, You saw what was done to me, and You are bigger than it. Help me forgive the way Joseph did, and show me how You can bring good out of it.

Go deeper: the free Genesis study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 27

Listen to Him

Today's reading: Genesis 47; Matthew 17; Psalm 19

> *While he was still speaking, look, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and look, a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, the beloved, in whom I was well pleased; listen to Him."*
>
> Matthew 17:5 (SLB)

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a high mountain, and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light. Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Him.

Peter, not knowing what to say, offered to build three shelters. While he was still talking, a bright cloud covered them, and the Father spoke: "This is My Son, the beloved, in whom I was well pleased; listen to Him." The disciples fell on their faces.

Moses stood for the Law and Elijah for the Prophets. Both were great men of God, but God would not let Peter put them on the same level as Jesus. When the cloud lifted, they "saw no one except Jesus alone."

Psalm 19 today says the heavens declare the glory of God and that God's law is perfect, restoring the soul. Creation speaks and Scripture speaks, but the Father's last word is His Son. If you want to know what God is like, listen to Jesus.

Think about it: What competes with Jesus for first place in what you listen to each day?

Pray

Father, Jesus is Your beloved Son. Help me listen to Him above every other voice, and let me see Jesus alone.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 28

Forgiven Much, Forgive Much

Today's reading: Genesis 48-49; Matthew 18; Psalm 20

> *Then Peter, having come, said to Him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus says to him, "I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*
>
> Matthew 18:21-22 (SLB)

Peter thought he was being generous when he offered to forgive his brother seven times. Jesus said seventy times seven, which means stop counting.

Then He told a parable. A servant owed his king ten thousand talents, a debt no one could pay in many lifetimes. The king forgave it all. That same servant went out, found a man who owed him a hundred denarii, a few months' wages, and threw him into prison. When the king heard, he was furious.

The point is simple. Whatever someone owes you, it is small next to what God has forgiven you. A person who really grasps how much he has been forgiven will find it hard to hold a grudge.

In Genesis 49 Jacob blesses his twelve sons. To Judah he says, "The scepter will not depart from Judah... until Shiloh comes," a promise that a King would come from Judah's line. That King is Jesus, who paid the debt we could never pay.

Think about it: Who do you need to stop keeping score with?

Pray

Father, You forgave me a debt I could never pay. Soften my heart toward the people who have wronged me, and help me forgive the way You have forgiven me.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 29

Drawn from the Water

Today's reading: Genesis 50; Exodus 1-2; Psalm 21

> *And the daughter of Pharaoh said to her, "Take this child away, and nurse him for me, and I, I will give your wages." And the woman took the child, and she nursed him. And the child grew up, and she brought him to the daughter of Pharaoh, and he became a son to her. And she called his name Moses, and she said, "Because I drew him out of the water."*
>
> Exodus 2:9-10 (SLB)

Genesis ends with Joseph's words: "you planned evil against me; God planned it for good" (Genesis 50:20). Exodus opens with a new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph. Israel is now a nation of slaves, and Pharaoh orders every Hebrew baby boy thrown into the Nile.

One mother hid her son for three months, then put him in a basket on the river. Pharaoh's own daughter found him, and the baby's sister arranged for his own mother to nurse him. Pharaoh's daughter named him Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

God saved the deliverer of Israel through the very river that was meant to kill him, and had Pharaoh's household pay to raise him. God loves to turn the enemy's plan upside down.

Notice too how many women are faithful in this story: the Hebrew midwives who refused to kill the babies, Moses' mother, his sister Miriam, and even Pharaoh's daughter. Quiet faithfulness in small moments often sets up God's biggest works.

Think about it: What small act of faithfulness might God use in ways you cannot see yet?

Pray

Lord, You turn evil plans upside down. Help me be faithful in the small things today, trusting that You are working out something bigger.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 30

I AM WHO I AM

Today's reading: Exodus 3-4; Matthew 19

> *And Moses said to God, "Look, I **am** going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they will say to me, 'What **is** His name?' What shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*
>
> Exodus 3:13-14 (SLB)

Moses was eighty, a shepherd in the desert, forty years removed from Egypt. Then a bush burned and did not burn up, and God spoke from it. He had seen His people's misery and heard their cry, and He was sending Moses to bring them out.

Moses asked what most of us would ask: "Who am I?" God did not answer by building up Moses' confidence. He said, "I will be with you." Then Moses asked God's name. God answered, "I AM WHO I AM." God simply is. He depends on no one, never changes, and has no beginning or end. The name LORD in our Bibles comes from this verb.

Jesus later said, "before Abraham came into being, I am" (John 8:58), and the crowd picked up stones, because they knew exactly what He was claiming.

In Matthew 19 a rich young man asks Jesus what good thing he must do. He walks away sad because he loved his money. Moses asked "Who am I?" and was told, "I will be with you." The rich man asked "What good thing shall I do?" and found out he could not let go. Everything depends on who God is, not who we are.

Think about it: Do you tend to focus more on your weakness or on God's presence?

Pray

I AM, You are always the same. When I ask "Who am I?", remind me that You are with me. That is enough.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 31

The Last Will Be First

Today's reading: Exodus 5-6; Matthew 20

> *But it will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you, let him be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you, let him be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life **as** a ransom for many."*
>
> Matthew 20:26-28 (SLB)

James and John had their mother ask Jesus to give them the best seats in His kingdom. The other ten were angry, probably because they wanted those seats too. Jesus called them together and turned their thinking upside down.

In the world, the great ones give orders. In His kingdom, the great ones serve. "Whoever wishes to become great among you, let him be your servant." Then Jesus pointed to Himself: He did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

A ransom is the price paid to set a captive free. Jesus paid it with His own life.

In Exodus 5 Moses goes to Pharaoh, and things get worse. Pharaoh makes the slaves gather their own straw and keep the same quota of bricks. The people blame Moses, and Moses complains to God. God answers in chapter 6: "I am the LORD, and I will bring you out." Following God's call can mean things get harder before they get better. Serve anyway. The ransom has been paid, and He will bring His people out.

Think about it: Who can you serve this week without expecting anything back?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You came to serve and to give Your life for me. Make me a servant like You, and let me be content with the last place if it honors You.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

Days 32 to 59

DAY 32

They Pierced My Hands

Today's reading: Exodus 7-8; Psalm 22

> *For dogs have surrounded me; a company of evildoers has encircled me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I count all my bones; they look, they gaze at me. They divide my garments among themselves, and for my clothing they cast a lot.*
>
> Psalm 22:16-18 (SLB)

In Exodus 7 and 8 the plagues begin. The Nile turns to blood, then come frogs, gnats, and flies. Pharaoh keeps hardening his heart, and God keeps showing that the gods of Egypt are nothing next to Him.

But today I want to stop at Psalm 22. David wrote it about a thousand years before Jesus was born, and long before crucifixion was ever used. Yet listen to it. Surrounded by a mocking crowd. Bones out of joint. "They pierced my hands and my feet." "They divide my garments among themselves, and for my clothing they cast a lot."

The Gospels tell us that is exactly what happened at the cross. The soldiers gambled for Jesus' clothing (John 19:23-24). And from the cross Jesus cried out the first line of this psalm: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46).

Psalm 22 does not end in despair. Starting in verse 22, it turns to praise, and by the end, all the ends of the earth turn to the LORD. That is the shape of the gospel: suffering, then victory. The cross, then the empty tomb.

Think about it: Why do you think God gave such clear details about the cross so many centuries ahead?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You were pierced for me. Thank You for bearing the cross, and thank You that the story did not end there.

DAY 33

Hosanna

Today's reading: Exodus 9; Matthew 21

> *And the crowds, those going before and those following, were crying out, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed **is** the **One** coming in **the** name of **the** Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"*
>
> Matthew 21:9 (SLB)

Today's Exodus reading brings hail, disease on the livestock, and boils. Each time Pharaoh promises to let the people go, and each time he goes back on his word once the pressure is off. That is what a hard heart does. It bargains with God in trouble and forgets Him in relief.

Then in Matthew 21 Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. The crowds spread their cloaks on the road and shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Hosanna means "save now." They were quoting Psalm 118, and they were calling Jesus the promised King.

Zechariah 9:9 said the King would come humble and riding on a donkey. Jesus did not ride in on a warhorse. He came in peace.

But many in that same city would shout "Crucify Him!" a few days later. Their praise was real in the moment, but shallow. Like Pharaoh, they wanted a deliverer on their own terms. When Jesus turned over the money tables in the temple instead of the Roman army, they lost interest.

Do we only want Jesus when He fixes our problems the way we want?

Think about it: Is your praise for Jesus steady, or does it rise and fall with how life is going?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are the King who came humbly to save. Keep my heart soft toward You, in trouble and in relief, and let my praise be real all week long.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 34

The Lord Is My Shepherd

Today's reading: Exodus 10-11; Psalm 23

> *The LORD **is** my shepherd; I will not lack. In pastures of grass He makes me lie down; beside waters of rest He leads me. He restores my soul; He guides me in tracks of righteousness for the sake of His name. Even when I walk in a valley of deep darkness, I will not fear evil, for You **are** with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*
>
> Psalm 23:1-4 (SLB)

Psalm 23 may be the most loved chapter in the Bible. David had been a shepherd, so he knew what it meant. Sheep are not smart, not fast, and not able to defend themselves. They need someone to lead them to food and water, pull them out of trouble, and fight off what comes for them at night.

"The LORD ***is*** my shepherd; I will not lack." Not "I will get everything I want," but "I will not lack what I need." He makes me lie down. He leads me. He restores my soul. Look at all the verbs. The Shepherd is doing the work.

Then comes the valley of deep darkness. Notice that the psalm does not promise we will avoid it. It promises we will not walk through it alone: "for You ***are*** with me." In the valley, David stops talking about God and starts talking to Him.

Today's Exodus reading brings the darkness over Egypt that could be felt, while all the sons of Israel had light in their homes (Exodus 10:23). Same country, same days, different outcomes. The difference was whose people they were.

Think about it: Which line of Psalm 23 do you need most this week?

Pray

LORD, You are my Shepherd. Lead me, restore my soul, and walk with me through every dark valley. I will not fear, for You are with me.

DAY 35

When I See the Blood

Today's reading: Exodus 12-13; Matthew 22; Psalm 24

> *And the blood shall be for you for a sign on the houses where you **are**; and I will see the blood, and I will pass over you, and **there** shall not be among you a plague for destruction when I strike in the land of Egypt.*
>
> Exodus 12:13 (SLB)

The last plague was the death of the firstborn. God gave Israel careful instructions. Each household was to take a spotless lamb, kill it at twilight, and put its blood on the doorposts. That night the LORD would pass through Egypt, and where He saw the blood, He would pass over.

Notice what kept them safe. It was not how good the family was, how strong their faith felt that night, or how well they understood it. It was the blood. God said, "I will see the blood, and I will pass over you."

The New Testament tells us plainly who that lamb pointed to: "our Passover was sacrificed for us: Christ" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The lamb had to be without blemish, and Jesus was sinless. Not a bone of the lamb was to be broken (Exodus 12:46), and John 19:36 says not one of Jesus' bones was broken.

In Matthew 22 Jesus sums up the law: love God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself. We cannot keep that perfectly. That is why we need the blood. Psalm 24 asks who may stand in God's holy place. Only those covered by the Lamb.

Think about it: Are you trusting in the blood of Jesus, or in how good your week has been?

Pray

Lamb of God, Your blood covers me. I am safe because of what You did, not because of what I do. Thank You.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 36

Stand Still and See

Today's reading: Exodus 14-15

> *And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; station yourselves, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will do for you today; for Egypt, whom you have seen today, you shall not again see them anymore, forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you, you shall keep silent."*
>
> Exodus 14:13-14 (SLB)

Israel had barely left Egypt when Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his chariots after them. The people were trapped: the sea in front of them, the army behind them. They panicked and turned on Moses: were there no graves in Egypt?

Moses' answer is one of the great lines of faith in the Bible. "Do not be afraid; station yourselves, and see the salvation of the LORD." "The LORD will fight for you, and you, you shall keep silent."

Then God told Moses to lift his staff, and the sea split. Israel walked through on dry ground, and the water came back over the Egyptians. The same sea that saved Israel judged Egypt.

Some battles are ours to fight with effort and courage. Others are past us completely, and the only thing we can do is stop thrashing and watch what God does. Exodus 15 is Moses' song of victory: "My strength and song ***is the*** LORD."

Are you up against a sea right now? Sometimes the most faithful thing you can do is stop talking, stop scheming, and trust Him to make a road where there is none.

Think about it: What would it look like for you to "keep silent" and let God fight this week?

Pray

LORD, I am trapped between things I cannot fix. Quiet my panic. Fight for me, and let me see Your salvation.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 37

Holding Up Tired Hands

Today's reading: Exodus 16-17; Matthew 23; Psalm 25

> *And it was, when Moses lifted up his hand, Israel prevailed; and when he let his hand rest, Amalek prevailed. And the hands of Moses **were** heavy; and they took a stone and put **it** under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on this **side** and one on that **side**; and his hands were steady until the sun went **down**.*
>
> Exodus 17:11-12 (SLB)

Israel's first battle after the Red Sea was against Amalek. Joshua led the fighting in the valley while Moses stood on the hill with the staff of God raised. When his hands were up, Israel won. When they dropped, Amalek won. And Moses' hands got heavy.

So Aaron and Hur found a stone for Moses to sit on, and they stood on each side holding his hands up until sunset. Israel won the battle.

I love this picture because it is so honest. Moses was the great leader, and he still got tired. He needed two friends to hold him up. Every leader does. Every believer does.

Who are your Aaron and Hur? And whose hands are you holding up? A pastor, a friend going through cancer, a young dad trying to lead his family. Sometimes the most important work in the battle is done by people no one notices, standing beside someone and saying, "I have you."

In Matthew 23 Jesus warns about the Pharisees, who tied heavy burdens on people's shoulders and would not lift a finger to help (Matthew 23:4). Be the opposite. Lift a finger. Lift a hand.

Think about it: Who in your life needs you to hold up their arms right now?

Pray

Lord, thank You for the people who hold me up. Show me whose hands I should be holding up this week, and give me the strength to stay until sunset.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 38

You Cannot Do It Alone

Today's reading: Exodus 18-19; Psalm 26

> *And the father-in-law of Moses said to him, "The thing that you are doing **is** not good. You will surely wear out, both you and this people that **is** with you; for the thing **is too** heavy for you; you are not able to do it by yourself alone.*
>
> Exodus 18:17-18 (SLB)

Moses' father-in-law Jethro visited and watched Moses judge the people from morning until evening. One man, a few million people, and a line that never ended. Jethro said, "The thing that you are doing ***is*** not good. You will surely wear out."

Then he gave Moses a plan. Teach the people God's ways. Pick capable men who fear God, love the truth, and hate dishonest gain. Put them over groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Let them handle the small cases and bring Moses the hard ones.

I have spent a lot of my working life managing projects, and this is still the best organizational advice I know. Good leaders do not do everything. They build people up, give them real responsibility, and keep the hard calls for themselves.

Moses was humble enough to listen to his father-in-law. That is worth noticing too. God often sends wisdom through the people around us, if we are willing to hear it.

In Exodus 19 God meets Israel at Mount Sinai and calls them "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). Leadership in God's people was never meant to be one man's job. Everyone has a part.

Think about it: Is there something you are carrying alone that you should share with others?

Pray

Lord, I am not meant to carry everything. Give me humility to accept help and wisdom to share the load with the people You have put around me.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 39

No Other Gods

Today's reading: Exodus 20-21; Matthew 24

> *"I **am** the LORD your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt, from a house of slaves. There shall not be for you other gods before My face.*
>
> Exodus 20:2-3 (SLB)

Before God gave a single commandment, He reminded Israel who He was and what He had done: "I ***am*** the LORD your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt, from a house of slaves." The commands came after the rescue, not before it. God did not say, "Keep these and I will save you." He said, "I saved you; now live like My people."

That is still the order. We do not obey to get saved. We obey because we have been saved.

The first commandment is the root of all the others. "There shall not be for you other gods before My face." Most of us do not bow to statues. But anything we trust, love, or fear more than God is a god. Money, approval, comfort, a career, even our kids.

In Matthew 24 Jesus talks about the end of the age, and He tells His listeners to watch and be ready, because no one knows the hour. I believe Jesus will come for His church before the tribulation, and that could happen any day. The question for today is the same either way: what do you love most?

Think about it: What is the hardest thing for you to keep in second place behind God?

Pray

LORD, You brought me out of slavery to sin. You alone are my God. Show me anything I have put before You, and help me tear it down.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 40

One Thing

Today's reading: Exodus 22-23; Psalm 27

> *One **thing** I have asked from the LORD; it I will seek: **that** I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to look on the pleasantness of the LORD and to inquire in His temple.*
>
> Psalm 27:4 (SLB)

Exodus 22 and 23 are full of everyday laws: what to do when an ox gores someone, how to treat a widow, why you should not take a bribe, and why you should help your enemy's donkey out of a ditch. God cares about how His people live on a Tuesday, not just how they worship on the Sabbath.

Psalm 27 lifts our eyes. David opens with confidence: "The LORD ***is*** my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Then he narrows his whole life down to one desire: "One ***thing*** I have asked from the LORD... ***that*** I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to look on the pleasantness of the LORD."

David had a kingdom to run, enemies to fight, and a messy family. But his deepest want was to be near God and enjoy Him.

What is your "one thing"? If you asked the people closest to you what you want most, what would they say? A year in the Word is a chance to move closer to David's answer. Not more information about God, but more of God Himself.

Think about it: If you could only ask God for one thing, what would it be?

Pray

LORD, You are my light and my salvation. Of all the things I want, let my deepest desire be to be near You and to see Your beauty.

DAY 41

God in the Middle of the Camp

Today's reading: Exodus 24-25; Matthew 25; Psalm 28

> *And they shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst. According to all that I am showing you, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its articles, so you shall make **it**.*
>
> Exodus 25:8-9 (SLB)

In Exodus 24 Moses, Aaron, and the elders see the God of Israel on the mountain, and Moses goes up into the cloud for forty days. In chapter 25 God starts giving the plans for the tabernacle, and He tells Moses why: "they shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst."

That is the heart of the whole Bible. God wants to live with His people. He walked with Adam in the garden. He filled the tabernacle and later the temple. Then "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Today He lives in every believer by His Spirit, and in Revelation 21 the dwelling of God will be with people forever.

The tabernacle was a tent in the middle of the camp. God did not set up on a mountain far away. He put His house in the center of their life.

In Matthew 25 Jesus says that whatever we do for "one of these My brothers, the least ***ones***," we do for Him. God still lives among His people, and how we treat them is how we treat Him.

Think about it: Is God at the center of your life, or off at the edge of the camp?

Pray

Father, thank You that You want to live with Your people. Come and dwell at the center of my life, my home, and my week.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 42

The Veil

Today's reading: Exodus 26; Psalm 29

> *And you shall put the veil under the clasps, and you shall bring there, inside the veil, the ark of the testimony; and the veil shall separate for you between the holy place and the holy of holies.*
>
> Exodus 26:33 (SLB)

Exodus 26 describes the curtains and frames of the tabernacle. It is easy to skim, but there is a detail here that matters a great deal. God told Moses to hang a veil, a heavy curtain, between the holy place and the holy of holies, where the ark sat. Only the high priest could go behind it, only once a year, and only with blood.

The veil said two things at once. God is present here. And you cannot just walk in. Sin keeps us out.

Now jump forward to the moment Jesus died. "The veil of the temple was torn into two from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:51). From top to bottom, from God's side. No human hand tore it. Hebrews 10:19-20 says we now have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, "through the veil, that is, His flesh."

Psalm 29 shows the voice of the LORD thundering over the waters and breaking cedars. This is the same God. And because of Jesus, you can come into His presence today with confidence, not terror.

Think about it: Do you come to God timidly, as if the curtain were still up, or boldly because of Jesus?

Pray

Holy God, the way into Your presence is open because Jesus' body was torn for me. I come to You today with confidence and thanks.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 43

Names on His Heart

Today's reading: Exodus 27-28

> *And Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastpiece of judgment over his heart when he goes into the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually.*
>
> Exodus 28:29 (SLB)

Exodus 28 describes the high priest's clothing. On his shoulders were two onyx stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes. On his chest was a breastpiece with twelve stones, one for each tribe. Every time Aaron went into the holy place, he carried Israel on his shoulders and over his heart.

Think about that. The high priest did not go before God alone. He brought the people with him, by name.

Hebrews tells us that Jesus is our great High Priest. He does not carry our names on stones. He carries us. He knows us by name, and He always lives to intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25). When you pray, you are not shouting into the dark. You are being represented by someone who has your name written on His heart.

Exodus 27 describes the bronze altar in the courtyard, the first thing anyone saw coming into the tabernacle. You could not reach the holy place without passing the altar of sacrifice. You cannot come to God without the cross.

Think about it: How does it change your prayers to know Jesus carries your name before the Father?

Pray

Lord Jesus, my great High Priest, thank You for carrying me on Your heart. I bring You the names of the people I love, and I trust You to carry them too.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 44

Not My Will

Today's reading: Exodus 29; Matthew 26; Psalm 30

> *And having gone forward a little, He fell on His face, praying and saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You **will**."*
>
> Matthew 26:39 (SLB)

In the garden of Gethsemane, the night He was betrayed, Jesus said His soul was deeply grieved, to the point of death. He fell on His face and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You ***will***."

The cup was the wrath of God against sin. Jesus knew what was coming, and in His humanity He did not want it. That should comfort us. He was not play-acting. He felt the full weight of what He was about to bear. And He chose the Father's will anyway, three times.

The disciples, meanwhile, fell asleep. Jesus said, "The spirit indeed ***is*** willing, but the flesh ***is*** weak." He prayed through. They did not.

Exodus 29 describes the ordination of priests with a ram, a bull, and blood on the right ear, thumb, and big toe. Ears to hear God, hands to do His work, feet to walk His way. Jesus did all three perfectly, all the way to the cross.

Psalm 30:5 promises, "in the evening weeping lodges, and at the morning, a shout of joy." Gethsemane's night was followed by Easter morning.

Think about it: What is the hardest "not my will" prayer you need to pray today?

Pray

Father, not as I will, but as You will. Give me the strength Jesus had in the garden to choose Your way when it costs me.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 45

Gifted to Build

Today's reading: Exodus 30-31

> *"See, I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him **with** the Spirit of God, with wisdom and with understanding and with knowledge and with all **kinds of** work,*
>
> Exodus 31:2-3 (SLB)

God told Moses that He had called Bezalel by name and filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in all kinds of craftsmanship. He could work in gold, silver, and bronze, cut stones, and carve wood.

This is the first person in the Bible described as filled with the Spirit of God, and he was a craftsman. Not a priest or a prophet. A builder.

I build and repair guitars, so that encourages me. Skill with your hands can be a gift from God and a way to serve Him. So can skill with numbers, schedules, cooking, nursing, or fixing engines. God does not only care about Sunday work. He cares about the work of your hands.

Right after this, in Exodus 31:13-17, God reminds Israel to keep the Sabbath. The workers on God's own house still had to stop and rest. Work matters, but it is not god. Even good work for God needs to stop so we remember who the real Builder is.

Exodus 30 describes the incense altar, a picture of prayer rising before God. Work and prayer go together.

Think about it: What skill has God given you, and how could you use it for Him this week?

Pray

Lord, thank You for the abilities You have put in my hands. Fill me with Your Spirit for my work, and teach me to rest in You too.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 46

If Your Presence Does Not Go

Today's reading: Exodus 32-33; Psalm 31

> *And He said, "My presence shall go, and I will give you rest." And he said to Him, "If Your presence is not going, do not bring us up from here.*
>
> Exodus 33:14-15 (SLB)

While Moses was on the mountain, the people got impatient and asked Aaron to make them gods. He made a golden calf, and they threw a party. God's anger burned, and Moses broke the tablets of the law.

Afterward God said He would still give them the land, but He would not go with them. Moses would not accept that. He pleaded, and God answered, "My presence shall go, and I will give you rest." Moses said, "If Your presence is not going, do not bring us up from here."

Moses understood something we forget. The promised land without God is not worth having. A successful career, a nice house, and a full calendar without God's presence is just a nicer desert.

Then Moses asked, "Show me, please, Your glory" (Exodus 33:18). After everything he had seen, he wanted more of God.

Psalm 31:15 says, "My times ***are*** in Your hand." Israel's sin came from impatience. They would not wait for God's timing, so they made a god they could see. When God seems slow, do not build a calf. Wait for His presence.

Think about it: Would you rather have God's blessings without Him, or Him without the blessings?

Pray

LORD, I do not want to go anywhere without You. Let Your presence go with me, and show me Your glory.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 47

It Is Finished

Today's reading: Exodus 34; Matthew 27

> *And Jesus, having cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up the spirit. And look, the veil of the temple was torn into two from top to bottom, and the earth was shaken, and the rocks were split,*
>
> Matthew 27:50-51 (SLB)

In Exodus 34 God passes in front of Moses and proclaims His own name: "The LORD, the LORD, a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and great in steadfast love and faithfulness." That is how God describes Himself. Then He adds that He "will surely not leave ***the guilty*** unpunished."

How can God be both? Gracious to sinners and just toward sin? Matthew 27 answers that question.

Jesus was mocked, beaten, and crucified between two criminals. Darkness covered the land for three hours. Then He cried out and gave up His spirit. And the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. The earth shook. A Roman centurion said, "Truly this was God's Son" (Matthew 27:54).

At the cross, God did not leave sin unpunished. He punished it fully, in His Son. And because the punishment fell on Jesus, God can be compassionate and gracious to you without being unjust. Both sides of His name meet at the cross.

Take your time with Matthew 27 today. Do not rush it.

Think about it: What does the cross tell you about how seriously God takes sin, and how much He loves you?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You bore the punishment I deserved. Thank You. I stand forgiven because of Your cross.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 48

The Relief of Confession

Today's reading: Exodus 35-36; Psalm 32

> *How blessed **is** he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed **is** the man to whom the LORD does not count iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!*
>
> Psalm 32:1-2 (SLB)

In Exodus 35 and 36 the people bring offerings for the tabernacle, and they bring so much that Moses has to tell them to stop. When hearts are right with God, giving overflows.

Psalm 32 was likely written by David after his sin with Bathsheba. He describes what it was like before he confessed. When he kept silent, his bones wasted away, and God's hand was heavy on him day and night. Hidden sin wears you out.

Then: "My sin I made known to You, and my iniquity I did not cover; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' and You, You forgave the iniquity of my sin."

Notice the order. David stopped covering his sin, and God covered it. We try to hide what we have done, and it eats us up inside. When we bring it into the open before God, He forgives it. That is the relief this psalm sings about: "How blessed ***is*** he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!"

Paul quotes this psalm in Romans 4 to show that forgiveness is a gift, not a wage.

Think about it: Is there something you have been keeping silent about before God?

Pray

Lord, I stop hiding. I confess my sin to You now. Thank You for covering it with the blood of Jesus and lifting the weight off me.

DAY 49

He Is Not Here

Today's reading: Exodus 37-38; Matthew 28; Psalm 33

> *And the angel, answering, said to the women, "Do not fear, you; for I know that you seek Jesus, who has been crucified. He is not here; for He has been raised, just as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord was lying.*
>
> Matthew 28:5-6 (SLB)

Early on the first day of the week, the women came to the tomb. There was an earthquake, and an angel rolled back the stone and sat on it. The guards shook and became like dead men. Then the angel spoke to the women: "Do not fear... He is not here; for He has been raised, just as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord was lying."

"Just as He said." Jesus told His disciples over and over that He would be killed and rise on the third day. They did not understand it. But He did exactly what He said He would do.

The resurrection is the center of the Christian faith. Paul says if Christ has not been raised, our faith is worthless (1 Corinthians 15:17). But He has been raised. The tomb was empty, and hundreds of people saw Him alive.

Then Jesus met the disciples in Galilee and gave them their marching orders: go and make disciples of all the nations. And He promised, "I am with you all the days, until the consummation of the age."

Psalm 33 ends, "Let Your steadfast love, LORD, be on us, just as we hope for You."

Think about it: How does knowing Jesus kept His word about rising again help you trust His other promises?

Pray

Risen Lord Jesus, You are alive, just as You said. Help me live today as someone who knows the tomb is empty.

Go deeper: the free Matthew study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 50

Just as the Lord Commanded

Today's reading: Exodus 39

> *According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did all the service. And Moses saw all the work, and look, they had done it; just as the LORD had commanded, so they had done. And Moses blessed them.*
>
> Exodus 39:42-43 (SLB)

Exodus 39 describes the priests' clothing being made, and one phrase keeps coming back, about ten times in the chapter: "just as the LORD had commanded Moses." Then the chapter ends with Moses inspecting everything, seeing it was done right, and blessing the people.

I like this chapter. There is nothing flashy in it. No miracles, no battles. Just people doing careful work exactly the way God asked. Weavers, goldsmiths, jewelers, tailors. Nobody got creative with God's instructions. They did it His way, and it was blessed.

A lot of the Christian life is like Exodus 39. Showing up, doing the work, following instructions, and getting the details right. Paying bills on time. Keeping your word. Being honest on a timesheet. Reading your Bible on a day when it feels dry. None of it makes headlines, but God notices.

Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Obedience in small things is how love shows up most days.

Think about it: Is there an instruction from God you have been "improving on" instead of just doing?

Pray

Lord, I want to do things the way You commanded, not the way I prefer. Make me faithful in the small things, and let my work please You.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 51

The Glory Filled the Tent

Today's reading: Exodus 40; Leviticus 1; Mark 1

> *And the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*
>
> Exodus 40:34 (SLB)

The tabernacle was finally finished and set up, and Moses put every piece in its place. Then "the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." It was so heavy with God's presence that Moses himself could not go in.

All those chapters of measurements and materials led to this moment. God moved in.

From that day on, the cloud led Israel. When it lifted, they moved. When it stayed, they stayed. God was not a theory to them. He was in the middle of the camp, leading the way.

Today we also start Leviticus and Mark. Leviticus 1 is about the burnt offering, an animal completely given to God. Mark 1 opens fast: John the Baptist, Jesus' baptism, temptation, calling fishermen, healing the sick. And in verse 35, early in the morning while it was still dark, Jesus went to a lonely place to pray.

If the Son of God needed time alone with the Father, how much more do we? The glory of God fills the life of a person who makes room for Him.

Think about it: Where and when do you make room each day to meet with God?

Pray

LORD, fill my life the way You filled the tabernacle. Lead me, and teach me to rise early and seek You like Jesus did.

Go deeper: the free Exodus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 52

Friends Who Dig Through Roofs

Today's reading: Leviticus 2-4; Mark 2; Psalm 34

> *And they come to Him, bringing a paralytic being carried by four. And not being able to come near to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof where He was; and having dug **it** out, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. Now Jesus, having seen their faith, says to the paralytic, "Child, your sins have been forgiven you."*
>
> Mark 2:3-5 (SLB)

Four men brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus, but the house was packed. So they climbed onto the roof, dug through it, and lowered him down right in front of Jesus.

Mark says, "Jesus, having seen their faith." Their faith. The friends' faith. Jesus looked at the four men holding the ropes and responded to them. Then He said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins have been forgiven you."

The religious leaders were offended, because only God can forgive sins. They were right about that. So Jesus healed the man too, to show He had that authority. The man picked up his mat and walked out in front of everyone.

Who are you carrying to Jesus? Some people cannot get there on their own. They are too hurt, too far gone, or too stubborn. Your prayers, your invitations, and your faithfulness might be the ropes that bring them to Him.

In Leviticus 2 through 4 we read about grain offerings, peace offerings, and sin offerings for sins done unknowingly. Even sins we do not know about need covering. Psalm 34:8 invites us to "Taste and see that the LORD ***is*** good."

Think about it: Who is one person you could "carry" to Jesus in prayer this week?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I bring You my friends who cannot get to You on their own. Forgive them, heal them, and use me to carry them.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 53

Keep the Fire Burning

Today's reading: Leviticus 5-6

> *A fire shall be kept burning continually on the altar; it shall not go out.*
>
> Leviticus 6:13 (SLB)

Leviticus 5 and 6 deal with guilt offerings. If someone cheated a neighbor, lied about something left in his care, or kept something he found, he had to repay it in full, add a fifth, and bring an offering to God. Making it right with God included making it right with the person you wronged.

That still applies. Being forgiven does not cancel the need to pay back what you took.

Then comes a small verse I love. "A fire shall be kept burning continually on the altar; it shall not go out." The priests had to tend it every morning, adding wood and clearing ashes. God lit that fire Himself (Leviticus 9:24), but people had to keep feeding it.

Your faith is like that. God lit it. But it takes daily wood: time in His Word, prayer, worship, fellowship. Skip those long enough, and the fire burns low. Nobody's faith goes cold in a day. It goes cold one skipped morning at a time.

You are already doing this by reading today. Keep adding wood.

Think about it: What do you need to add to your daily life to keep the fire from going out?

Pray

Lord, You lit the fire in me. Help me keep it burning, morning by morning, and help me make things right with anyone I have wronged.

Go deeper: the free Leviticus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 54

That They Might Be with Him

Today's reading: Leviticus 7; Mark 3; Psalm 35

> *And He appointed twelve, so that they might be with Him, and so that He might send them out to preach,*
>
> Mark 3:14 (SLB)

In Mark 3 Jesus went up on a mountain and called the ones He wanted, and they came to Him. He appointed twelve "so that they might be with Him, and so that He might send them out to preach."

The order matters. First, be with Him. Then, be sent. Before the disciples ever preached a sermon or cast out a demon, they spent time with Jesus, walking, eating, listening, and watching how He lived.

Many of us want to skip straight to doing things for God. Service is good, but service that does not come from time with Jesus burns out fast. The fruit comes from the relationship.

Look at the list of the twelve too. Fishermen, a tax collector, and Simon the Zealot, a man who probably wanted to overthrow Rome. Matthew worked for Rome. Jesus put them on the same team. Being with Him changes how we see people who used to be our enemies.

Later in the chapter Jesus' own family thought He had lost His mind. He said whoever does the will of God is His brother and sister and mother. In Jesus we get a new family.

Think about it: Are you trying to do things for Jesus without spending time with Him?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I want to be with You before I do anything for You. Call me close, then send me out.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 55

Fire from the Lord

Today's reading: Leviticus 8-9

> *And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and they came out, and they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. And fire went out from before the LORD, and it consumed on the altar the burnt offering and the fat* ***portions****; and all the people saw, and they shouted, and they fell on their faces.*
>
> Leviticus 9:23-24 (SLB)

Aaron and his sons were ordained as priests, and on the eighth day Aaron offered the first sacrifices. Then Moses and Aaron blessed the people, the glory of the LORD appeared, and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the offering on the altar. All the people shouted and fell on their faces.

God accepted the sacrifice. That was the point. You can build the altar and lay out the offering perfectly, but only God can send the fire.

Our worship is the same. We can plan a great service, sing well, and preach clearly, but only God can make it alive. The right response to Him showing up is what the people did: shout for joy and fall on their faces. Joy and reverence together.

Leviticus 8 describes how the priests were set apart: washed, clothed, anointed with oil, and covered with blood. Peter says believers are now "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). You have been washed by Christ, clothed in His righteousness, and anointed with His Spirit. You are set apart for God.

Translating the Steadfast Literal Bible word for word slowed me down in a way normal reading never did. Passages I thought I knew well hit with fresh weight once I had to weigh every word. Familiarity gave way to reverence. Scripture still has the power to stop us in our tracks when we read it closely.

Think about it: When was the last time you were moved to awe in God's presence?

Pray

LORD, send Your fire on my worship. I cannot make it real by myself. Let me know both the joy and the fear of being in Your presence.

Go deeper: the free Leviticus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 56

Who Then Is This?

Today's reading: Leviticus 10-11; Mark 4

> *And having been awakened, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Be quiet! Be silenced!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How **is it that** you do not have faith?" And they feared a great fear, and they were saying to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"*
>
> Mark 4:39-41 (SLB)

After a day of teaching in parables, Jesus told the disciples to cross the Sea of Galilee. A violent storm came up, and the waves filled the boat. Jesus was asleep on a cushion. They woke Him and asked, "Teacher, does it not concern You that we are perishing?"

Jesus got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Be quiet! Be silenced!" The wind stopped, and there was a great calm. Then He asked them, "Why are you so fearful?"

The disciples went from fear of the storm to a different kind of fear, awe of Jesus. "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" They had followed a teacher into the boat. They found out they were in the boat with God.

Leviticus 10 shows that same holy power. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire that God had not commanded, and fire came out and consumed them. God said, "Among those near Me I will be sanctified." The God in the boat is the same God of Sinai.

Jesus asleep in a storm is not a sign that He does not care. It is a sign that He is not worried.

Think about it: What storm in your life do you need to bring to the One who commands the wind?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You rule the wind and the waves. I bring You the storm I am in. Calm my fear, and grow my faith.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 57

Daughter, Go in Peace

Today's reading: Leviticus 12-13; Mark 5; Psalm 36

> *And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace, and be healthy from your affliction."*
>
> Mark 5:34 (SLB)

Leviticus 12 and 13 deal with uncleanness: after childbirth and with skin diseases. A person who was unclean could not go to the tabernacle and had to stay apart. Leviticus 15 says a woman with a long-term flow of blood was unclean the whole time, and anyone she touched became unclean.

Now read Mark 5. A woman had bled for twelve years. She had spent all her money on doctors and only got worse. For twelve years she had been unclean, cut off from worship and from touch. She pushed through the crowd and touched Jesus' clothing from behind, thinking that would be enough.

She was healed instantly. And Jesus stopped. He would not let her slip away. He wanted her to hear something. "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace, and be healthy from your affliction."

Under the law, touching an unclean person made you unclean. With Jesus it works the other way. His cleanness flowed into her. He called her "Daughter," the only time in the Gospels He calls someone that.

Psalm 36:7 says, "How precious ***is*** Your steadfast love, God!"

Think about it: What part of your life do you feel is "unclean" and needs Jesus' touch?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I reach out to You. Make me clean, and let me hear You call me Your child.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 58

The Bird That Went Free

Today's reading: Leviticus 14

> *then the priest shall command, and he shall take for the one cleansing himself two living clean birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet of a worm, and hyssop. And the priest shall command, and he shall slaughter the one bird into an earthenware vessel over living water.* ***As for*** *the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood and the scarlet of the worm and the hyssop, and he shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the living water. And he shall spatter* ***it*** *on the one cleansing himself from the leprosy seven times, and he shall pronounce him clean, and he shall let the living bird go over the face of the field.*
>
> Leviticus 14:4-7 (SLB)

Leviticus 14 describes the ceremony for a leper who had been healed. The priest took two clean birds. One was killed over fresh water in a clay pot. The living bird was dipped in the blood of the first, along with cedar, scarlet yarn, and hyssop. The blood was sprinkled on the healed man seven times, and he was declared clean. Then the living bird was set free over the open field.

Picture that bird flying off with blood on its wings. That is a picture of the gospel. One died, so the other could go free.

Notice also that the priest did not heal the leper. He went outside the camp to examine him and declare him clean after God healed him. When Jesus healed lepers, He told them to go show themselves to the priest (Mark 1:44). The priests would have had to run this ceremony for men Jesus had cleansed. Very few priests ever had to do this for real.

If you belong to Christ, you are the living bird. He died. You fly free.

Think about it: How does it feel to know someone else's blood bought your freedom?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You died so I could go free. I do not want to waste that freedom. Let my life fly for You.

Go deeper: the free Leviticus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 59

Delight Yourself in the Lord

Today's reading: Leviticus 15; Psalm 37

> *And take delight in the LORD, and He will give you the requests of your heart. Roll your way on the LORD, and trust in Him, and He Himself will act.*
>
> Psalm 37:4-5 (SLB)

Leviticus 15 deals with bodily discharges, and I will be honest, it is not the most inspiring reading. But it reminds us that God cared about every part of His people's lives, even the private ones, and that He is holy.

Psalm 37 is a wisdom psalm from David in his old age. He tells us not to fret over evildoers who seem to prosper, because they will wither like grass. Then he says, "take delight in the LORD, and He will give you the requests of your heart."

That is not a promise that God gives you whatever you want. When you delight in God, your desires start to change. The more you love Him, the more you want what He wants. Then He gives you those things.

Verse 5 says, "Roll your way on the LORD, and trust in Him, and He Himself will act." I love that picture. You take the heavy thing you have been carrying and roll it onto Him. Then you trust Him and let Him act.

Verse 25 is David's testimony: he had been young and now was old, and he had not seen the righteous forsaken.

Think about it: What worry do you need to roll onto the Lord today?

Pray

LORD, I want to delight in You more than in anything You give. I roll my way onto You. Change my desires, and act on my behalf.

Days 60 to 90

DAY 60

The Goat That Carried It Away

Today's reading: Leviticus 16-17; Mark 6

> *And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the living goat, and he shall confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions, for all their sins; and he shall put them on the head of the goat and send **it** away into the wilderness by the hand of a man **who is** ready. And the goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a land cut off; and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness.*
>
> Leviticus 16:21-22 (SLB)

Leviticus 16 describes the Day of Atonement, the most solemn day of Israel's year. Once a year the high priest went behind the veil with blood. He also took two goats. One was killed as a sin offering. Over the other, Aaron laid both hands, confessed all the sins of Israel, and sent it away into the wilderness, never to return.

Two goats, two sides of what Jesus did. The first shows that sin must be paid for with a life. Hebrews 9:22 says that apart from shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. The second shows where our sin goes once it is paid for. It is carried off, far away. Psalm 103:12 says that as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Leviticus 17:11 adds that the life of the flesh is in the blood, given on the altar to make atonement. That is why the cross was bloody. It had to be.

In Mark 6 Jesus feeds five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. He saw the crowd and had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. The same compassion that fed them carried our sins away.

Think about it: Do you still carry guilt for sins God has already sent far away?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You paid for my sin and carried it away. Help me stop dragging back what You have removed.

Go deeper: the free Leviticus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 61

Be Holy, Love Your Neighbor

Today's reading: Leviticus 18-19

> *You shall not take vengeance, and you shall not keep **a grudge** against the sons of your people; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I **am** the LORD.*
>
> Leviticus 19:18 (SLB)

Leviticus 18 and 19 move from sacrifices to daily life. Chapter 18 lays out God's boundaries for sexuality and family. Chapter 19 opens with the theme of the whole book: "You shall be holy, for holy ***am*** I, the LORD your God."

Then look at what holiness covers. Leave the edges of your field for the poor. Do not steal or lie. Pay your worker the same day. Do not curse the deaf or trip the blind. Do not show favoritism in court. Do not gossip. Honor the elderly. Treat the foreigner like a native, and use honest weights and measures.

Holiness is not just about avoiding certain sins. It is about being set apart for God in how we treat people. And in the middle of the chapter comes the line Jesus called the second greatest commandment: "you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I ***am*** the LORD."

Notice what comes just before it: "You shall not take vengeance, and you shall not keep ***a grudge***." Loving your neighbor starts with letting go of what they did to you.

"I am the LORD" is repeated again and again through this chapter. We treat people right because of who God is.

Think about it: Who is the "neighbor" God is asking you to love better this week?

Pray

Holy God, make me holy like You. Let it show in how I work, how I talk, and how I treat the people around me.

Go deeper: the free Leviticus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 62

It Comes from the Heart

Today's reading: Leviticus 20-21; Mark 7

> *And He was saying, "That which goes out of the man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, go out the evil thoughts, adulteries, sexual immoralities, murders, thefts, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, sensuality, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil* ***things*** *go out from within and defile the man."*
>
> Mark 7:20-23 (SLB)

In Leviticus 20 and 21 God sets penalties for serious sins and stricter standards for priests. The closer you served to God's presence, the more careful you had to be.

In Mark 7 the Pharisees complained that Jesus' disciples ate without the ceremonial hand washing. Jesus answered that they had set aside God's commandments to keep their own traditions. Then He made a statement that shocked everyone. It is not what goes into a man that defiles him, but what comes out.

"For from within, out of the heart of men, go out the evil thoughts, adulteries, sexual immoralities, murders, thefts, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, sensuality, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness."

That is a hard list to read. We would like to blame our sin on our upbringing, our environment, or other people. Jesus puts it squarely in the heart. The problem is not out there. It is in here.

That is bad news and good news. Bad, because we cannot fix ourselves by washing our hands or changing our surroundings. Good, because Jesus came to give us new hearts. Ezekiel 36:26 promised a new heart and a new spirit. Only God can do heart surgery.

Think about it: Which item on Jesus' list do you most need Him to deal with in your heart?

Pray

Lord Jesus, my problem is my heart. Do not just clean my hands. Give me a new heart and a new spirit.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 63

My Sighing Is Not Hidden

Today's reading: Leviticus 22; Psalm 38

> *Lord, all my desire **is** before You, and my sighing is not hidden from You.*
>
> Psalm 38:9 (SLB)

Leviticus 22 tells the priests that the animals brought to God had to be without blemish. No blind, injured, or sickly animals. God deserves our best, not our leftovers.

Psalm 38 is one of David's darkest psalms. He is sick, in pain, and he connects it to his own sin. His friends stay away, his enemies plot against him, and he feels like a deaf man who cannot answer.

In the middle of all that, he writes, "Lord, all my desire ***is*** before You, and my sighing is not hidden from You."

Sometimes we cannot even put our prayers into words. We just sigh. David says God hears that too. Romans 8:26 says the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

The psalm ends with a short, desperate prayer: "Do not forsake me, LORD; my God, do not be far from me. Hurry to my help, Lord, my salvation."

If all you can manage today is a sigh, bring it to God. He knows what it means.

Think about it: What are you carrying that you have not been able to put into words?

Pray

Lord, You know every desire and every sigh. Do not be far from me. Hurry to help me, my Savior.

DAY 64

Take Up Your Cross

Today's reading: Leviticus 23-24; Mark 8

> *And having called the crowd to **Him** with His disciples, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross, and let him follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life on account of Me and the gospel, this **one** will save it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?*
>
> Mark 8:34-36 (SLB)

In Mark 8 Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ. Then Jesus tells the disciples He must suffer, be killed, and rise again. Peter pulls Him aside and rebukes Him. Jesus turns and rebukes Peter in front of everyone.

Then He calls the crowd and says, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross, and let him follow Me."

In that day, a man carrying a cross was a man on his way to die. Jesus was not talking about a bad back or an annoying coworker. He was talking about dying to our own way, our rights, our plans, every day.

"For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?" Some people get everything they ever wanted and lose themselves in the process.

Leviticus 23 lays out Israel's feasts: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and Booths. Christ died at Passover and rose on the day of Firstfruits, and the Spirit came at Pentecost. God keeps His calendar.

Think about it: What is one specific way you could "deny yourself" for Jesus this week?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I want to follow You, cross and all. Teach me to lose my life for You, so I can find real life in You.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 65

The Year of Jubilee

Today's reading: Leviticus 25; Psalm 39

> *And you shall sanctify the year of the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty in the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you, and you shall return each man to his possession, and each man to his clan you shall return.*
>
> Leviticus 25:10 (SLB)

Leviticus 25 lays out one of the most remarkable laws in the Bible. Every seventh year the land was to rest. And after seven sevens, in the fiftieth year, came the Jubilee. Debts were cancelled. Slaves went free. Land that had been sold went back to the family that first owned it.

"Proclaim liberty in the land to all its inhabitants." Those words are on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia.

Why would God build this into Israel's economy? Because the land was His (Leviticus 25:23), and because He did not want anyone trapped in poverty forever. Every family got a fresh start.

When Jesus began His ministry, He read from Isaiah 61 and said He came to proclaim release to the captives and the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus is our Jubilee. He cancels the debt we cannot pay and sets the slave to sin free.

Psalm 39 reminds us how short life is. David asks God to show him the measure of his days. A breath. A shadow. Use the time you have, and live as someone who has been set free.

Think about it: What does it mean for you that Jesus has proclaimed liberty over your life?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are my Jubilee. You cancelled my debt and set me free. Help me live like a free person today.

Go deeper: the free Leviticus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 66

Help My Unbelief

Today's reading: Leviticus 26; Mark 9; Psalm 40

> *And Jesus said to him, "If you are able to believe, all things **are** possible to the **one** believing." And immediately the father of the child, having cried out with tears, was saying, "I believe, Lord; help my unbelief."*
>
> Mark 9:23-24 (SLB)

A father brought his son to the disciples. The boy had a demon that threw him into fire and water to destroy him. The disciples could not cast it out. When Jesus came, the father said, if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.

Jesus picked up the "if." "If you are able to believe, all things ***are*** possible to the ***one*** believing."

The father's answer is one of the most honest prayers in the Bible: "I believe, Lord; help my unbelief."

He had faith, and he had doubt, at the same time. Most of us live there. Jesus did not send him away until his faith was perfect. He healed the boy.

You do not have to have it all together to come to Jesus. Bring Him the faith you have, and ask Him for the faith you lack.

Psalm 40 fits right in: "I waited intently for the LORD, and He inclined to me and heard my cry for help. And He brought me up from a pit." Leviticus 26 lists the blessings of obedience and the discipline that would come for disobedience. But even there, God promises He will remember His covenant if they humble themselves.

Think about it: Where do you need to pray, "I believe, Lord; help my unbelief"?

Pray

Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief. Take the little faith I have and make it grow.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 67

It Is Holy to the Lord

Today's reading: Leviticus 27

> *And all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land, of the fruit of the tree, **is** the LORD's; it **is** holy to the LORD.*
>
> Leviticus 27:30 (SLB)

Leviticus ends with vows and dedications: what happened when someone promised a person, an animal, a house, or a field to God. It closes with the tithe. "All the tithe of the land... ***is*** the LORD's; it ***is*** holy to the LORD."

A tithe is a tenth. Israel gave the first tenth of their crops and herds to God. Notice how God puts it. It was not their money that they were being generous with. It was His. It already belonged to Him.

Under the new covenant we are not under the law of the tithe, but the principle is still there. Everything we have belongs to God, and giving the first part back is how we show we believe that. Paul says each one should give as he has purposed in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

I will be honest. Giving is one of the clearest tests of where our trust is. It is easy to say God is first. It is harder to write the check first.

Congratulations, by the way. You just finished Leviticus. A lot of people give up on their reading plan here. You did not.

Think about it: What does your giving say about who you think owns your money?

Pray

Lord, everything I have is Yours. Help me give the first and best back to You with a cheerful heart.

Go deeper: the free Leviticus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 68

Jesus Loved Him

Today's reading: Numbers 1-2; Mark 10; Psalm 41

> *And Jesus, having looked at him, loved him and said to him, "One **thing** you lack: go, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me, having taken up the cross." But he, having become gloomy at the word, went away grieving; for he was **one** having many possessions.*
>
> Mark 10:21-22 (SLB)

Today we start Numbers. Chapters 1 and 2 count the fighting men of Israel and arrange the tribes around the tabernacle. God was in the center, and every tribe had its place.

In Mark 10 a rich young man ran up to Jesus, knelt down, and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. He said he had kept the commandments since his youth. Then Mark adds a detail the other Gospels leave out: "Jesus, having looked at him, loved him."

Jesus loved him, and because He loved him, He told him the truth. "One ***thing*** you lack: go, sell whatever you have and give to the poor... and come, follow Me." His money was his god, and Jesus put His finger right on it.

The man went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

Real love does not just tell people what they want to hear. Jesus loved this man enough to name the one thing standing between him and God. And Jesus loves you enough to do the same.

Psalm 41 opens, "How blessed ***is he who*** considers ***the*** poor." The rich man was asked to do exactly that and could not.

Think about it: If Jesus looked at you with love and named "one thing you lack," what would it be?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You love me enough to tell me the truth. Show me the one thing I am holding on to, and give me the courage to let it go.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 69

My Soul Thirsts for God

Today's reading: Numbers 3; Psalm 42

> *As a deer pants for channels of water, so my soul pants for You, God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when will I come and appear* ***before*** *the face of God?*
>
> Psalm 42:1-2 (SLB)

Numbers 3 lists the Levites and their jobs. God took the Levites as His own in place of every firstborn son of Israel. Some carried the tabernacle, some guarded it, and some served inside. Every job mattered.

Psalm 42 is written by someone far from home and far from the temple. He remembers leading crowds in worship, and now he cannot get there. His tears have been his food day and night, and people keep asking him, "Where is your God?"

"As a deer pants for channels of water, so my soul pants for You, God." Picture a deer in a dry land, worn out, searching for a stream. That is how the psalmist feels about God. Not mildly interested. Desperate.

Then he talks to himself, and this is worth learning to do: "Why are you bowed down, my soul, and ***why*** are you in turmoil within me? Wait for God, for I will yet give thanks to Him."

Do not just listen to your feelings. Talk back to them with the truth. Tell your soul to hope in God. The dry season will end.

Think about it: When you feel down, do you listen to yourself or talk to yourself with God's truth?

Pray

God, my soul is thirsty for You. When I am discouraged, remind me to hope in You. I will yet praise You.

DAY 70

Faith and Forgiveness

Today's reading: Numbers 4; Mark 11; Psalm 43

> *And Jesus, answering, says to them, "Have faith of God. For truly I say to you that whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that the things he says happen, it will be **done** for him, whatever he says. Because of this I say to you, all things whatever you ask, praying, believe that you receive **them**, and it will be **done** for you. And whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who **is** in the heavens may also forgive you your trespasses.*
>
> Mark 11:22-25 (SLB)

In Mark 11 Jesus cursed a fig tree that had leaves but no fruit, and the next morning it was withered from the roots. The disciples were amazed. Jesus told them to have faith in God. Whoever says to this mountain, be taken up and cast into the sea, and does not doubt, it will be done.

Then He added something we often skip. "And whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who ***is*** in the heavens may also forgive you your trespasses."

Faith that moves mountains and forgiveness go together. You cannot pray with real power while holding a grudge. Unforgiveness clogs the line.

The fig tree is a warning too. It looked healthy, but it had no fruit. Right after that, Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple, which was also full of activity and empty of real worship. God is not impressed by leaves.

Numbers 4 gives detailed instructions for carrying the holy things. Psalm 43 prays, "Send Your light and Your truth; let them lead me." Pray with faith. Forgive. Bear fruit.

Think about it: Is there anyone you need to forgive before you pray today?

Pray

Father, I believe You can move mountains. I forgive the people who have wronged me, and I ask You to forgive me. Make my life fruitful, not just leafy.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 71

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

Today's reading: Numbers 5-6

> *"May the LORD bless you, and may He keep you; may the LORD make His face shine toward you, and may He be gracious to you; may the LORD lift up His face toward you, and may He set peace for you."'*
>
> Numbers 6:24-26 (SLB)

Numbers 5 deals with purity in the camp, and chapter 6 describes the Nazirite vow, a special promise to be set apart to God for a time: no wine, no haircut, no touching the dead.

Then God gives Aaron the words he is to speak over the people. You may have heard this blessing at the end of a church service. It is worth slowing down to read it.

"May the LORD bless you, and may He keep you; may the LORD make His face shine toward you, and may He be gracious to you; may the LORD lift up His face toward you, and may He set peace for you."

Three times the name of the LORD. Three lines that build on each other. Blessing and protection. Favor and grace. Attention and peace. When someone's face shines toward you, they are glad to see you. When they lift up their face toward you, they are paying attention.

Verse 27 tells us why the priests said it: so they would put God's name on the people. To be blessed is to be marked as His.

This is not a wish. It is what God wants for His people. Read it over your own life today. Then read it over your family.

Think about it: Who could you speak this blessing over this week?

Pray

LORD, bless me and keep me. Make Your face shine on me, be gracious to me, and give me Your peace. Put Your name on my family.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 72

The Widow's Two Coins

Today's reading: Numbers 7; Mark 12; Psalm 44

> *And Jesus, having sat down opposite the treasury, was watching how the crowd casts copper **money** into the treasury; and many rich **people** were casting in much. And one poor widow, having come, cast in two lepta, which is a quadrans. And having called His disciples to **Him**, He says to them, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has cast in more than all those having cast into the treasury; for all cast in out of what is abounding to them, but she out of her poverty cast in all that she had, her whole livelihood."*
>
> Mark 12:41-44 (SLB)

Numbers 7 is the longest chapter in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Each of the twelve tribal leaders brought the exact same offering for the altar, and the Bible lists every one of them in full, twelve times. God did not get tired of recording their gifts. He noticed each one.

In Mark 12 Jesus sat across from the temple treasury and watched people giving. Rich people threw in large amounts. Then a poor widow put in two small copper coins, almost worthless.

Jesus called His disciples over. "This poor widow has cast in more than all those having cast into the treasury; for all cast in out of what is abounding to them, but she out of her poverty cast in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

God does not measure gifts by the amount. He measures them by what they cost us and by the heart behind them. The rich gave from their extra. She gave from her need.

Earlier in the chapter Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The widow did that with two coins.

Think about it: Do you give God what is left over, or what costs you something?

Pray

Lord, You see every gift and every heart. Give me a heart like that widow's, willing to trust You with everything.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 73

Given to Serve

Today's reading: Numbers 8

> *And I have given the Levites **as** given **ones** to Aaron and to his sons from among the sons of Israel, to serve the service of the sons of Israel in the tent of meeting and to make atonement for the sons of Israel, and there shall not be a plague among the sons of Israel when the sons of Israel draw near to the holy place."*
>
> Numbers 8:19 (SLB)

Numbers 8 describes the setting apart of the Levites. They were washed, shaved, and given new clothes. The people laid their hands on them, and they were presented to God as a wave offering. God said He had given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons to serve at the tabernacle.

Notice the word "given." The Levites belonged to God, and God gave them to serve His people. Their service was a gift, not a career move.

Verse 25 adds an interesting detail. At age fifty the Levites stopped the heavy work but could keep helping their brothers. God does not throw people away when they get older. Their role changes. Experience still has a place in God's house.

Today, every believer is called to serve. Ephesians 4:11-12 says Christ gave leaders to the church to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Not just pastors. You.

What gift has God given you to serve His people? A listening ear, a strong back, a gift for teaching, a way with kids, a talent for numbers? You were washed and set apart so you could serve.

Think about it: How are you serving God's people right now?

Pray

Lord, I am Yours, set apart to serve. Show me where You want me to serve in Your church, and help me do it gladly.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 74

Following the Cloud

Today's reading: Numbers 9-10; Mark 13; Psalm 45

> *And according to the taking up of the cloud from over the tent, after that the sons of Israel would set out; and in the place where the cloud would settle, there the sons of Israel would camp. At the mouth of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out, and at the mouth of the LORD they would camp; all the days that the cloud would settle over the tabernacle they would camp.*
>
> Numbers 9:17-18 (SLB)

Numbers 9 describes how Israel traveled. When the cloud lifted from the tabernacle, they packed up and followed. When the cloud settled, they camped. Sometimes it stayed for two days, sometimes a month, sometimes a year. "At the mouth of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out, and at the mouth of the LORD they would camp."

I imagine that was hard. You finally get the tent set up and the cloud lifts. Or you are ready to move on and the cloud just sits there for months.

God's guidance still works like that. Sometimes He moves us when we want to stay. Sometimes He keeps us when we want to go. The question is whether we will follow the cloud or our own plans.

In Numbers 10 Israel finally sets out from Sinai. Moses prays, "Rise up, LORD," when the ark set out, and "Return, LORD," when it rested.

In Mark 13 Jesus says, "The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My words will certainly not pass away." Plans change. Seasons change. His word does not.

Think about it: Are you in a season of waiting or a season of moving? How can you follow God in it?

Pray

LORD, I want to go when You go and stay when You stay. Give me patience in the waiting and courage in the moving.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 75

Is the Lord's Hand Short?

Today's reading: Numbers 11

> *And the LORD said to Moses, "Is the hand of the LORD short? Now you shall see whether My word will happen to you or not."*
>
> Numbers 11:23 (SLB)

The people grumbled about the manna. They remembered the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt, as if they had been on vacation instead of in slavery. Grumbling has a bad memory.

Moses was worn out. He told God he could not carry all these people by himself and would rather die. God answered by giving seventy elders His Spirit to share the load. Then He promised meat, a whole month of it.

Moses doubted. Six hundred thousand men? Even if every flock and every fish were gathered, it would not be enough. God answered, "Is the hand of the LORD short? Now you shall see whether My word will happen to you or not."

Then quail came in on the wind and covered the camp.

When two men started prophesying in the camp, Joshua wanted Moses to stop them. Moses said, "Who will grant ***that*** all the people of the LORD ***were*** prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit on them!" At Pentecost that wish came true. Every believer has the Spirit.

Think about it: What problem have you decided is bigger than God's reach?

Pray

LORD, Your hand is not short. Forgive me for grumbling and for doubting. I trust You to provide what I need.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 76

We Are Well Able

Today's reading: Numbers 12-13; Mark 14; Psalm 46

> *And Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and he said, "We shall surely go up, and we shall take possession of it, for we shall surely prevail over it." And the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for it **is** stronger than we."*
>
> Numbers 13:30-31 (SLB)

Moses sent twelve spies into Canaan. They came back after forty days with a cluster of grapes so big two men had to carry it on a pole. The land was everything God said. But ten of the spies said the cities were fortified and the people were giants. "We are not able to go up against the people, for it ***is*** stronger than we."

Caleb quieted the people and said, "We shall surely go up, and we shall take possession of it, for we shall surely prevail over it."

Same land. Same giants. Two different reports. The ten measured the giants against themselves. Caleb measured the giants against God.

In Numbers 12, just before this, Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses. God defended him and described him as "very humble, more than any man who ***was*** on the face of the ground." Humility and courage are not opposites. Moses had both.

In Mark 14 Jesus is anointed, celebrates the Last Supper, prays in Gethsemane, and is arrested. Peter denies Him three times. Even the bold can falter. But Jesus did not give up on Peter.

Think about it: What giant are you measuring against yourself instead of against God?

Pray

Lord, I do not want to be one of the ten. Give me Caleb's faith to look at the giants and say, we are able, because You are with us.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 77

Another Spirit

Today's reading: Numbers 14; Psalm 47

> *But My servant Caleb, because another spirit has been with him and he has fully followed after Me, I will bring him into the land into which he went, and his seed shall possess it.*
>
> Numbers 14:24 (SLB)

The people believed the ten spies. They wept all night, wanted to pick a new leader, and talked about stoning Joshua and Caleb. God was ready to destroy them. Moses interceded, and God forgave, but He said that generation would not enter the land. They would wander forty years, one year for every day the spies were in Canaan, until they died in the wilderness.

But God singled out one man. "My servant Caleb, because another spirit has been with him and he has fully followed after Me, I will bring him into the land."

"Fully followed." Not mostly. Not when it was popular. Caleb followed God fully when the whole nation wanted to stone him.

Then the people changed their minds and tried to go up and fight anyway, without God. They were beaten badly. Obedience on your own schedule is not obedience.

Psalm 47 calls God the King of all the earth. The people of Numbers 14 forgot that. Caleb never did. Forty-five years later, at eighty-five, he would ask for a mountain full of giants. We will read about that in Joshua.

Think about it: Are you following God fully, or only where it is easy?

Pray

Lord, give me another spirit, a heart that follows You fully. Keep me from fear of the crowd and from obedience on my own terms.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 78

Standing Between the Dead and the Living

Today's reading: Numbers 15-16; Psalm 48

> *And Aaron took **it** just as Moses had spoken, and he ran into the midst of the assembly, and look, the plague had begun among the people; and he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was restrained.*
>
> Numbers 16:47-48 (SLB)

Korah, a Levite, and about 250 leaders rose up against Moses and Aaron. They said, "Enough for you!" and claimed the whole congregation was holy. What they really wanted was the priesthood. God opened the earth and swallowed the rebel leaders, and fire consumed the 250.

The next day the whole congregation grumbled that Moses had killed the LORD's people. A plague broke out. Moses told Aaron to grab his censer and hurry. "Aaron took ***it*** just as Moses had spoken, and he ran into the midst of the assembly... And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was restrained."

Picture that: an old priest running into a crowd that had just been accusing him, standing in the gap for the very people who wanted him gone.

That is what Jesus did. He stood between us and death. He did it for people who rejected Him.

Psalm 48 celebrates Zion, the city of God, as beautiful and secure. Our security is not in walls. It is in the One who stands between us and judgment.

I know what it is to be the one who drifted. I drifted from God more than once through my own bad choices, and God did not let go of me. That is why I keep praying for people who are drifting now, even when nothing seems to change. Standing in the gap does not give us control over anyone else's choices. It keeps us faithful, and it leaves the outcome with the Lord.

Think about it: Who in your life needs you to stand in the gap for them in prayer?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You stood between me and death. Make me someone who prays for others, even those who oppose me.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 79

Released for Barabbas

Today's reading: Numbers 17-18; Mark 15

> *And Pilate, wishing to do what **was** satisfying to the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and having flogged Jesus, he delivered **Him** up so that He might be crucified.*
>
> Mark 15:15 (SLB)

In Numbers 17 God settles the question of who He chose as priest. Each tribe's leader put a staff in the tabernacle overnight. In the morning, Aaron's staff had sprouted, budded, blossomed, and produced almonds. A dead stick came to life. That is how God shows His choice.

In Mark 15 Jesus stands before Pilate. Pilate knows He is innocent and that the chief priests handed Him over out of envy. It was the custom to release one prisoner at the feast. The crowd chose Barabbas, a man who had committed murder in a revolt.

"And Pilate, wishing to do what ***was*** satisfying to the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and having flogged Jesus, he delivered ***Him*** up so that He might be crucified."

Barabbas was guilty and went free. Jesus was innocent and died in his place. Barabbas may be the only man in history who could say Jesus died in his place in the most physical sense. Except that it is true of every one of us.

Pilate is a warning too. He knew what was right and did what was popular. Satisfying the crowd is a terrible way to make decisions.

Think about it: How does it feel to know you are Barabbas in this story?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I was guilty, and You took my place. I am free because You were condemned. Thank You.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 80

And Peter

Today's reading: Numbers 19-20; Mark 16; Psalm 49

> *And he says to them, "Do not be greatly alarmed. You are seeking Jesus the Nazarene, the **One** who has been crucified. He has been raised; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He said to you."*
>
> Mark 16:6-7 (SLB)

Numbers 20 is a sad chapter. Miriam dies. The people complain about water again. God tells Moses to speak to the rock, but Moses, angry, strikes it twice. Water comes out anyway, but God says Moses will not bring the people into the land. "Because you did not believe in Me, to treat Me as holy in the eyes of the sons of Israel." Leaders are held to a higher standard. Then Aaron dies on Mount Hor.

Mark 16 brings the best news ever told. The women find the stone rolled away and a young man in a white robe. "He has been raised; He is not here."

Then two little words: "go, tell His disciples and Peter." Peter, who had denied Jesus three times. Peter, who went out and wept bitterly. Jesus made sure he was named. He did not want Peter to think he had been written off.

If you have failed Jesus, and all of us have, hear this. The risen Lord knows your name, and He has not crossed it off the list. He is going ahead of you, and you will see Him.

Psalm 49 says no man can redeem his brother's life with money, but God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave. Easter proves it.

Think about it: Where do you need to hear Jesus say your name after a failure?

Pray

Risen Lord, You did not give up on Peter, and You have not given up on me. Thank You for calling me back by name.

Go deeper: the free Mark study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 81

Look and Live

Today's reading: Numbers 21

> *And the LORD said to Moses, "Make for yourself a fiery **serpent**, and set it on a standard; and it shall be **that** everyone who is bitten and sees it shall live." And Moses made a serpent of bronze, and he set it on the standard; and it happened, if the serpent had bitten a man, and he looked to the serpent of bronze, and he lived.*
>
> Numbers 21:8-9 (SLB)

Israel complained again, this time about the "worthless bread," the manna God sent from heaven every morning. God sent fiery serpents among them, and many died. The people confessed their sin and asked Moses to pray.

God's answer is strange. He did not take away the snakes. He told Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. Anyone who was bitten and looked at it would live.

That is all. Look. No medicine, no ceremony, no effort. Just look at what God provided, in faith that He would heal.

Jesus pointed back to this moment when He talked to Nicodemus. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15).

We have all been bitten by sin. The poison is already in us. The cure is not trying harder. The cure is looking to Jesus, lifted up on the cross, and trusting Him.

Many people find that too simple. They want to do something. But God's way has always been: look and live.

Think about it: Are you trying to cure yourself, or are you looking to Jesus?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You were lifted up for me. I look to You, and I trust You to heal what sin has poisoned in me.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 82

God Does Not Lie

Today's reading: Numbers 22-23

> *God **is** not a man, that He should lie, and a son of mankind, that He should relent. Has He said, and will He not do **it**? And has He spoken, and will He not establish it?*
>
> Numbers 23:19 (SLB)

Balak, king of Moab, was terrified of Israel. He hired Balaam, a prophet for profit, to curse them. On the way, Balaam's donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the road and refused to move. Balaam beat her three times, and then God opened the donkey's mouth. The donkey had more spiritual sense than the prophet.

Balak took Balaam to high places to look over Israel's camp and curse them. Every time Balaam opened his mouth, a blessing came out instead.

In the second blessing Balaam said, "God ***is*** not a man, that He should lie, and a son of mankind, that He should relent. Has He said, and will He not do ***it***? And has He spoken, and will He not establish it?"

God had promised to bless Abraham's descendants, and no amount of money could buy a curse against them. People change their minds. They lie, forget, and break promises. God does not.

That means every promise in this Bible you are reading is as solid as the day it was written. Hold on to them.

Think about it: What promise of God do you most need to believe is still true today?

Pray

God, You do not lie, and You do not change Your mind. I stand on what You have said. Help me trust Your word over my feelings.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 83

Nothing Is Impossible

Today's reading: Numbers 24-25; Luke 1; Psalm 50

> *For with God no declaration will be impossible." Then Mary said, "Look, the slave of **the** Lord; may it happen to me according to your declaration." And the angel departed from her.*
>
> Luke 1:37-38 (SLB)

Today we start Luke. Luke was a physician who carefully investigated everything from the beginning (Luke 1:3). He opens with two birth announcements. An angel tells an old priest named Zechariah that his barren wife Elizabeth will have a son, John. Zechariah doubts and is struck mute.

Then the same angel, Gabriel, goes to a young virgin in Nazareth named Mary. She will conceive by the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Son of the Most High, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. Mary asks how this can be, since she is a virgin. Gabriel says, "For with God no declaration will be impossible."

Mary's answer is one of the most beautiful lines in Scripture. "Look, the slave of ***the*** Lord; may it happen to me according to your declaration."

Mary knew what this would cost her. An unmarried, pregnant girl in a small town. Joseph might leave her. People would talk. But she said yes.

Later she sings, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." Mary needed a Savior too.

Think about it: What is God asking you to say yes to, even though it will cost you?

Pray

Lord, nothing is impossible for You. I am Your servant. Let it be to me according to Your word.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 84

The Second Count

Today's reading: Numbers 26

> *For the LORD had said of them, "They shall surely die in the wilderness." And not a man was left of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.*
>
> Numbers 26:65 (SLB)

Numbers 26 is a second census. Forty years have passed, and God counts the people again, tribe by tribe. Then comes a sobering line. Of all the men counted at Sinai, not one was left except Caleb and Joshua.

A whole generation died in the wilderness. They had seen the plagues, walked through the Red Sea, eaten manna, and heard God's voice from the mountain. And they did not enter the land, because they did not believe.

Hebrews 3 and 4 use this generation as a warning. They heard God's promise, but it did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. Seeing miracles is not the same as trusting God.

But look at the hope. A new generation stood ready to go in. God's promise did not fail. It just passed to people who would believe it.

The chapter also lists daughters of Zelophehad, and we will meet them tomorrow. God's people are not just numbers to Him. He knows every family, every name.

Think about it: What does it take to move from seeing God work to actually trusting Him?

Pray

LORD, I do not want to die in the wilderness of unbelief. Help me trust You, and let my family be a generation that goes in.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 85

Create a Clean Heart

Today's reading: Numbers 27-28; Psalm 51

> *Create for me a pure heart, God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from before You, and do not take the Spirit of Your holiness from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and a willing spirit will sustain me.*
>
> Psalm 51:10-12 (SLB)

In Numbers 27 five sisters, the daughters of Zelophehad, came to Moses with a problem. Their father had died with no sons, so his land would disappear from the family. Moses took their case to God, and God said they were right. They received the inheritance. God cares about people the system overlooks.

Then God tells Moses to appoint Joshua as his successor. Moses' first concern was that the people would not be like sheep without a shepherd.

Psalm 51 is David's prayer after the prophet Nathan confronted him about Bathsheba and Uriah. It is the model prayer of repentance. David does not blame anyone. He says, against You, You only, I have sinned.

Then he asks for more than forgiveness. He asks for a new heart. "Create for me a pure heart, God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me... Restore to me the joy of Your salvation."

Sin steals our joy. David did not lose his salvation, but he lost the joy of it. Many believers live there. Confession brings it back.

Verse 17 says, "a broken and crushed heart, God, You will not despise."

Think about it: Has sin stolen the joy of your salvation? What do you need to confess to get it back?

Pray

God, create in me a pure heart. Renew a steadfast spirit in me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation.

DAY 86

Good News of Great Joy

Today's reading: Numbers 29-30; Luke 2; Psalm 52

> *And the angel said to them, "Do not fear; for look, I announce to you great joy as good news, which will be to all the people. For there has been born to you today a Savior, who is Christ **the** Lord, in **the** city of David.*
>
> Luke 2:10-11 (SLB)

Numbers 29 and 30 cover the offerings for Israel's feasts and the rules for vows. God takes our words seriously. If you say you will do something, do it.

Luke 2 is the Christmas story, and reading it on an ordinary day is a good reminder that it is not just a holiday story. Caesar Augustus ordered a census, which put Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem, the town Micah 5:2 named as the birthplace of the Messiah. An emperor's paperwork fulfilled God's promise. Mary laid the baby in a feeding trough because there was no room in the guest room.

Then the angel appeared to shepherds, men on the bottom rung of society. "Do not fear; for look, I announce to you great joy as good news, which will be to all the people. For there has been born to you today a Savior, who is Christ ***the*** Lord."

A Savior. Not a teacher or a good example. A rescuer. Christ, the Messiah. The Lord, God Himself.

After the shepherds left, "Mary was treasuring up all these declarations, pondering ***them*** in her heart." That is a good word for us. Do not rush past the wonder.

Think about it: What does it mean to you, today, that a Savior has been born for you?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You came as a baby to be my Savior. Thank You for the good news of great joy. Let me treasure it like Mary did.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 87

None Who Does Good

Today's reading: Numbers 31; Psalm 53

> *God has looked down from **the** heavens on the sons of man to see whether there is **anyone** who acts prudently, who seeks God. Every one of them has turned back; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, there is not even one.*
>
> Psalm 53:2-3 (SLB)

Numbers 31 describes Israel's war against Midian, who had led Israel into idolatry and immorality at Peor through the advice of Balaam (Numbers 31:16). It is a hard chapter. It shows that God takes seriously those who lead His people into sin.

Psalm 53 is almost the same as Psalm 14. When God says something twice, pay attention. "God has looked down from ***the*** heavens on the sons of man to see whether there is ***anyone*** who acts prudently, who seeks God. Every one of them has turned back; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, there is not even one."

Paul quotes these words in Romans 3 to prove that everyone, Jew and Gentile, is under sin. Nobody passes the test on their own.

This is not a popular message. We like to think people are basically good. But God looked down at the whole human race and did not find one.

That is why the gospel is good news. If any of us could be good enough, Jesus would not have needed to die. Because no one is, He came to save sinners.

Think about it: Do you tend to think of yourself as basically good, or as a sinner saved by grace?

Pray

God, I am not good on my own. Thank You for seeing me in my sin and sending Jesus to save me.

DAY 88

Your Sin Will Find You

Today's reading: Numbers 32; Luke 3; Psalm 54

> *And if you do not do so, look, you have sinned against the LORD; and know your sin, that it will find you.*
>
> Numbers 32:23 (SLB)

The tribes of Reuben and Gad had large herds, and the land east of the Jordan looked good for cattle. They asked to settle there instead of crossing over. Moses was angry. He thought they were backing out of the fight, like the ten spies forty years before.

They answered that they would build pens for their cattle and towns for their families, then cross over and fight alongside their brothers until every tribe had its land. Moses agreed, with a warning: "if you do not do so, look, you have sinned against the LORD; and know your sin, that it will find you."

Notice it does not say your sin will be found out. It says your sin will find you. Sin has a way of coming back around. What we sow, we reap.

In Luke 3 John the Baptist told people what repentance looks like in real life. Share your coat. Tax collectors, do not take more than you should. Soldiers, do not extort money, and be content with your wages.

Then Jesus was baptized, and the Father spoke: "You are My Son, the beloved; in You I was well pleased."

Think about it: Is there a promise you made that you have not kept?

Pray

Lord, I do not want to break my word or hide my sin. Help me keep my promises and walk in the light.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 89

God Wrote Down the Journey

Today's reading: Numbers 33

> *And Moses wrote down their goings out according to their journeys at the mouth of the LORD; and these **are** their journeys according to their goings out.*
>
> Numbers 33:2 (SLB)

Numbers 33 is a list of every place Israel camped from Egypt to the plains of Moab, about forty stops. "Moses wrote down their goings out according to their journeys at the mouth of the LORD."

Why would God want this in the Bible? Because every one of those places mattered. Some were places of victory. Some were places of failure, like Kibroth-hattaavah, the "graves of craving," where they died after demanding meat. All of them were part of the story God was writing.

Your life has a list like that. Places where you trusted God, and places where you grumbled. Hard stretches and easy ones. God was there for all of it.

It can help to write down your own journey. Where has God brought you from? Where did He provide? Where did you fail, and how did He bring you back? Looking back builds faith for looking ahead.

The chapter ends with God's command to drive out the people of the land and destroy their idols, or else they would become thorns in Israel's sides. Leftover sin always grows back.

Think about it: What are the key "stops" in your journey with God so far?

Pray

Lord, You have been with me at every stop. Thank You for the way You have led me. Help me trust You for the road ahead.

Go deeper: the free Numbers study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 90

Good News for the Poor

Today's reading: Numbers 34-35; Luke 4; Psalm 55

> *"**The** Spirit of **the** Lord **is** upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to **the** poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken in heart, to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to **the** blind, to send away **the** oppressed in release, to proclaim **the** acceptable year of **the** Lord."*
>
> Luke 4:18-19 (SLB)

In Numbers 35 God set aside six cities of refuge. A person who killed someone by accident could run there and be safe from the avenger until he had a fair trial. God's law made room for mercy.

In Luke 4 Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for forty days, then returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. In His hometown synagogue He stood up, unrolled the scroll of Isaiah, and read: "***The*** Spirit of ***the*** Lord ***is*** upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to ***the*** poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken in heart, to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to ***the*** blind."

Then He sat down and said, today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

At first the people were impressed. Then they remembered He was Joseph's son, and by the end of the service they tried to throw Him off a cliff.

Jesus came for the poor, the brokenhearted, the captive, and the blind. That is all of us, spiritually. The question is whether we will admit it.

Psalm 55:22: "Cast your burden on the LORD, and He will sustain you."

Think about it: Which part of Jesus' mission statement speaks most to where you are?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I am poor, broken, captive, and blind without You. Bring me Your good news, Your healing, and Your freedom.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

Days 91 to 120

DAY 91

At Your Word

Today's reading: Numbers 36; Deuteronomy 1; Luke 5

> *And when He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch." And answering, Simon said to Him, "Master, having toiled through the whole night, we took nothing; but at Your declaration I will let down the net."*
>
> Luke 5:4-5 (SLB)

Today we finish Numbers and start Deuteronomy, which is Moses' farewell sermon on the plains of Moab. He reminds the new generation that God carried them through the wilderness "just as a man carries his son" (Deuteronomy 1:31).

In Luke 5 Peter had fished all night and caught nothing. He was a professional, and he was tired and washing his nets. Then Jesus, a carpenter's son, told him to go back out into deep water and drop the nets again.

Peter's answer is honest: "Master, having toiled through the whole night, we took nothing; but at Your declaration I will let down the net." He did not feel like it. He did not think it would work. But he obeyed because Jesus said so.

The nets filled so full they started to tear, and two boats nearly sank. Peter fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord." The miracle did not make Peter proud. It made him see who he was standing next to. Jesus told him not to fear. From now on he would be catching people.

Obedience does not wait for our feelings to catch up. "At Your declaration" is enough.

Think about it: What has Jesus told you to do that you have been waiting to feel like doing?

Pray

Lord Jesus, at Your word I will let down the net. I do not always understand, but I will obey. Use me to bring people to You.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 92

When I Am Afraid

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 2; Psalm 56

> ***In the*** *day I fear, I will trust in You. In God I will praise His word; in God I have trusted; I will not fear. What will flesh do to me?*
>
> Psalm 56:3-4 (SLB)

In Deuteronomy 2 Moses reminds Israel of their long walk around Edom, Moab, and Ammon. God told them not to fight those nations, because He had given them their land too. Then Moses says, "These forty years the LORD your God ***has been*** with you; you have not lacked a thing." Forty years in a desert, and not one need went unmet.

David wrote Psalm 56 when the Philistines seized him in Gath. He was so afraid that he pretended to be insane to get away (1 Samuel 21). This is the prayer of a scared man.

"***In the*** day I fear, I will trust in You." Notice he does not say "I will never be afraid." He says that when fear comes, he will choose to trust. Courage is not the absence of fear. It is trusting God in the middle of it.

Verse 8 is one of the tenderest lines in the Psalms: "put my tears in Your skin bottle; ***are they*** not in Your book?" God keeps track of every tear you cry. None of them are wasted or forgotten.

Think about it: What are you afraid of right now, and how can you trust God with it today?

Pray

God, when I am afraid, I will trust in You. You know every tear I have cried. Thank You for not forgetting a single one.

DAY 93

Love Your Enemies

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 3-4; Luke 6; Psalm 57

> *But I say to you who are hearing: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you.*
>
> Luke 6:27-28 (SLB)

In Deuteronomy 4 Moses urges Israel to remember what they saw at Sinai and not make idols. And he promises that even if they fall away and are scattered, if they search for God with all their heart, they will find Him (Deuteronomy 4:29).

In Luke 6 Jesus gives His sermon on the plain, and He says some of the hardest words in the Bible. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you."

That is not natural. Our instinct is to get even, or at least to avoid. Jesus asks us to do good to people who would not do good to us. Not because they deserve it, but because that is what our Father is like. He is kind to the ungrateful and evil (Luke 6:35).

Later in the chapter Jesus asks a pointed question: "why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" Then He tells about two houses, one built on rock and one without a foundation. The storm reveals which is which.

Loving your enemies is where the rubber meets the road. Pray for one of yours by name today.

Think about it: Who is one "enemy" you can pray for by name today?

Pray

Lord Jesus, this is hard. Help me love the people who have hurt me, bless them, and pray for them, the way You prayed for those who crucified You.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 94

Oh, That They Had This Heart

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 5; Psalm 58

> *Oh that they had this heart in them, to fear Me and to keep all My commandments all the days, so that it might go well with them and with their sons forever!*
>
> Deuteronomy 5:29 (SLB)

In Deuteronomy 5 Moses repeats the Ten Commandments for the new generation. Then he reminds them what happened at Sinai. The people were terrified by the fire and the voice of God, and they begged Moses to go near and listen for them. They promised to do whatever God said.

God heard them and said something that sounds almost like a sigh. "Oh that they had this heart in them, to fear Me and to keep all My commandments all the days, so that it might go well with them and with their sons forever!"

God knew their promise was sincere in the moment, but He also knew their hearts. They wanted to obey, but they did not have the heart to keep it up.

That is the problem the whole Old Testament shows us. The law was good, but people could not keep it. They needed new hearts. And God promised to give them. In Jeremiah 31:33 He said He would write His law on their hearts.

God's commands are not meant to make us miserable. "So that it might go well with them." Obedience is the path to life, and God wants it for us.

Psalm 58 cries out for justice against wicked rulers. God sees, and He will judge.

Think about it: Do you see God's commands as a burden or as what is best for you?

Pray

Father, I want a heart that fears You and keeps Your commands every day. Give me that heart by Your Spirit.

Go deeper: the free Deuteronomy study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 95

Hear, O Israel

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 6-7

> *Hear, Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD **is** one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. And you shall repeat them to your sons, and you shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you rise up.*
>
> Deuteronomy 6:4-7 (SLB)

These verses are called the Shema, from the first Hebrew word, "hear." Jewish people have recited them every day for thousands of years, and Jesus called them the greatest commandment.

"Hear, Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD ***is*** one." There is one God, not a team of gods. We believe that one God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but He is one God.

Then: "you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Everything. Not a slice of your heart or Sunday mornings. All of it.

Then Moses tells parents how to pass it on. Talk about God's words when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. Faith is not mainly taught in a classroom. It is taught at the dinner table, in the car, at bedtime, and over breakfast.

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 says God did not choose Israel because they were big or impressive. He chose them because He loved them. That is why we love Him. He loved us first.

Think about it: How do you talk about God in ordinary moments with the people closest to you?

Pray

LORD, You are the one true God. I want to love You with all my heart, soul, and strength, and pass that love on to the people in my home.

Go deeper: the free Deuteronomy study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 96

Not by Bread Alone

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 8-10; Luke 7; Psalm 59

> *And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, to test you, to know what **was** in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you, and caused you to hunger, and caused you to eat the manna, which you had not known, and your fathers had not known, in order to make you know that man does not live on bread alone, but on everything that goes out of the mouth of the LORD man lives.*
>
> Deuteronomy 8:2-3 (SLB)

Moses told Israel to remember the whole way God led them for forty years. Why the wilderness? "In order to humble you, to test you, to know what ***was*** in your heart." He let them be hungry, then fed them manna, "in order to make you know that man does not live on bread alone."

God allowed hunger on purpose. He was teaching them that their life depended on Him, not on their own supply. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He quoted this exact verse back to Satan.

Moses also warns about the opposite danger. When you have eaten and are full, built good houses, and your herds and silver have grown, do not forget the LORD. Do not say in your heart, "My strength and the might of my hand have made for me this wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:17). Prosperity can be a harder test than the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 10:12 boils it down: "what is the LORD your God asking from you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him."

In Luke 7 a sinful woman washes Jesus' feet with her tears. Jesus says her many sins are forgiven, "for she loved much." People who know how much they have been forgiven love the most.

Think about it: Are you in a wilderness season or a full season? What is God teaching you in it?

Pray

LORD, I do not live on bread alone. I live on You and Your word. Keep me humble when I am hungry and humble when I am full.

Go deeper: the free Deuteronomy study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 97

Write It on Your Doorposts

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 11

> *And you shall put these words of Mine on your heart and on your soul, and you shall bind them for a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And you shall teach them to your sons, speaking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you rise up.*
>
> Deuteronomy 11:18-19 (SLB)

Moses repeats a command here that we already read in chapter 6, and he adds some practical touches. Put these words on your heart. Tie them on your hand. Write them on your doorposts and gates. Teach them to your children everywhere you go.

Some Jewish families took this word for word and still do. They put a small case with Scripture on their doorframes and touch it as they come and go. Whatever we think of that practice, the principle is wise. Put God's word where you will see it.

What would that look like for you? A verse on your bathroom mirror. A card on the dashboard. A reminder on your phone's lock screen. A verse read at the dinner table. Memorizing one verse a week as a family. It does not have to be fancy. It has to be in front of you.

Moses also sets before Israel a blessing and a curse (Deuteronomy 11:26-28). Obey and be blessed, turn away and suffer the consequences. God makes the choice clear. He does not hide what is at stake.

Today's reading is just one chapter. Use the extra time to pick a verse to put in front of you this week.

Think about it: Where could you put God's word so you see it every day?

Pray

Lord, put Your word on my heart and in front of my eyes. Help me teach it to the people I love, in every part of the day.

Go deeper: the free Deuteronomy study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 98

Go Home and Tell

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 12-14; Luke 8; Psalm 60

> *And the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him to be with Him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your house, and relate how much God has done for you." And he departed through all the city, proclaiming how much Jesus had done for him.*
>
> Luke 8:38-39 (SLB)

Deuteronomy 12 through 14 give Israel instructions for worship in the land: tear down the pagan altars, worship where God chooses, do not copy the nations, eat what is clean, and give your tithe.

Luke 8 is packed: the parable of the sower, Jesus calming the storm, a man with a legion of demons, a woman healed of bleeding, and Jairus' daughter raised from the dead.

I want to focus on the man who had the legion. He lived naked among the tombs, chained and out of control. After Jesus freed him, he was sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind. He begged to go with Jesus. That makes sense. Who would want to stay in the town that chained him?

But Jesus said no. "Return to your house, and relate how much God has done for you." And he went through the whole city telling what Jesus had done.

Not everyone is called to leave home and go into ministry. Many of us are called to go home and tell our story to people who knew us before. That can be harder. But it is powerful, because they know what we used to be.

Think about it: Who in your home or town needs to hear what Jesus has done for you?

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You for what You have done in my life. Give me courage to tell the people who know me best.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 99

The Rock That Is Higher Than I

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 15-16; Psalm 61

> *From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart grows faint; lead me on a rock **that** is higher than I.*
>
> Psalm 61:2 (SLB)

Deuteronomy 15 commands Israel to cancel debts every seven years and to be generous to the poor. "You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your poor, and to your needy in your land." Chapter 16 describes the three great feasts, when every man was to appear before the LORD, and none empty-handed.

Psalm 61 is a short prayer from someone far away and worn out. "From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart grows faint; lead me on a rock ***that*** is higher than I."

I love that line. When my heart is faint, I do not need a rock at my level. I need one higher than me, higher than my problems, my fears, and my weakness. Something I could never climb on my own. So David asks God to lead him up to it.

That Rock is God Himself. Paul says the rock that followed Israel in the wilderness was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4).

When you feel overwhelmed, do not look for strength inside yourself. Ask God to lead you to higher ground. He is the Rock that is higher than I.

Think about it: Where do you usually go when your heart is faint?

Pray

Lord, my heart grows faint. Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. Be my refuge and my strength today.

DAY 100

A Prophet Like Moses

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 17-18; Psalm 62

> *A prophet from your midst, from your brothers, like me, the LORD your God will raise up for you; to him you shall listen,*
>
> Deuteronomy 18:15 (SLB)

You have hit Day 100. Good work. Keep going.

Deuteronomy 17 and 18 cover judges, kings, priests, and prophets. God told Israel that a future king must write out a copy of the law by hand and read it all his life (Deuteronomy 17:18-19). Even the king was under God's word.

Then Moses gives a promise. "A prophet from your midst, from your brothers, like me, the LORD your God will raise up for you; to him you shall listen."

Israel waited for this Prophet for centuries. When John the Baptist showed up, people asked him, "Are you the prophet?" (John 1:21). After Jesus fed the five thousand, people said, "This is truly the Prophet who is coming into the world" (John 6:14). Peter preached in Acts 3:22 that Jesus is the Prophet Moses spoke of.

Like Moses, Jesus delivered God's people from slavery, spoke God's word, and stood between God and the people. But He is greater than Moses, because He is the Son.

Psalm 62:8 adds, "Trust in Him at every time, people; pour out your heart before Him." Listen to the Prophet, and pour out your heart to Him.

Think about it: How do you make room to listen to Jesus each day?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are the Prophet Moses promised. I will listen to You. Speak, and help me obey.

Go deeper: the free Deuteronomy study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 101

No Looking Back

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 19-21; Luke 9; Psalm 63

> *And Jesus said to him, "No one having put his hand on **the** plow and looking at the things behind is fit for the kingdom of God."*
>
> Luke 9:62 (SLB)

Deuteronomy 19 through 21 cover cities of refuge, boundary stones, honest witnesses, and rules for war. Even in war, Israel was told to offer peace first and not to cut down fruit trees.

Luke 9 is a turning point. Peter confesses Jesus as "The Christ of God." Jesus is transfigured on the mountain. Then in verse 51 Jesus sets His face to go to Jerusalem, knowing what waited there.

On the road, three people say they want to follow Him. One wants to, but Jesus warns him that the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. Another wants to bury his father first. A third wants to say goodbye at home. Jesus answers, "No one having put his hand on ***the*** plow and looking at the things behind is fit for the kingdom of God."

A farmer who keeps looking over his shoulder plows a crooked row. Following Jesus takes focus. Not a dozen other priorities first, but Him first.

Psalm 63 is a good companion. "God, You ***are*** my God; I seek You earnestly." "Your steadfast love ***is*** better than life."

Think about it: What keeps pulling your eyes back over your shoulder?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I put my hand to the plow. Help me keep my eyes forward on You and not keep looking back.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 102

Do Not Look the Other Way

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 22-23; Psalm 64

> *You shall not see the ox of your brother or his sheep straying, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely return them to your brother.*
>
> Deuteronomy 22:1 (SLB)

Deuteronomy 22 and 23 contain a mix of laws that can seem random. Return your neighbor's lost animal. Build a railing around your roof so no one falls off. Do not plow with an ox and a donkey together. Keep the camp clean.

But look at the first one. "You shall not see the ox of your brother or his sheep straying, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely return them." Verse 3 adds, "you shall not be able to hide yourself."

The temptation was not to steal the ox. It was to pretend you did not see it. Look away. Not my problem.

We do that all the time. We see a need and look at our phone. We hear about a struggling family and change the subject. We notice a coworker who is sinking and hope someone else will help.

God says do not hide yourself. If you see it, you are responsible to do something.

The railing on the roof is the same idea. Think ahead about how your choices could hurt others, and take steps to protect them.

Psalm 64:10: "Let the righteous rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in Him."

Think about it: What need have you seen recently and looked away from?

Pray

Lord, open my eyes to the needs around me, and keep me from hiding. Show me what to do, and help me do it.

Go deeper: the free Deuteronomy study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 103

Only One Thing

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 24-26; Luke 10

> *And answering, Jesus said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but there is need of one **thing**; and Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."*
>
> Luke 10:41-42 (SLB)

Deuteronomy 24 through 26 include some of the kindest laws in Scripture. When you harvest, leave what you missed for the foreigner, the orphan, and the widow. Pay the poor worker on the same day. Do not take a widow's coat as security for a loan.

Luke 10 has the parable of the Good Samaritan. Then Jesus visits the home of Martha and Mary. Martha was busy with all the serving. Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening. Martha complained and asked Jesus to tell her sister to help.

"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but there is need of one ***thing***; and Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Martha was not doing something bad. She was serving Jesus. But she was so busy working for Him that she missed being with Him.

Many of us are Marthas. Busy for God, worn out, a little resentful of the people who do not seem to work as hard. Jesus gently says: sit down. Listen. That is the one thing.

The Samaritan story shows we must serve. The Martha story shows we must sit. Both are needed, in the right order.

Think about it: Are you more like Martha or Mary right now?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I am anxious about many things. Help me choose the one thing, sitting at Your feet, before I serve.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 104

The Curse and the Cross

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 27; Psalm 65

> *'Cursed **is** he who does not establish the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'"*
>
> Deuteronomy 27:26 (SLB)

In Deuteronomy 27 Moses tells Israel that when they cross the Jordan, half the tribes are to stand on Mount Gerizim to pronounce blessings and half on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses. The Levites would call out twelve curses, and the people would answer, "Amen."

The last one sums them all up. "Cursed ***is*** he who does not establish the words of this law by doing them."

Think about that. Not cursed is the one who breaks the big ones. Cursed is the one who does not keep all of it. By that standard, everyone is under the curse.

Paul quotes this verse in Galatians 3:10. Then he gives the good news three verses later: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree (Galatians 3:13).

Jesus took the curse so we could have the blessing. Every "Amen" Israel shouted at Mount Ebal was pointing to the cross.

Psalm 65 praises God who forgives our transgressions and fills the earth with good things. "You have visited the earth and made it overflow."

Think about it: How does it feel to know Jesus took the curse you deserved?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I could never keep the whole law. You became a curse for me. Thank You for taking my place.

Go deeper: the free Deuteronomy study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 105

Ask, Seek, Knock

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 28; Luke 11; Psalm 66

> *And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*
>
> Luke 11:9-10 (SLB)

Deuteronomy 28 is a long chapter of blessings and curses. If Israel listened to God, they would be blessed in the city and the field, coming in and going out. If they turned away, disaster would follow, ending in exile. Israel's later history follows this chapter almost line by line.

In Luke 11 one of the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus gave them the Lord's Prayer, then a story about a man who knocks on his friend's door at midnight asking for bread. The friend gets up and gives it to him because he keeps asking.

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

In the Greek, these verbs suggest continuing action. Keep asking. Keep seeking. Keep knocking. Prayer is not a one-time request. It is persistence.

Then Jesus says, if you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, "how much more will the Father who ***is*** from heaven give ***the*** Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" The best answer to prayer is more of God Himself.

Psalm 66:19: "God has heard; He has paid attention to the voice of my prayer."

Think about it: What have you stopped asking God for that you need to start asking again?

Pray

Father, I will keep asking, seeking, and knocking. Most of all, give me more of Your Holy Spirit.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 106

Choose Life

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 29-30

> *I call the heavens and the earth to witness against you today: life and death I have set before you, the blessing and the curse; and you shall choose life, so that you may live, you and your seed, to love the LORD your God, to listen to His voice, and to cling to Him; for He **is** your life and the length of your days, to dwell on the ground which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them."*
>
> Deuteronomy 30:19-20 (SLB)

Moses is near the end of his sermon, and he makes it simple. "Life and death I have set before you, the blessing and the curse; and you shall choose life."

Then he defines what choosing life means: "to love the LORD your God, to listen to His voice, and to cling to Him; for He ***is*** your life."

Not a set of rules. A Person. God is your life. Choosing life means choosing Him.

Earlier in chapter 30, Moses says this command is not too hard or too far away. You do not have to go up to heaven or across the sea to get it. "the word ***is*** very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart" (Deuteronomy 30:14). Paul quotes that in Romans 10 to explain the gospel.

Deuteronomy 29:29 is also worth remembering: "The hidden ***things belong*** to the LORD our God, and the revealed ***things belong*** to us." There are things we will not understand this side of heaven. Leave those with God. Do what He has made clear.

Every day you face small choices between life and death, between clinging to God and drifting away. Choose life today.

Think about it: What choice in front of you today is a choice between life and death?

Pray

LORD, You are my life. I choose You today. Help me listen to Your voice and cling to You.

Go deeper: the free Deuteronomy study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 107

He Will Not Forsake You

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 31-32; Psalm 67

> *And the LORD, He **is** the **One** who goes before you; He, He will be with you; He will not let you go, and He will not forsake you; do not be afraid, and do not be dismayed."*
>
> Deuteronomy 31:8 (SLB)

Moses is 120 years old. He will not cross the Jordan. In front of all Israel, he calls Joshua forward and hands him the job. Then he speaks these words over him.

"The LORD, He ***is*** the ***One*** who goes before you; He, He will be with you; He will not let you go, and He will not forsake you; do not be afraid, and do not be dismayed."

God goes before you. He is already in tomorrow, already in that meeting, already in that hospital room. And He goes with you. You never walk in alone.

Joshua had big shoes to fill. Moses was the greatest leader Israel ever had. But Joshua did not need to be Moses. He needed the God of Moses.

Deuteronomy 32 is the Song of Moses, a song for Israel to remember when they turned away. It calls God "The Rock, His work ***is*** perfect, for all His ways ***are*** justice."

Psalm 67 is a prayer that God would bless His people "that Your way may be known on the earth." God blesses us so that others will see Him.

I spent about 35 years at a public utility before I moved on to new work. Every move like that looks uncertain from the starting line. What gave me courage was remembering how faithful God had already been in every earlier chapter of my life. The God who carried you this far is already ahead of you in the next one.

Think about it: What are you facing that you need to remember God has already gone before you into?

Pray

LORD, You go before me and You go with me. I will not be afraid. You will not leave me or forsake me.

Go deeper: the free Deuteronomy study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 108

The Everlasting Arms

Today's reading: Deuteronomy 33-34; Luke 12

> *The God of old **is** a dwelling place, and underneath **are** the everlasting arms; and He drove out the enemy from before you, and said, 'Destroy!'*
>
> Deuteronomy 33:27 (SLB)

Moses blesses each tribe one last time. Then he climbs Mount Nebo, and God shows him the whole promised land. Moses dies there, and God Himself buries him. "And there has not arisen again a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face."

Near the end of his blessing, Moses says, "The God of old ***is*** a dwelling place, and underneath ***are*** the everlasting arms."

Moses had seen God do incredible things. But at the end of his life he does not talk about plagues or the Red Sea. He talks about being held. God is a home, and underneath us are arms that never get tired.

Whatever you fall into today, you cannot fall below those arms.

In Luke 12 Jesus warns about greed and tells about a rich man who built bigger barns, then died that night. "So ***is*** the one who treasures up for himself and is not rich toward God." Then Jesus says, "Do not fear, little flock, because your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." And He tells us to be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour we do not expect.

Congratulations. You just finished the five books of Moses.

Think about it: What does it mean to you that God's arms are underneath you right now?

Pray

Eternal God, You are my home, and Your arms are underneath me. Hold me today, and keep me ready for Your Son's return.

Go deeper: the free Deuteronomy study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 109

Be Strong and Bold

Today's reading: Joshua 1-3; Psalm 68

> *This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall meditate on it by day and night, so that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your ways successful, and then you will prosper. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and be bold. Do not be terrified, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God **is** with you in every **place** where you go."*
>
> Joshua 1:8-9 (SLB)

Moses is dead, and Joshua is in charge. Before Joshua takes a single step into the land, God gives him two things: a command and a promise.

The command: "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall meditate on it by day and night." God's recipe for success was not military strategy. It was His word. Joshua was to read it, think on it, talk about it, and do it.

The promise: "Be strong and be bold. Do not be terrified, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God ***is*** with you in every ***place*** where you go."

God tells Joshua to be strong and courageous three times in this chapter. He knew Joshua needed to hear it.

In chapter 2 Rahab, a prostitute in Jericho, hides the spies. She says everyone in the city melted with fear, because "the LORD your God, He ***is*** God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath." She believed, and she ends up in the line of Jesus. In chapter 3 the Jordan stops flowing the moment the priests' feet touch the water.

Psalm 68:19: "Blessed ***be*** the Lord; day ***by*** day He bears a load for us."

Think about it: How would meditating on God's word day and night change your courage?

Pray

LORD, keep Your word in my mouth and on my mind. Make me strong and bold, because You are with me wherever I go.

Go deeper: the free Joshua study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 110

Take Off Your Sandals

Today's reading: Joshua 4-5; Luke 13

> *And it was, when Joshua was at Jericho, and he lifted up his eyes and saw, and look, a man **was** standing in front of him, and his sword **was** drawn in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "**Are** you for us or for our adversaries?" And he said, "No, for I **am** the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the ground and bowed down, and he said to him, "What **is** my lord saying to his servant?" And the commander of the army of the LORD said to Joshua, "Take off your sandal from on your foot, for the place on which you **are** standing, it **is** holy." And Joshua did so.*
>
> Joshua 5:13-15 (SLB)

Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground, and Joshua had twelve men carry stones from the riverbed to build a memorial. When your children ask what these stones mean, tell them how God stopped the river.

Then, near Jericho, Joshua saw a man with a drawn sword. Joshua asked the natural question: "***Are*** you for us or for our adversaries?" The answer: "No, for I ***am*** the commander of the army of the LORD."

Joshua asked the wrong question. The question is not whether God is on our side. The question is whether we are on His.

Joshua fell on his face, and the commander told him, "Take off your sandal from on your foot, for the place on which you ***are*** standing, it ***is*** holy." The same words God spoke to Moses at the burning bush. And this commander accepted Joshua's worship, which no angel would do. Many believe this was the Son of God before He was born in Bethlehem.

In Luke 13 Jesus heals a woman bent over for eighteen years and weeps over Jerusalem, longing to gather her children like a hen gathers her chicks.

Think about it: Are you asking God to be on your side, or are you making sure you are on His?

Pray

Lord, I do not want You on my side. I want to be on Yours. I bow before You. Lead me, Commander.

Go deeper: the free Joshua study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 111

Walls Fall, and So Do We

Today's reading: Joshua 6-7

> *And the people shouted, and they blew the trumpets. And it was, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted **with** a great shout, and the wall fell in its place; and the people went up into the city, each man straight before him, and they captured the city.*
>
> Joshua 6:20 (SLB)

God's battle plan for Jericho made no military sense. March around the city once a day for six days, silently. On the seventh day march around seven times, blow the trumpets, and shout. The people did it, and the walls fell flat.

God wanted everyone to know who won the battle. It was not Israel's strength. It was His.

Then chapter 7 hits hard. One man, Achan, took gold, silver, and a beautiful robe from Jericho that God had said belonged to Him. He hid it in his tent. Israel then went up against little Ai and lost. Thirty-six men died. God told Joshua that Israel had sinned and that He would not be with them until the stolen goods were removed.

One man's hidden sin affected the whole nation. We like to think our private sins are private. But sin always spreads. It hurts our families, our churches, and our witness.

Achan's confession is honest: "I saw... and I desired them and took them. And look, they ***are*** hidden" (Joshua 7:21). That is how sin works. It starts with the eyes and ends in the tent.

After the great victory came the great failure. Watch yourself most right after a win.

Think about it: Is there anything hidden "in your tent" that God wants removed?

Pray

Lord, You won the battle, not me. Search my heart and show me anything I have hidden. I want nothing between You and me.

Go deeper: the free Joshua study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 112

They Did Not Ask the Lord

Today's reading: Joshua 8-9; Luke 14

> *And the men took from their provisions, and they did not ask the mouth of the LORD.*
>
> Joshua 9:14 (SLB)

After dealing with Achan's sin, Israel took Ai. Then Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal and read all the law aloud to the people, just as Moses had commanded.

Then came a new kind of enemy. The people of Gibeon were afraid, so they put on worn-out clothes, packed moldy bread, and came to Joshua pretending they lived far away. They asked for a peace treaty. Israel looked at the bread and believed them. "And the men took from their provisions, and they did not ask the mouth of the LORD."

Three days later Israel learned the Gibeonites lived just down the road. But the oath had been sworn, and they had to keep it.

The enemy does not always come with swords. Sometimes he comes with a convincing story and some moldy bread. The danger is not just big battles. It is making decisions based on what looks obvious, without praying.

In Luke 14 Jesus tells us to count the cost before we follow Him, like a builder who sits down to see if he can finish a tower. Counting the cost and asking God both take time. Both save a lot of regret.

Think about it: What decision are you making right now that you have not prayed about?

Pray

Lord, forgive me for making decisions without asking You. Give me the habit of praying first, especially when things seem obvious.

Go deeper: the free Joshua study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 113

The Father Ran

Today's reading: Joshua 10-11; Luke 15; Psalm 69

> *And having risen up, he went to his own father. But while he was still far distant, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and having run, he fell on his neck and kissed him.*
>
> Luke 15:20 (SLB)

Luke 15 has three stories: a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. Jesus told them because the religious leaders were grumbling that He welcomed sinners and ate with them.

The younger son asked for his inheritance early, which was like saying, "I wish you were dead." He wasted it all, ended up feeding pigs, and was so hungry he wanted the pigs' food. Then he came to his senses and headed home, practicing a speech.

"But while he was still far distant, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and having run, he fell on his neck and kissed him."

The father was watching. He saw him from far away. Then he ran, something older men in that culture did not do. He hugged and kissed his son before the boy finished his speech. Then he threw a party.

That is how God receives sinners who come home.

But there is an older brother in the story too. He stayed home, did everything right, and was furious. He would not go in to the party. Jesus left that story open-ended for the Pharisees, and for us. Are we glad when the lost come home?

Joshua 10 records the long day when God made the sun stand still.

Think about it: Are you more like the son coming home or the brother standing outside?

Pray

Father, thank You for running to me. Give me a heart that rejoices when others come home too.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 114

Very Much Land Remains

Today's reading: Joshua 12-13

> *And Joshua was old, come into the days; and the LORD said to him, "You are old, come into the days, and very much **of** the land remains to take possession of it.*
>
> Joshua 13:1 (SLB)

Joshua 12 lists thirty-one kings Israel defeated. That is a lot of victories. Then chapter 13 opens with a reality check. "Joshua was old... and the LORD said to him, 'You are old, come into the days, and very much ***of*** the land remains to take possession of it.'"

God was honest with Joshua. You have done a lot. You are getting old. And there is still a lot left to do.

That is true for all of us in our walk with God. We have had victories. Some old sins have been beaten. But very much land remains. Areas of our lives God has not fully taken over yet. Habits, attitudes, fears, and relationships still waiting to be brought under His rule.

That is not a reason for discouragement. It is a reason to keep going. Sanctification, the process of becoming more like Jesus, takes a lifetime. Paul said he had not yet arrived, but he pressed on (Philippians 3:12).

The rest of chapter 13 starts dividing the land among the tribes. God had already given it. They still had to go take it.

Think about it: What "land" in your life still needs to be brought under God's rule?

Pray

Lord, You have given me many victories, and much land remains. Keep me pressing on until every part of my life belongs to You.

Go deeper: the free Joshua study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 115

Give Me This Mountain

Today's reading: Joshua 14; Luke 16; Psalm 70

> *And now, look, the LORD has kept me alive, just as He spoke, these forty-five years from when the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now, look, I **am** this day a son of eighty-five years. I **am** still this day strong, just as on the day Moses sent me; as my strength **was** then, so my strength **is** now, for battle and to go out and to come in. And now, give to me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day; for you heard on that day that Anakim **were** there, and cities great **and** fortified. Perhaps the LORD **will be** with me, and I will dispossess them, just as the LORD spoke."*
>
> Joshua 14:10-12 (SLB)

Caleb was one of the two spies who believed God forty-five years earlier. Now he is eighty-five, and he comes to Joshua with a request.

"I ***am*** still this day strong, just as on the day Moses sent me... And now, give to me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day; for you heard on that day that Anakim ***were*** there."

The Anakim were the giants who had scared the other ten spies. Caleb did not ask for a nice retirement spot. He asked for the hardest assignment, the one with giants in it.

At eighty-five! He did not think his age disqualified him. He thought God's promise qualified him.

Many people think their best years for God are behind them. Caleb would disagree. Your body may slow down, but faith does not have to. Some of the most important work in God's kingdom is done by older saints who still say, "Give to me this hill country."

In Luke 16 Jesus says, "The one ***who is*** faithful in very little is faithful also in much." Caleb had been faithful for forty-five years in the wilderness. Now he got his mountain.

Think about it: What "mountain" might God still have for you, whatever your age?

Pray

Lord, I do not want to coast. As long as I have breath, give me a mountain to take for You.

Go deeper: the free Joshua study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 116

Where Are the Nine?

Today's reading: Joshua 15-16; Luke 17

> *And one of them, having seen that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on **his** face at His feet, giving thanks to Him; and he was a Samaritan. And answering, Jesus said, "Were not the ten cleansed? But the nine, where **are they**? Were none found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?"*
>
> Luke 17:15-18 (SLB)

Joshua 15 and 16 divide the land for Judah and Joseph's sons. In the middle of the boundary lists, Caleb gives his daughter Achsah to the man who captures a city, and she asks her father for springs of water. He gives her the upper and lower springs (Joshua 15:19). A good father gives good gifts when asked.

In Luke 17 ten lepers called to Jesus from a distance. He told them to go show themselves to the priests, and as they went, they were healed. One of them, seeing he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice, and fell at Jesus' feet giving thanks. He was a Samaritan.

Jesus asked, "Were not the ten cleansed? But the nine, where ***are they***?"

Nine got what they wanted and kept walking. One came back to say thank you. Jesus noticed.

How many prayers has God answered for you that you never came back to thank Him for? We are quick to ask and slow to thank. Gratitude is not just good manners. It is worship. It turns our attention from the gift to the Giver.

Think about it: What answered prayer do you need to go back and thank God for today?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I do not want to be one of the nine. Thank You for every answered prayer, especially the ones I forgot to thank You for.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 117

Even to Old Age

Today's reading: Joshua 17-18; Psalm 71

> *God, You have taught me from my youth, and until now I declare Your wonders. And even to old age and gray hair, God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your arm to a generation, Your might to everyone who will come.*
>
> Psalm 71:17-18 (SLB)

In Joshua 18 the land is not finished being divided, and Joshua scolds seven tribes. "Until when ***are*** you slack to go to take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given to you?" God had given it. They just had not bothered to go get it. Many of us live below the blessings God has already given.

Psalm 71 is a prayer from an older believer. "God, You have taught me from my youth, and until now I declare Your wonders. And even to old age and gray hair, God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your arm to a generation."

This writer had known God since he was young. Now he is old, and he has one prayer: let me live long enough to tell the next generation.

That is a good goal for any age. If you are older, who are you passing the faith to? Grandchildren, younger men or women at church, a neighbor's kid? Your stories of what God has done are a treasure. Do not take them to the grave with you.

If you are younger, find an older believer and ask them to tell you their story.

Think about it: Who in the next generation are you telling about God's faithfulness?

Pray

God, You have been with me from my youth. Let me live to tell the next generation what You have done.

DAY 118

God, Be Merciful to Me

Today's reading: Joshua 19-20; Luke 18

> *And the tax collector, having stood far off, was not willing to lift up even **his** eyes to heaven, but was striking his breast, saying, 'God, be propitious to me, the sinner!' I say to you, this one went down to his house justified rather than that one; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*
>
> Luke 18:13-14 (SLB)

Joshua 19 finishes the land division, and Joshua himself gets his portion last. A good leader takes care of the people first. Chapter 20 sets up the cities of refuge.

In Luke 18 Jesus told a parable to people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and looked down on others. Two men went to the temple to pray, a Pharisee and a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood and thanked God he was not like other people: robbers, adulterers, or this tax collector. He fasted twice a week and tithed everything.

The tax collector stood far off. He would not even look up. He beat his chest and said, "God, be propitious to me, the sinner!" Propitious means having your anger turned away and becoming favorable. He was asking God to deal with his sin and show him mercy.

Jesus said the tax collector, not the Pharisee, went home justified, made right with God.

The Pharisee's prayer was about himself. The tax collector's prayer was about God's mercy. God hears the second kind.

Think about it: When you pray, do you come more like the Pharisee or the tax collector?

Pray

God, be merciful to me, a sinner. I have nothing to boast about. I trust only in Your mercy through Jesus.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 119

Not One Word Failed

Today's reading: Joshua 21-22; Psalm 72

> *Not a word fell of every good word which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel; everything came **to pass**.*
>
> Joshua 21:45 (SLB)

Joshua 21 gives the Levites their towns, scattered throughout all the tribes so God's teachers would be everywhere. Then come three verses that sum up everything since Genesis 12.

"Not a word fell of every good word which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel; everything came ***to pass***."

Think of all the promises from Abraham onward. A land. A nation. Deliverance from Egypt. Victory over giants. Rest from enemies. Four hundred years, a wilderness, and a lot of failures by Israel. And God kept every word.

Joshua will say it again in his farewell speech (Joshua 23:14). He wanted them to remember it.

In chapter 22 the eastern tribes build an altar by the Jordan, and the western tribes almost go to war over it, thinking it is rebellion. It turns out to be a memorial meant to unite them. A lot of church fights could be avoided by asking questions before drawing swords.

Psalm 72 is a prayer for the king, looking ahead to a King whose name will endure forever and in whom all nations will be blessed. That is Jesus.

Think about it: What promise of God have you seen fulfilled in your own life?

Pray

LORD, not one of Your words has failed. You have kept every promise. I trust You with the ones I am still waiting on.

Go deeper: the free Joshua study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 120

As for Me and My House

Today's reading: Joshua 23-24; Luke 19

> *And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that **were** on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are dwelling. And I and my house, we will serve the LORD."*
>
> Joshua 24:15 (SLB)

Joshua is old and about to die. He gathers all Israel at Shechem and tells their whole story, starting with Abraham's father worshiping other gods. God took them from there to here.

Then Joshua puts the choice in front of them. "Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve... And I and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Joshua did not wait to see what everyone else would do. He made his decision for himself and his family, publicly. Leadership in the home starts there.

The people said they would serve the LORD. Joshua pushed back: you are not able, because He is holy and jealous. He wanted them to understand the weight of their promise. They insisted, and he made a covenant with them.

In Luke 19 Zacchaeus, a rich chief tax collector, climbs a tree to see Jesus. Jesus calls him down and invites Himself over. Zacchaeus gives half his goods to the poor and repays fourfold anyone he cheated. Jesus says, "the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which has been lost." When Jesus comes into a house, everything changes.

Think about it: Have you made a clear decision about whom you and your house will serve?

Pray

LORD, as for me and my house, we will serve You. Make that true in my home, not just in my words.

Go deeper: the free Joshua study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

Days 121 to 151

DAY 121

Half-Finished Obedience

Today's reading: Judges 1

> *And it was, when Israel became strong, and put the Canaanites to forced labor, and did not utterly dispossess them.*
>
> Judges 1:28 (SLB)

Judges is one of the saddest books in the Bible. It covers about three hundred years after Joshua, and it spirals downward.

Chapter 1 starts well. Judah fights and wins. But then a pattern keeps showing up: tribe after tribe did not drive them out. Manasseh did not. Ephraim did not. Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali did not. "When Israel became strong... put the Canaanites to forced labor, and did not utterly dispossess them."

Notice it says when they became strong. They had the power to finish the job. They just decided it was better to make the Canaanites useful. Why fight them when you can put them to work?

That is how compromise works. We do not rebel against God outright. We just stop short. We keep a little of the old life around because it seems useful or harmless. And those leftovers end up ruling us. In chapter 2 God says the Canaanites will become thorns in their sides and their gods a snare.

Judges 2:10 is one of the most chilling verses in the Bible: "another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD." It took one generation of compromise.

Think about it: What have you left "undriven out" in your life because it seemed useful or harmless?

Pray

Lord, I do not want half-finished obedience. Show me what I have tolerated, and give me the will to finish the job.

Go deeper: the free Judges and Ruth study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 122

Until I Went into the Sanctuary

Today's reading: Judges 2-3; Luke 20; Psalm 73

> *Whom have I in the heavens? And with You I desire nothing on the earth. My flesh and my heart have failed; God **is** the rock of my heart and my portion forever.*
>
> Psalm 73:25-26 (SLB)

Judges 2 and 3 set the pattern for the whole book. Israel sins and serves other gods. God hands them over to an enemy. They cry out. God raises up a judge to rescue them. The judge dies, and they go right back to sin. Around and around. Yet even in that, "the LORD was moved to compassion by their groaning" (Judges 2:18).

Psalm 73 is honest about a struggle many of us have. Asaph looked at the wicked and saw them prosper. They were healthy, rich, and arrogant, and they seemed to get away with everything. Meanwhile he was trying to live right and getting hit every morning. He almost slipped.

What changed his mind? "Until I went into the sanctuaries of God; ***then*** I discerned their end." In God's presence he saw the long view. Their success was a slippery place.

Then he says one of the greatest things in the Psalms: "Whom have I in the heavens? And with You I desire nothing on the earth. My flesh and my heart have failed; God ***is*** the rock of my heart and my portion forever."

In Luke 20 Jesus says, "give back the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God." Our hearts belong to God.

Think about it: When you compare your life with others, what helps you see the long view?

Pray

God, when I envy others, bring me back into Your presence. You are my portion forever, and I want nothing more than You.

DAY 123

Has Not the Lord Gone Out Before You?

Today's reading: Judges 4-5

> *And Deborah said to Barak, "Arise, for this **is** the day on which the LORD has given Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?" And Barak went down from the mountain of Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.*
>
> Judges 4:14 (SLB)

In Judges 4 Israel was oppressed for twenty years by Jabin, a Canaanite king with nine hundred iron chariots. God's judge at the time was Deborah, a prophetess who held court under a palm tree.

She called Barak and told him God's command: gather ten thousand men and go fight Sisera, Jabin's general. Barak said he would go only if she went with him. She agreed, but told him the honor would go to a woman.

On the day of battle Deborah said, "Arise, for this ***is*** the day on which the LORD has given Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?"

Judges 5 tells us God sent a storm, and the river Kishon swept the chariots away. Iron chariots are not much use in mud. Sisera ran on foot and was killed by Jael, a woman, just as Deborah said.

Barak gets a mention in Hebrews 11 for his faith, so he was not a coward. He just needed encouragement. We all do sometimes. Deborah's words are worth remembering: the LORD has already gone out before you.

The song in chapter 5 ends, "those who love Him ***be*** like the going out of the sun in its might."

Think about it: Who has been a Deborah to you, encouraging you to step out in faith?

Pray

Lord, You have already gone out before me. Give me courage to step into the battle You have called me to.

Go deeper: the free Judges and Ruth study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 124

Mighty Man of Valor

Today's reading: Judges 6-7; Luke 21

> *And the angel of the LORD appeared to him, and he said to him, "The LORD **is** with you, O mighty man of valor." And Gideon said to him, "Please, my lord, **if** the LORD is with us, then why has all this found us? And where **are** all His wonders which our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' And now the LORD has abandoned us, and He has given us into the palm of Midian." And the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this strength of yours, and you shall save Israel from the palm of Midian. Have I not sent you?" And he said to Him, "Please, Lord, with what shall I save Israel? Look, my clan **is** the weakest in Manasseh, and I **am** the least in the house of my father."*
>
> Judges 6:12-15 (SLB)

Midian raided Israel so badly that the people hid in caves. Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress, hiding from the enemy, when the Angel of the LORD showed up and said, "The LORD ***is*** with you, O mighty man of valor."

I can picture Gideon looking around for whoever the angel was talking to. He had questions. If God is with us, why is all this happening? Where are the miracles our fathers told us about?

God did not answer the "why." He answered with a commission. "Go in this strength of yours... Have I not sent you?" Gideon objected: my clan is the weakest, and I am the least in my family.

God saw a mighty man of valor in a scared farmer hiding in a winepress. He sees what we will become, not just what we are.

In chapter 7 God trims Gideon's army from 32,000 to 300 so Israel could not say "My own hand has saved me." With torches, jars, and trumpets, they routed the Midianites.

In Luke 21 Jesus says, "The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

Think about it: What does God see in you that you have a hard time seeing in yourself?

Pray

Lord, I feel weak and small. But You call me by what You will make me. Go with me, and let the victory be Yours.

Go deeper: the free Judges and Ruth study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 125

The Lord Shall Rule over You

Today's reading: Judges 8; Psalm 74

> *And the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son and the son of your son, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian." And Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son shall not rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you."*
>
> Judges 8:22-23 (SLB)

After the great victory over Midian, the men of Israel asked Gideon to be their king, and his sons after him. Gideon said the right thing: "I will not rule over you, and my son shall not rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you."

That is a good answer. But then he asked each man for an earring from the spoil. He collected about forty-three pounds of gold and made an ephod, a priestly garment, and set it up in his hometown. "And all Israel prostituted themselves after it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his household."

Gideon refused the crown but kept the gold. He said God should rule, then made something that pulled people away from God.

It is possible to say all the right words and still leave a trap behind. Great victories can be followed by careless decisions. Gideon also had many wives and named one son Abimelech, "my father is king." His words said one thing. His life said another.

Psalm 74:12 says, "God ***is*** my King from of old." Make sure your life agrees with that, not just your mouth.

Think about it: Is there anything in your life that could become a "snare" for your family?

Pray

Lord, You rule over me. Let my life say that as clearly as my words. Keep me from leaving traps for the people who come after me.

Go deeper: the free Judges and Ruth study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 126

He Could Bear It No Longer

Today's reading: Judges 9-10

> *And you have forsaken Me and served other gods; therefore I will not again save you. Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress." And the sons of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned. You do to us according to all that **is** good in Your eyes; only deliver us, please, this day." And they removed the foreign gods from their midst and served the LORD; and His soul became impatient over the trouble of Israel.*
>
> Judges 10:13-16 (SLB)

Judges 9 is the ugly story of Abimelech, Gideon's son, who killed seventy of his brothers to make himself king. It ended with a woman dropping a millstone on his head from a tower. Evil brings its own collapse.

In Judges 10 Israel serves the gods of seven nations, and God hands them over to the Philistines and Ammonites for eighteen years. They cry out, and God's answer is sharp: "Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress."

That is fair. They had chosen other gods. Let those gods help.

But Israel did not just say sorry. They said, "We have sinned. You do to us according to all that ***is*** good in Your eyes; only deliver us." And they put away their foreign gods and served the LORD.

Then comes a beautiful line: "His soul became impatient over the trouble of Israel." God could not stand to watch them suffer anymore.

That is the heart of God. Even when He disciplines, He feels His children's pain. Real repentance does not just ask for relief. It removes the idols.

Think about it: When you repent, do you just ask God to fix things, or do you remove the idols?

Pray

Father, I have sinned. Do what is good in Your eyes. I put away anything I have put in Your place. Thank You that You feel my pain.

Go deeper: the free Judges and Ruth study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 127

I Have Prayed for You

Today's reading: Judges 11-12; Luke 22; Psalm 75

> *And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, look, Satan has asked for you, to sift **you** like wheat. But I begged for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."*
>
> Luke 22:31-32 (SLB)

At the Last Supper, Jesus turned to Peter. "Simon, Simon, look, Satan has asked for you, to sift ***you*** like wheat. But I begged for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Jesus knew Peter would deny Him that same night. He did not say "if you turn back." He said "when." He had already prayed for Peter's restoration before the fall even happened.

Then in the courtyard, after Peter's third denial, the rooster crowed. "And having turned, the Lord looked at Peter." I have wondered what that look was like. I do not think it was anger. I think it was the look of someone who still loved him. Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Satan sifts. Jesus prays. Peter's faith failed for a night, but it did not fail completely, because Jesus held on to him.

Judges 11 tells of Jephthah's rash vow. Psalm 75:7 says God puts one down and lifts up another.

If you have fallen, Jesus has already prayed for you. Turn back, and then use what you learned to strengthen others.

Think about it: How could your past failures help you strengthen someone else?

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You for praying for me before I ever fell. Bring me back, and use my story to strengthen my brothers and sisters.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 128

His Name Is Wonderful

Today's reading: Judges 13-14; Psalm 76

> *And Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "What **is** your name, that when your word comes **to pass**, we may honor you?" And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why **is** this **that** you ask for my name? And it **is** wonderful."*
>
> Judges 13:17-18 (SLB)

Judges 13 begins the story of Samson. The Angel of the LORD appeared to a childless woman and told her she would have a son who would begin to save Israel from the Philistines. He would be a Nazirite from birth: no wine, no unclean food, and no razor on his head.

Her husband Manoah wanted to meet this messenger. When the Angel came back, Manoah asked his name. The answer: "Why ***is*** this ***that*** you ask for my name? And it ***is*** wonderful."

The Hebrew word means beyond understanding, something only God can do. Isaiah 9:6 uses the same word for the coming Child: His name will be called Wonderful Counselor.

Then the Angel went up in the flame of the altar. Manoah said, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God" (Judges 13:22). His wife had more sense. If God wanted to kill us, she said, He would not have accepted our offering or told us all this.

Judges 14 shows Samson already going his own way, demanding a Philistine wife because she looked right to him. Great gifts and weak character are a dangerous mix.

Psalm 76:1: "in Israel His name ***is*** great."

Think about it: How do you respond when God is beyond your understanding?

Pray

Lord, Your name is wonderful, beyond my understanding. I trust You even where I cannot figure You out.

Go deeper: the free Judges and Ruth study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 129

He Did Not Know the Lord Had Left

Today's reading: Judges 15-16

> *And she said, "The Philistines **are** upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as time after time, and shake myself free." And he did not know that the LORD had departed from on him.*
>
> Judges 16:20 (SLB)

Samson was the strongest man who ever lived, and one of the weakest. He killed a thousand Philistines with a donkey's jawbone, then fell for Delilah.

Three times she tried to find the secret of his strength, and three times the Philistines came. Anyone else would have figured it out. But Samson kept playing the game. Finally he told her the truth, and she cut his hair while he slept.

"I will go out as time after time, and shake myself free." "And he did not know that the LORD had departed from on him."

That might be the scariest sentence in Judges. Samson did not notice God was gone. He assumed what had always worked would keep working. Sin had dulled him so slowly that he did not feel the difference.

The Philistines gouged out his eyes and made him grind grain. But his hair began to grow. In the temple of Dagon, blind and humbled, Samson prayed: "Lord GOD, remember me, please, and strengthen me, please, only this time." God answered, and Samson brought down the temple.

Even after a lifetime of failure, God heard one humble prayer.

Think about it: Are there warning signs in your life you have been ignoring?

Pray

Lord God, do not let me drift so slowly that I do not notice You are grieved. Remember me, and strengthen me to finish well.

Go deeper: the free Judges and Ruth study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 130

Remember Me

Today's reading: Judges 17-19; Luke 23; Psalm 77

> *And he was saying to Jesus, "Remember me, Lord, when You come in Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*
>
> Luke 23:42-43 (SLB)

Judges 17 through 19 are dark chapters: a man with a homemade idol, a priest for hire, a tribe stealing both, and a horrible crime in Gibeah. One verse explains it all: "In those days ***there was*** no king in Israel; each man did what ***was*** right in his own eyes."

That is the opposite of what happens in Luke 23. Jesus is crucified between two criminals. While soldiers gamble for His clothes, He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

One criminal mocks Him. The other rebukes him. We are getting what we deserve, he says, but this Man has done nothing wrong. Then he turns to Jesus: "Remember me, Lord, when You come in Your kingdom."

He had no time to be baptized, join a church, or do good works. He had a few hours to live and nothing to offer. Jesus answered, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

That is grace in its purest form. Salvation is not earned. It is received. The thief simply asked the King to remember him, and the King said, "Today."

Psalm 77:11: "I will remember the deeds of ***the*** LORD."

Think about it: Do you believe that grace is enough even for someone with nothing to offer?

Pray

Lord Jesus, remember me. I have nothing to bring You but my need. Thank You that grace is enough.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 131

Weeping Before the Lord

Today's reading: Judges 20

> *And all the sons of Israel and all the people went up and came **to** Bethel, and they wept and sat there before the LORD, and they fasted on that day until the evening, and they offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.*
>
> Judges 20:26 (SLB)

Judges 20 is a civil war. After the crime in Gibeah, the other tribes demanded that Benjamin hand over the guilty men. Benjamin refused and went to war against their own brothers. The other tribes lost two battles and tens of thousands of men.

After the second defeat, "all the sons of Israel and all the people went up and came ***to*** Bethel, and they wept and sat there before the LORD, and they fasted on that day until the evening, and they offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings."

Until then, they had asked God which tribe should go first, but they had not humbled themselves. They were angry and sure they were right. After the losses, they finally wept and fasted. Then God gave them the victory, but it was a terrible one. Benjamin was nearly wiped out.

There are no real winners when God's people fight each other. Churches split, families divide, and everyone loses something.

This chapter also shows that being right is not enough. Israel was right that the crime had to be judged, but they needed to come to God broken, not just angry.

Think about it: Is there a conflict where you have been right but not humble?

Pray

Lord, I humble myself before You. Where I have been angry and sure of myself, break my heart and lead me in Your way.

Go deeper: the free Judges and Ruth study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 132

Our Hearts Burned

Today's reading: Judges 21; Ruth 1; Luke 24

> *And it came to pass, as He reclined **at table** with them, having taken the bread, He blessed **it**, and having broken **it**, He was giving **it** to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished from them. And they said to one another, "Was not our heart burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, and while He was opening the Scriptures to us?"*
>
> Luke 24:30-32 (SLB)

Judges ends with the same line as yesterday's dark chapters: everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Then Ruth opens with a famine, a family that moves to Moab, and three widows. Naomi decides to go home, and her daughter-in-law Ruth refuses to leave her: "where you go, I will go... your people ***will be*** my people, and your God my God."

Luke 24 is the first Easter Sunday. Two disciples were walking to Emmaus, heartbroken, and Jesus walked with them. They did not recognize Him. They told Him how they had hoped Jesus would redeem Israel. Then, "having begun from Moses and from all the prophets, He was explaining to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

That evening at dinner He broke the bread, and their eyes were opened. They recognized Him, and He vanished. They said to each other, "Was not our heart burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, and while He was opening the Scriptures to us?"

That is what this year of reading is about. The whole Bible points to Jesus. Ask Him to open the Scriptures to you, and your heart will burn too.

Think about it: Has your heart burned while reading God's Word this year? When?

Pray

Risen Lord, walk with me as I read. Open the Scriptures to me, and let my heart burn as I see You on every page.

Go deeper: the free Luke study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 133

Under His Wings

Today's reading: Ruth 2-4

> *May the LORD repay your work, and may your wages be complete from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."*
>
> Ruth 2:12 (SLB)

Ruth went to glean, picking up the leftover grain behind the harvesters, which is exactly what God's law allowed the poor to do. She "happened" to land in the field of Boaz, a relative of Naomi's dead husband.

Boaz noticed her and had heard how she left her own people to care for Naomi. He blessed her: "May the LORD repay your work... the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

Later Ruth goes to Boaz at the threshing floor and asks him to spread his wing, the corner of his garment, over her (Ruth 3:9). It was a request for marriage and protection. Boaz becomes the answer to his own prayer.

Boaz was a kinsman-redeemer, a close relative with the right to buy back family land and marry a widow to carry on the family name. He paid the price, married Ruth, and their son Obed became the grandfather of King David.

Jesus is our Kinsman-Redeemer. He became our relative by becoming human, and He paid the price to buy us back. The women of Bethlehem said to Naomi, "Blessed ***be*** the LORD, who has not caused a redeemer to cease for you today."

Think about it: Where have you seen God's "happened to" providence in your life?

Pray

Lord, I take refuge under Your wings. Thank You for redeeming me and bringing me into Your family.

Go deeper: the free Judges and Ruth study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 134

For This Child I Prayed

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 1; Psalm 78

> *For this lad I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked from Him. And also I have lent him to the LORD; all the days that he is, he **is** asked for the LORD." And he bowed down there to the LORD.*
>
> 1 Samuel 1:27-28 (SLB)

Hannah could not have children, and her husband's other wife provoked her year after year. At the tabernacle in Shiloh she prayed so hard that her lips moved without sound, and the priest Eli thought she was drunk. She told him she was pouring out her soul before the LORD.

She promised that if God gave her a son, she would give him back to God for all his life. God answered. She named him Samuel. When he was weaned, she brought him to the tabernacle and said, "For this lad I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked from Him. And also I have lent him to the LORD."

Think about that. She waited years for this boy, and then she gave him away, to grow up in God's house. She kept her promise.

Every parent has to learn this. Our children are not ours to keep. They are God's, lent to us for a time. The best thing we can do is give them back to Him.

Psalm 78 is a long history of Israel, written so the next generation would know what God had done. "We will not hide ***them*** from their sons."

Think about it: What has God given you that you need to give back to Him?

Pray

Lord, everything I have is from You, including the people I love most. I give them back to You. Use them for Your glory.

Go deeper: the free 1 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 135

Children of God

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 2-4; John 1

> *But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born not of bloods, nor of **the** will of **the** flesh, nor of **the** will of a man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from **the** Father, full of grace and truth.*
>
> John 1:12-14 (SLB)

1 Samuel 2 through 4 show two kinds of sons. Eli's sons were priests who stole from the offerings and slept with women at the tabernacle. Samuel, the little boy, grew in favor with God and men. When God called him at night, Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10).

Today we also start the Gospel of John. It opens before creation: "In the beginning was the Word." The Word was with God, and the Word was God. Everything was made through Him.

Then John tells us how anyone can become part of God's family. "As many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."

Not born into it. Not by family, effort, or human decision. Born of God.

Then the greatest sentence in history: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." God moved into the neighborhood. The word "dwelt" means He pitched His tent among us, the way God's glory once lived in the tabernacle.

Eli's sons were born into a priestly family and did not know God. Samuel listened when God called. Being near holy things does not make you God's child. Receiving Jesus does.

Think about it: Have you received Jesus and become a child of God?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I receive You. Thank You for the right to be called God's child. Speak, Your servant is listening.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 136

Thus Far the Lord Has Helped Us

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 5-7; John 2

> *And Samuel took one stone and set **it** between Mizpah and Shen, and he called its name Ebenezer, and he said, "Until now the LORD has helped us."*
>
> 1 Samuel 7:12 (SLB)

The Philistines captured the ark of God, but it caused them nothing but trouble. Their god Dagon fell on his face before it, twice, the second time broken. Plague broke out in every city that kept the ark. They finally sent it back on a cart pulled by two cows.

Twenty years later Samuel called Israel to put away their foreign gods and serve the LORD only. They gathered at Mizpah, confessed their sin, and fasted. While they were there, the Philistines attacked. God thundered from heaven and threw the Philistines into confusion, and Israel won.

Samuel set up a stone and named it Ebenezer, "the stone of help," and said, "Until now the LORD has helped us."

"Until now." God had helped them up to that point, through failure and victory alike. The stone looked back with gratitude and ahead with trust.

In John 2 Jesus turns water into wine at a wedding in Cana. His mother says to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do ***it***." That is good advice for every one of us.

Look back over your life. You can say it too: until now, the LORD has helped me.

Think about it: What would you write on your own "Ebenezer" stone?

Pray

LORD, until now You have helped me. I raise my Ebenezer today, and I trust You for the road ahead.

Go deeper: the free 1 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 137

They Have Rejected Me

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 8-9

> *And the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from reigning over them.*
>
> 1 Samuel 8:7 (SLB)

Samuel was old, and his sons did not walk in his ways. They took bribes. So the elders of Israel came and asked for a king, "like all the nations."

Samuel was hurt. But God told him, "they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from reigning over them."

God warned them what a king would cost. He would take their sons for his army, their daughters for his kitchen, the best of their fields, and a tenth of their flocks. They would cry out because of the king they chose. The people still said, we want a king like the nations, to judge us and fight our battles.

Wanting a leader was not the sin. God had planned for a king (Deuteronomy 17). The sin was why they wanted one. They wanted to be like everyone else, and they wanted someone they could see instead of trusting the God they could not see.

In chapter 9 God leads Saul, a tall, handsome young man looking for his father's lost donkeys, straight to Samuel. God gave them what they asked for.

Be careful what you demand from God. Sometimes He gives it.

Think about it: Where are you tempted to want what everyone else has instead of trusting God?

Pray

Lord, I do not want to reject You for something I can see. Rule over me, and keep me from wanting to be like everyone else.

Go deeper: the free 1 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 138

For God So Loved the World

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 10-12; John 3

> *For God so loved the world, that He gave His Son, the only begotten, so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.*
>
> John 3:16-17 (SLB)

In 1 Samuel 10 through 12, Saul is anointed king, and Samuel gives his farewell speech. He says, "far be it from me to sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23). Not praying for others was sin to Samuel.

In John 3 Nicodemus, a respected teacher, came to Jesus at night. Jesus told him he must be born again. Nicodemus did not understand. Jesus explained that just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, the Son of Man must be lifted up.

Then come the most famous words in the Bible. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Son, the only begotten, so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Look at each part. God, the source. So loved, the reason. The world, the reach. He gave, the cost. His only Son, the gift. Everyone who believes, the invitation. Should not perish, the rescue. Eternal life, the result.

Verse 17 is just as important: "God did not send His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

At the end of the chapter, John the Baptist says, "He must increase, but I ***must*** decrease."

Think about it: Which phrase in John 3:16 means the most to you today?

Pray

Father, thank You for loving the world, and me, so much that You gave Your Son. I believe in Him. Let Him increase and me decrease.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 139

A Man After His Own Heart

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 13; Psalm 79

> *And Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God which He commanded you; for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. And now your kingdom will not endure. The LORD has sought for Himself a man according to His heart, and the LORD has commanded him* ***to be*** *leader over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."*
>
> 1 Samuel 13:13-14 (SLB)

Saul's kingdom started to unravel quickly. The Philistines gathered a huge army, and Saul's men started deserting. Samuel had told Saul to wait seven days for him to come and offer the sacrifice. Saul waited, but Samuel did not arrive on time. So Saul offered the burnt offering himself.

Just as he finished, Samuel arrived. Saul made excuses. The people were scattering. You did not come. The Philistines were gathering. I forced myself.

Samuel said, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God." Then the hard word: Saul's kingdom would not last. "The LORD has sought for Himself a man according to His heart."

Saul's sin might look small. He did a religious thing. But he did it his way, on his schedule, because he panicked. Impatience and fear pushed him to disobey.

God was looking for someone whose heart was in tune with His. That is what God still looks for. Not perfection. David made huge mistakes. But a heart that belongs to God and comes back to Him.

Psalm 79:9: "Help us, God of our salvation, on account of the glory of Your name."

Think about it: When you feel pressure, do you wait on God or take matters into your own hands?

Pray

Lord, give me a heart after Yours. When I feel pressure, help me wait on You instead of acting out of fear.

Go deeper: the free 1 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 140

Living Water

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 14-15; John 4

> *Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will certainly never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life."*
>
> John 4:13-14 (SLB)

In 1 Samuel 14 Jonathan and his armor bearer climb up and take on a Philistine outpost alone. Jonathan says, "there is no restraint for the LORD to save by many or by few." In chapter 15 Saul disobeys again and keeps the best animals from the Amalekites, saying he will sacrifice them. Samuel answers, "to listen ***is*** better than sacrifice."

In John 4 Jesus sits at a well at noon, tired, and asks a Samaritan woman for a drink. Jews did not talk to Samaritans, and men did not talk to women like this in public. She had been married five times and was living with a man who was not her husband. She came to the well at the hottest part of the day, likely to avoid the other women.

Jesus offered her something better than water from Jacob's well. "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will certainly never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life."

She had tried to fill her thirst with relationships, and it never worked. Jesus knew everything about her and offered her living water anyway. She ran back to town and told everyone, "Come, see a man who told me all things that I did" (John 4:29).

Think about it: What have you been trying to fill your thirst with besides Jesus?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I am thirsty. I have tried other wells, and they run dry. Give me Your living water.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 141

The Lord Looks at the Heart

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 16; Psalm 80

> *And the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance and at the height of his stature, for I have rejected him; for **it is** not what man sees, for man sees according to the eyes, and the LORD sees according to the heart."*
>
> 1 Samuel 16:7 (SLB)

God sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint one of Jesse's sons as the next king. When Samuel saw the oldest, Eliab, tall and good-looking, he thought, surely this is the one.

God said no. "Do not look at his appearance and at the height of his stature... for man sees according to the eyes, and the LORD sees according to the heart."

Seven sons passed by, and God chose none of them. Samuel asked if there were any more. There was one, the youngest, out watching sheep. Jesse had not even thought to bring him in. That was David.

We judge by what we can see: looks, resumes, talent, confidence, how someone talks. God looks deeper. He saw a shepherd boy who had been writing songs to Him out in the fields and fighting lions to protect his sheep.

Here is the comfort. God sees what others miss in you. And here is the warning. God sees what others miss in you. Both are true.

After David was anointed, the Spirit of the LORD came on him mightily from that day forward. Saul, meanwhile, was tormented, and David was brought in to play the harp for him.

Psalm 80:3: "God, restore us, and make Your face shine, and let us be saved."

Think about it: How do you judge other people, by appearance or by heart?

Pray

LORD, You see my heart. Make it right before You. And help me see others the way You do.

Go deeper: the free 1 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 142

The Battle Is the Lord's

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 17; John 5

> *And David said to the Philistine, "You are coming to me with sword and with spear and with javelin, and I am coming to you in the name of the LORD of armies, the God of the battle lines of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will hand you over into my hand, and I will strike you and remove your head from upon you, and I will give the corpses of the camp of the Philistines this day to the flying things of the heavens and to the living things of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God for Israel, and that all this assembly may know that not by sword and by spear does the LORD save; for the battle **belongs** to the LORD, and He will give you into our hand."*
>
> 1 Samuel 17:45-47 (SLB)

For forty days Goliath, a giant over nine feet tall, came out and mocked the army of Israel. Every soldier, including King Saul, was terrified.

Then David showed up with lunch for his brothers. He heard Goliath and asked, who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? His brothers scolded him. Saul tried to give him his armor, but it did not fit. David took his staff, his sling, and five smooth stones.

"You are coming to me with sword and with spear and with javelin, and I am coming to you in the name of the LORD of armies... that all the earth may know that there is a God for Israel... for the battle ***belongs*** to the LORD."

David ran toward Goliath. One stone, and the giant fell.

David was not being brave on his own strength. He had seen God help him kill a lion and a bear. Past faithfulness built present faith. And he was not fighting for his own glory. He fought so all the earth would know there is a God.

In John 5 Jesus says, "the one who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life."

May 29, 2020, is the day I stopped drinking. It was a battle I had been losing on my own strength for a long time. When I face a hard problem now, I remember who actually pulled me out. Past deliverance is the best fuel for present faith.

Think about it: What past victories can you remember to build your faith for today's giant?

Pray

LORD of armies, the battle is Yours. Help me face my giants in Your name, remembering how You have helped me before.

Go deeper: the free 1 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 143

A Friend Who Gave Away His Robe

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 18-19; Psalm 81

> *And Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe which **was** on him, and he gave it to David, and his garments, and even to his sword and to his bow and to his belt.*
>
> 1 Samuel 18:3-4 (SLB)

After David killed Goliath, Saul's son Jonathan loved David "as his own soul." Jonathan made a covenant with him and gave him his own robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt.

That is remarkable. Jonathan was the crown prince. He was the one who should have been king. And he handed his royal robe and weapons to the shepherd boy God had chosen instead. He knew God's hand was on David, and he was glad about it.

That is the opposite of how his father reacted. When the women sang that Saul had slain thousands and David ten thousands, Saul got angry and jealous, and he eyed David from that day on. Twice he threw a spear at him. In chapter 19 Saul sent men to kill David in his home, and David's wife Michal helped him escape through a window.

Jealousy and generosity sit side by side in this family. Saul saw David as a threat. Jonathan saw him as God's gift.

Are you glad when God blesses someone else, even if it costs you? That is one of the clearest tests of humility.

Psalm 81:10: "open your mouth wide, and I will fill it."

Think about it: Is there someone whose success you struggle to celebrate?

Pray

Lord, free me from jealousy. Make me a friend like Jonathan, glad when You raise someone else up.

Go deeper: the free 1 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 144

Defend the Weak

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 20-21; Psalm 82

> *Judge **for the** poor and **the** fatherless; do justice to **the** afflicted and **the** destitute. Rescue **the** poor and **the** needy; deliver **them** from the hand of **the** wicked.*
>
> Psalm 82:3-4 (SLB)

In 1 Samuel 20 David and Jonathan make a plan to find out whether Saul really means to kill David. When it is clear he does, they say goodbye in a field, weeping. Jonathan says, "Go in peace, since we have sworn, the two of us, in the name of the LORD." In chapter 21 David flees, gets bread from the priests at Nob, and ends up pretending to be crazy in Gath.

Psalm 82 pictures God standing in the court of the "gods," the rulers and judges of the earth, and holding them accountable. How long will you judge unjustly and favor the wicked?

Then God tells them what justice looks like. "Judge ***for the*** poor and ***the*** fatherless; do justice to ***the*** afflicted and ***the*** destitute. Rescue ***the*** poor and ***the*** needy."

God cares about the people with no power. The orphan, the poor, the person who cannot afford a lawyer. Anyone with authority, from judges to parents to managers, will answer to God for how they used it.

David was on the run, hungry and powerless, at the mercy of people with authority. Some helped him and some betrayed him. God saw all of it.

Think about it: Where do you have power or influence that you could use to defend someone weaker?

Pray

God, You are the Judge of all. Use me to defend the weak and help the needy. Make me fair with whatever authority You give me.

DAY 145

To Whom Shall We Go?

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 22-24; John 6

> *From this **time** many of His disciples went away back and were no longer walking with Him. Therefore Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not also want to go away, do you?" Therefore Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have words of eternal life.*
>
> John 6:66-68 (SLB)

In 1 Samuel 24 Saul went into a cave to relieve himself, not knowing David and his men were hiding inside. David's men said, this is your chance. David crept up and cut off a corner of Saul's robe, then felt guilty even for that. "Far be it for me... that I should... stretch out my hand against him, for he ***is*** the anointed of the LORD." David trusted God to give him the throne in God's way.

In John 6 Jesus feeds five thousand, then says, "I am the bread of life." He tells the crowd that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. He meant that they must take Him in by faith, fully, but many were offended.

"From this ***time*** many of His disciples went away back and were no longer walking with Him." Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "You do not also want to go away, do you?"

Peter's answer is one I come back to often. "Lord, to whom will we go? You have words of eternal life."

Peter did not understand everything Jesus said. But he knew there was nowhere else to go. Sometimes faith is not having all the answers. It is knowing who has them.

Think about it: When parts of the Bible are hard to understand, what keeps you following?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I do not understand everything, but where else would I go? You have the words of eternal life. I am staying with You.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 146

Blessed Be Your Discernment

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 25; Psalm 83

> *And David said to Abigail, "Blessed **be** the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me. And blessed **be** your discernment, and blessed **be** you, who have restrained me this day from coming into bloodshed and **from** my hand saving me.*
>
> 1 Samuel 25:32-33 (SLB)

David and his men had protected the shepherds of a rich man named Nabal. When David asked for some food at sheep-shearing time, Nabal insulted him. His name means "fool," and he lived up to it. David strapped on his sword and set out with four hundred men to wipe out every male in Nabal's house.

Nabal's wife Abigail heard about it. She loaded donkeys with bread, wine, sheep, and raisins and rode out to meet David. She fell at his feet, took the blame, and reminded him that God would make him king. Do not let this be a weight on your conscience, she said.

David stopped. "Blessed ***be*** the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me. And blessed ***be*** your discernment, and blessed ***be*** you, who have restrained me this day from coming into bloodshed."

David the giant-killer was about to make a terrible mistake in anger. God sent a wise woman to stop him.

Thank God for the Abigails in our lives, people who see us heading for disaster and step in. And be humble enough to listen when they do.

Think about it: Who has God used to stop you from making a decision in anger?

Pray

Lord, thank You for the people You send to stop me when I am about to sin. Give me ears to listen, and wisdom to be that person for others.

Go deeper: the free 1 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 147

Better Is One Day

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 26-28; Psalm 84

> *For a day in Your courts **is** better than a thousand; I have chosen to stand at the threshold in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God **is** a sun and a shield; the LORD gives favor and glory; He does not withhold good from those who walk in blamelessness.*
>
> Psalm 84:10-11 (SLB)

In 1 Samuel 26 David spares Saul's life a second time, taking his spear and water jug while he sleeps. In chapters 27 and 28 David hides among the Philistines, and Saul, desperate and abandoned by God, consults a medium at Endor. It is a picture of a man who once had everything, now grasping in the dark.

Psalm 84 is the opposite. It is the song of someone who loves being in God's house. "How lovely are Your dwelling places, LORD of armies!" Even the sparrow finds a home near God's altar.

"For a day in Your courts ***is*** better than a thousand; I have chosen to stand at the threshold in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

A doorkeeper had a humble job. He did not lead worship or offer sacrifices. He stood at the door. The psalmist would rather have that job in God's house than the best seat in the world.

"The LORD God ***is*** a sun and a shield... He does not withhold good from those who walk in blamelessness."

Saul sought answers from a medium. The psalmist found everything he needed in God's presence.

Think about it: Do you look forward to being with God's people in His house?

Pray

LORD, one day in Your presence is better than a thousand anywhere else. Give me a heart that loves Your house.

DAY 148

Strengthened in the Lord

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 29-30; John 7

> *And it was exceedingly distressing for David, for the people spoke of stoning him, for the soul of all the people was bitter, each man over his sons and over his daughters. And David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.*
>
> 1 Samuel 30:6 (SLB)

David and his men came home to Ziklag and found it burned. The Amalekites had raided it and taken all their wives and children. The men wept until they had no strength left to weep. Then they turned on David and talked about stoning him.

That is about as low as it gets. Your family is gone, your home is ashes, and your own friends want you dead.

"And David strengthened himself in the LORD his God."

There was no one else to encourage him. So he went to God. He asked God whether to pursue, and God said yes. David and his men chased down the raiders, recovered every person and every possession, and took plenty of plunder.

Then David made a rule. The two hundred men who were too exhausted to cross the brook and had stayed with the supplies would get the same share as the fighters. Grace in victory.

In John 7 Jesus stands up at the feast and cries out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." When no one else can strengthen you, come to Him.

Think about it: Where do you go first when everything falls apart?

Pray

Lord my God, when everyone turns on me and I have nothing left, I will find my strength in You.

Go deeper: the free 1 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 149

Righteousness and Peace Have Kissed

Today's reading: 1 Samuel 31; 2 Samuel 1-2; Psalm 85

> *Steadfast love and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth springs up from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven.*
>
> Psalm 85:10-11 (SLB)

1 Samuel ends with Saul and his sons, including Jonathan, dying on Mount Gilboa. In 2 Samuel 1 David does not celebrate. He tears his clothes, weeps, and writes a lament for both of them: "Saul and Jonathan, the beloved and the pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not separated." David honored even the man who tried to kill him.

In chapter 2 David becomes king over Judah, but the rest of Israel follows Saul's son. It will be years of conflict.

Psalm 85 asks God to restore His people and revive them again. Then come two of the most beautiful lines in the Psalms. "Steadfast love and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed."

How can righteousness, God's perfect justice, and peace for sinners ever meet? How can truth that exposes sin and love that forgives it come together? Only at the cross. There, God's justice was fully satisfied, and His love was fully shown. Romans 3:26 says God is both just and the One who justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

"Truth springs up from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven." Jesus came down.

Think about it: Why does it matter that God is both just and loving at the same time?

Pray

God, at the cross Your righteousness and peace met. Thank You for being just and for justifying me through Jesus.

DAY 150

Free Indeed

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 3; John 8; Psalm 86

> *Therefore Jesus was saying to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*
>
> John 8:31-32 (SLB)

In 2 Samuel 3 the war between the house of Saul and the house of David drags on, "and David ***was*** going on and ***growing*** stronger, and the house of Saul ***was*** going on and ***growing*** weaker." Abner, Saul's general, switches sides, but Joab murders him in revenge. David mourns publicly.

In John 8 Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." Then He says to those who believed in Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

The crowd bristled. We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves to anyone. Jesus answered that everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. "Therefore if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

Freedom is not doing whatever you want. A person who cannot stop drinking, cannot stop lying, cannot stop looking at what he should not, is not free. He is a slave. Real freedom is being released from sin's grip to live as God made you to live.

Notice how it comes: abide in His word. Keep reading. Keep obeying. The truth sets you free over time.

Psalm 86:11: "Teach me Your way, LORD; I will walk in Your truth."

Think about it: What sin has been holding you as a slave? Have you asked the Son to set you free?

Pray

Lord Jesus, set me free indeed. Help me abide in Your word, so I know the truth and walk in freedom.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 151

Dancing Before the Lord

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 4-6

> *And David **was** dancing with all **his** strength before the LORD, and David **was** girded **with** an ephod of linen.*
>
> 2 Samuel 6:14 (SLB)

In 2 Samuel 5 David becomes king over all Israel, captures Jerusalem, and makes it his capital. "David went on, going on and becoming great, and the LORD God of armies ***was*** with him."

In chapter 6 David brings the ark of God to Jerusalem. The first try ends in disaster. They put it on a new cart, the way the Philistines had done, instead of having the Levites carry it as God commanded. When the oxen stumbled, Uzzah reached out to steady it, and God struck him dead.

David was angry and afraid. But three months later he tried again, God's way, with the Levites carrying it on poles. And this time "David ***was*** dancing with all ***his*** strength before the LORD."

His wife Michal watched from a window and despised him for making a fool of himself. David answered, "***It was*** before the LORD... and I will play before the LORD. And I will demean myself still more than this."

The two halves of this chapter belong together. God is holy, and He must be approached His way. And when we come His way, the right response is joy with everything we have.

Think about it: Are you ever more worried about looking foolish than about worshiping God fully?

Pray

LORD, You are holy, and I want to come to You Your way. And when I do, let me worship You with all my strength, whatever anyone thinks.

Go deeper: the free 2 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

Days 152 to 181

DAY 152

Who Am I?

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 7-8; Psalm 87

> *And King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, "Who **am** I, O Lord GOD, and what **is** my house, that You have brought me this far?*
>
> 2 Samuel 7:18 (SLB)

David was settled in his palace, and it bothered him that he lived in a house of cedar while the ark of God sat in a tent. He wanted to build God a house.

God said no, not you. Your son will build it. Then God turned it around. You want to build Me a house? I will build you a house, a dynasty. "Your house and your kingdom will be established forever before you; your throne will be established forever."

That promise is called the Davidic covenant, and it is one of the most important in the Bible. It points straight to Jesus, the Son of David, whose kingdom will never end. When the angel told Mary her Son would sit on the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32), this is the promise he meant.

David's response was to go in and sit before the LORD. "Who ***am*** I, O Lord GOD, and what ***is*** my house, that You have brought me this far?"

That is the right response to grace. Not "I deserve this," but "Who am I?" David was overwhelmed that God would do so much for a shepherd boy.

Psalm 87 says God loves the gates of Zion. He chose a place and a family to bring His King into the world.

Think about it: When you think about what God has done for you, does it make you ask "Who am I?"

Pray

Lord GOD, who am I that You have brought me this far? Thank You for Your promises, and for Jesus, the King whose throne lasts forever.

Go deeper: the free 2 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 153

At the King's Table

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 9-11; John 9; Psalm 88

> *And David said to him, "Do not be afraid, for I will certainly do steadfast love with you for the sake of Jonathan your father, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father; and you, you will eat bread at my table continually."*
>
> 2 Samuel 9:7 (SLB)

David asked if there was anyone left from Saul's house he could show kindness to, for Jonathan's sake. There was one: Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, lame in both feet since he was five, living in a place called Lo-debar.

In those days, a new king often wiped out the old king's family. Mephibosheth must have been terrified when he was called to the palace. He fell on his face. David said, "Do not be afraid, for I will certainly do steadfast love with you for the sake of Jonathan your father, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father; and you, you will eat bread at my table continually."

Mephibosheth called himself a dead dog. David treated him like one of his own sons.

That is what God does for us. We were enemies, crippled by sin, hiding far away. He sought us out for the sake of someone else, His Son, and gave us a seat at His table forever.

Then in chapter 11 David, who had shown such grace, falls hard. He stays home from war, sees Bathsheba from his roof, and sins. Even great men of God are one bad decision away from disaster.

In John 9 a man born blind is healed and says, "being blind, now I see."

Think about it: How does it feel to know you have a permanent seat at the King's table?

Pray

Lord, I was crippled and far away, and You brought me to Your table. Thank You for Your kindness for Jesus' sake.

Go deeper: the free 2 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 154

You Are the Man

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 12-13

> *And Nathan said to David, "You **are** the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you as king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.*
>
> 2 Samuel 12:7 (SLB)

After David's sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah, nearly a year passed. Then God sent the prophet Nathan.

Nathan told a story about a rich man with many flocks who took a poor man's only lamb, a lamb the poor man loved like a daughter, to serve to a guest. David was furious. That man deserves to die!

Nathan looked at him and said, "You ***are*** the man!"

I admire Nathan's courage. Confronting a king who had just murdered to cover his sin was dangerous. But he loved David and loved God enough to tell the truth.

And I admire David's response. He did not make excuses or kill the messenger. "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan answered, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die."

Forgiveness was immediate, but consequences remained. The child died, and violence never left David's house. Chapter 13 shows his son Amnon committing a terrible sin against his sister Tamar, and Absalom killing Amnon in revenge. David's children copied his lust and his violence.

On May 29, 2020, my wife caught me drinking after I had denied it for a long time. The hurt on her face broke through my pride in a way nothing else had. She told me I needed help, and she loved me enough to take me to my first 12-step meeting that same day. That was my "You are the man" moment. A hard truth spoken by someone who loves you can save your life.

God forgives completely. But sin still leaves scars.

Think about it: Is there a Nathan in your life who loves you enough to tell you the truth?

Pray

Lord, I have sinned against You. Thank You for taking away my sin. Give me friends who will tell me the truth, and humility to listen.

Go deeper: the free 2 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 155

The Good Shepherd

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 14; John 10

> *The thief does not come except that he may steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and may have **it** abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.*
>
> John 10:10-11 (SLB)

In 2 Samuel 14 a wise woman from Tekoa tells David that God "plans so that the banished one is not cast out from Him." David lets Absalom come home, but will not see him for two years. Half-forgiveness breeds bitterness, and Absalom's rebellion grows from it.

In John 10 Jesus contrasts Himself with thieves and hired hands. "The thief does not come except that he may steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and may have ***it*** abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

A hired hand runs when the wolf comes, because the sheep are not his. A good shepherd stays and fights, because they are his.

Then Jesus makes a promise every believer should hold on to. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they will certainly never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand."

Never. No one. That is security. Not because of how tightly we hold on to Him, but because of how tightly He holds on to us.

Think about it: Do you believe that no one can snatch you out of Jesus' hand?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are my Good Shepherd. You laid down Your life for me. I rest in Your hand, where no one can snatch me away.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 156

Let Him Do What Is Good

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 15-16

> *And the king said to Zadok, "Take back the ark of God **to** the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, then He will bring me back and show me it and His habitation. And if He says thus, 'I do not delight in you,' look, **here** I **am**; let Him do to me as **it** is good in His eyes."*
>
> 2 Samuel 15:25-26 (SLB)

Absalom spent four years stealing the hearts of Israel, standing at the city gate and telling people that if he were judge, they would get justice. Then he declared himself king. David had to flee Jerusalem barefoot and weeping.

The priests brought the ark of God with them, but David sent it back. "If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, then He will bring me back... And if He says thus, 'I do not delight in you,' look, ***here*** I ***am***; let Him do to me as ***it*** is good in His eyes."

David did not try to use God as a good-luck charm. He put himself in God's hands and let God decide.

Then a man named Shimei came out and cursed David and threw rocks at him. David's men wanted to cut off his head. David said, "Leave him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has spoken to him. Perhaps the LORD will look on my eye, and the LORD will repay me good instead of his cursing this day."

David knew he was reaping some of what he had sown. He accepted it humbly and trusted God with the outcome.

Think about it: How do you respond when you are treated unfairly, especially when you know you are not perfect either?

Pray

Lord, here I am. Do to me what seems good to You. Keep me humble when I am criticized, and help me trust You with the outcome.

Go deeper: the free 2 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 157

I Am the Resurrection

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 17-18; John 11; Psalm 89

> *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The **one** believing in Me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone living and believing in Me will certainly never die. Do you believe this?"*
>
> John 11:25-26 (SLB)

In 2 Samuel 18 Absalom's army is defeated, and Absalom's long hair catches in a tree. Joab kills him against David's orders. David's grief is one of the most heartbreaking scenes in the Bible: "My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! Would that I had died, I myself, in your place!"

David wished he could die in his son's place. He could not. But the Son of David could, and did.

In John 11 Lazarus is sick, and Jesus waits two days before going. By the time He arrives, Lazarus has been dead four days. Martha meets Him and says, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

Jesus answers, "I am the resurrection and the life. The ***one*** believing in Me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone living and believing in Me will certainly never die. Do you believe this?"

Then, standing at the tomb, "Jesus wept." He knew He was about to raise Lazarus. He wept anyway. He feels our grief.

Then He called, "Lazarus, come out!" And the dead man walked out.

Psalm 89:1: "I will sing of the steadfast loves of the LORD forever."

Think about it: How does knowing Jesus wept change how you think about Him in your grief?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are the resurrection and the life. I believe this. Thank You for weeping with me and for the hope that death is not the end.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 158

Speak to the Heart of Your People

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 19

> *And now, arise, go out and speak to the heart of your servants; for by the LORD I swear that **if** you are not going out, not a man will lodge with you this night. And this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come on you from your youth until now."*
>
> 2 Samuel 19:7 (SLB)

After Absalom's death, David was so overwhelmed with grief that the victory turned into mourning. His soldiers, who had just risked their lives for him, crept back into the city like men ashamed of running from battle.

Joab, never a gentle man, went in and told David the hard truth. You have shamed all your servants who saved your life today. You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. "Arise, go out and speak to the heart of your servants... ***if*** you are not going out, not a man will lodge with you this night."

David listened. He got up and sat in the gate, and the people came to him.

Grief is real, and it is right to mourn. But leaders sometimes have to set their own pain aside long enough to care for the people depending on them. Joab was harsh, but he was right.

The rest of the chapter shows David showing mercy as he returned. He spared Shimei, who had cursed him, and honored old Barzillai, who had fed him in the wilderness. And Mephibosheth had not washed his feet or trimmed his beard the whole time David was gone, out of loyalty to him.

Think about it: Is there someone depending on you who needs you to "speak to their heart" today?

Pray

Lord, I carry my own grief, but others need me too. Give me strength to care for the people You have given me, even when I am hurting.

Go deeper: the free 2 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 159

Unless a Seed Dies

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 20-21; John 12

> *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat, having fallen into the ground, dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*
>
> John 12:24 (SLB)

In 2 Samuel 20 and 21, a rebel named Sheba is stopped by a wise woman of Abel who talks the city into handing him over rather than being destroyed. Wisdom saved a city.

In John 12 Mary pours expensive perfume on Jesus' feet and wipes them with her hair. Judas complains about the waste. Then Jesus rides into Jerusalem, and some Greeks ask to see Him.

Jesus answers with a picture from farming. "Unless the grain of wheat, having fallen into the ground, dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

A seed in a jar on a shelf stays a seed forever. It has to go into the ground and break open before it can grow. Jesus was talking about His own death. Through it, a harvest of people from every nation would come to life.

Then He applied it to us. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Dying to ourselves is the path to a fruitful life.

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all ***men*** to Myself."

Mary's perfume was "wasted" on Jesus. Nothing given to Him is ever wasted.

Think about it: What might God be asking you to let go of so He can bring a harvest from it?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You died so I could live. Teach me to die to myself so my life bears fruit for You.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 160

The Lord Is My Rock

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 22

> *And he said, "The LORD **is** my crag and my stronghold, and a rescuer for me; the God of my rock, I take refuge in Him; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my high refuge and my place of escape; my savior, from violence You save me.*
>
> 2 Samuel 22:2-3 (SLB)

2 Samuel 22 is David's song of praise after God rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. The same song appears as Psalm 18. David packs it with picture words for God.

"The LORD ***is*** my crag and my stronghold, and a rescuer for me; the God of my rock, I take refuge in Him; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my high refuge and my place of escape; my savior."

Rock, fortress, deliverer, shield, horn, high tower, refuge, savior. David had hidden in caves and climbed cliffs to get away from Saul. He knew what a safe high place meant. And he learned that the real safety was not in the rock. It was in God.

Later he describes how God came down. The earth shook, smoke and fire went out, and "He drew me out of many waters." God thundered from heaven to rescue one man. That is how personally God cares.

Verse 31: "***As for*** God, His way ***is*** blameless; the word of the LORD ***is*** refined; He ***is*** a shield to all who take refuge in Him."

Take time to read the whole chapter aloud. Make David's song your own. Which picture of God fits what you need today?

Think about it: Which of David's pictures of God do you need most right now?

Pray

LORD, You are my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer. I take refuge in You. You drew me out of deep waters.

Go deeper: the free 2 Samuel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 161

Love One Another

Today's reading: 2 Samuel 23-24; John 13; Psalm 90

> *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love among one another."*
>
> John 13:34-35 (SLB)

At the end of 2 Samuel David insists on buying a threshing floor for a sacrifice instead of taking it for free. "I will not offer up to the LORD my God burnt offerings without cost" (2 Samuel 24:24). That site later became the location of the temple.

John 13 begins the Last Supper. Before the meal, Jesus got up, took off His outer garment, wrapped a towel around Himself, and washed His disciples' feet. That was a servant's job, the dirtiest one. Peter protested. Jesus said, unless I wash you, you have no part with Me.

"If therefore I, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

Then He gave them a new command. "That you love one another; even as I have loved you... By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love among one another."

Not by our doctrine, our buildings, or our programs. By our love. And not just any love. Love like His: humble, serving, and willing to get dirty.

Psalm 90:12: "So teach ***us*** to count our days, that we may bring in a heart of wisdom." Our days are short. Spend them loving.

Think about it: Whose "feet" could you wash this week by serving them humbly?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You washed feet, and You loved me to the end. Help me love others the way You have loved me.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 162

Under the Shadow of the Almighty

Today's reading: 1 Kings 1; Psalm 91

> *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will lodge in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "My refuge and my stronghold, my God, in whom I trust."*
>
> Psalm 91:1-2 (SLB)

1 Kings opens with David old and cold, unable to keep warm, and another son, Adonijah, trying to grab the throne. Nathan and Bathsheba remind David of his promise, and David has Solomon anointed king that same day. Delaying an important decision can create chaos.

Psalm 91 is a psalm of protection. "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will lodge in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'My refuge and my stronghold, my God, in whom I trust.'"

Notice the word "dwells." Not visits. Not drops in when there is trouble. Lives there. The promises of this psalm are for the person who makes God his home.

Satan quoted this psalm to Jesus in the wilderness, telling Him to throw Himself off the temple because the angels would catch Him (Matthew 4:6). Jesus refused. This psalm is not a promise that we can take foolish risks and test God. It is a promise that those who live close to Him are safe in Him, whatever comes.

Believers still get sick and die. But nothing can touch us outside God's will, and no harm can reach our souls.

Think about it: Is God a place you visit in trouble, or the place you live?

Pray

Most High God, I want to dwell in Your shelter, not just visit. You are my refuge and my fortress. I trust in You.

DAY 163

Be Strong and Show Yourself a Man

Today's reading: 1 Kings 2; John 14

> *"I **am** going in the way of all the earth. And you shall be strong and become a man. And you shall keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the law of Moses, so that you may act wisely in all that you do and in every **place** where you turn there,*
>
> 1 Kings 2:2-3 (SLB)

David's last words to Solomon are a father's charge to his son. "I ***am*** going in the way of all the earth. And you shall be strong and become a man. And you shall keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways."

David did not tell Solomon to be strong by being tough. He defined being a man as walking with God and keeping His word. That is the strength that lasts.

Fathers, what are you telling your sons about manhood? The world says real men are rich, powerful, and in control. David says real men keep God's commands.

In John 14, the night before the cross, Jesus comforted His disciples. "Let your heart not be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In the house of My Father are many dwelling places... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself."

That is the promise of the rapture. Jesus will come for His own and take them to the Father's house. I believe that will happen before the tribulation. Either way, it is a promise to hold on to.

Thomas asked how they could know the way. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Think about it: What does it mean to you to "be a man" or "be a woman" of God?

Pray

Lord, make me strong in You. Keep my heart from being troubled, because You are coming again to take me to be with You.

Go deeper: the free 1 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 164

Give Me a Listening Heart

Today's reading: 1 Kings 3-4; John 15; Psalm 92

> *And give to Your servant a listening heart to judge Your people, to discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"*
>
> 1 Kings 3:9 (SLB)

God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, ask what you want Me to give you. Solomon could have asked for anything: money, long life, victory over his enemies.

He asked for this: "give to Your servant a listening heart to judge Your people, to discern between good and evil."

God was pleased. Because Solomon did not ask for riches or revenge, God gave him wisdom and also riches and honor. Then came the famous case of two women fighting over one baby. Solomon's ruling revealed the real mother, and all Israel saw that God's wisdom was in him.

A "listening heart" is a good request for anyone. A heart that listens to God and listens to people. Most of our mistakes come from not listening.

In John 15 Jesus says, "I am the vine; you ***are*** the branches. The ***one*** remaining in Me and I in him, this ***one*** bears much fruit; for apart from Me you are not able to do anything."

A branch does not try hard to grow grapes. It stays connected to the vine. Solomon's wisdom came from God. Our fruit comes from staying connected to Jesus.

Psalm 92 adds that the righteous "will still bear fruit in old age."

Think about it: If God asked what you want Him to give you, what would you ask for?

Pray

Lord, give me a listening heart. Help me stay connected to Jesus, the Vine, so my life bears fruit for You.

Go deeper: the free 1 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 165

Built in Silence

Today's reading: 1 Kings 5-6; Psalm 93

> *And the house, when it was built, was built **of** complete stone **from the** quarry; and hammers and the axe, any tool of iron, were not heard in the house when it was built.*
>
> 1 Kings 6:7 (SLB)

Solomon began building the temple 480 years after Israel came out of Egypt. He used cedar from Lebanon and stone from the quarries. And one detail stands out: "the house, when it was built, was built ***of*** complete stone ***from the*** quarry; and hammers and the axe, any tool of iron, were not heard in the house when it was built."

All the cutting and shaping was done at the quarry. When the stones arrived at the temple, they fit perfectly, and the house went up in quiet.

Peter says believers are "living stones" being built into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5). God does His shaping work on us here, in the quarry of this life. Sometimes that work is loud and painful: trials, losses, hard seasons. But He is shaping each stone for its exact place in His eternal house.

When we finally get there, there will be no more chiseling. Every stone will fit.

Psalm 93:1: "The LORD reigns; He is clothed ***with*** majesty." While the hammers are ringing in your life, remember who is holding the chisel and what He is building.

Think about it: What is God shaping in your life right now that hurts but has a purpose?

Pray

Lord, You are shaping me for Your house. When the chisel hurts, help me trust that You know exactly where I fit.

Go deeper: the free 1 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 166

Take Courage

Today's reading: 1 Kings 7; John 16

> *These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but take courage, I have overcome the world."*
>
> John 16:33 (SLB)

1 Kings 7 describes Solomon's palace and the bronze work for the temple, including two huge pillars named Jachin and Boaz, meaning "He establishes" and "in Him is strength." Every person walking into God's house passed those names.

In John 16 Jesus tells His disciples hard things. They will be thrown out of synagogues. People will think they are serving God by killing them. He is going away. They will weep while the world rejoices.

But He also tells them the Spirit is coming. "When He comes, the Spirit of truth, He will guide you into all the truth."

Then He ends with this: "These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but take courage, I have overcome the world."

Jesus does not promise an easy life. He promises the opposite. "In the world you will have tribulation." That word means pressure, trouble, distress. It is guaranteed.

But peace is also guaranteed, in Him. And the reason we can take courage is not that our troubles are small. It is that our Savior has already won.

Think about it: What trouble are you facing that you need to bring under Jesus' victory?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You told me I would have trouble, and I do. But You have overcome the world. Give me Your peace and courage today.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 167

That They May Know You

Today's reading: 1 Kings 8; John 17; Psalm 94

> *And this is the eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You sent.*
>
> John 17:3 (SLB)

In 1 Kings 8 Solomon dedicates the temple. The ark is brought in, and the glory of the LORD fills the house so thickly that the priests cannot stand to minister. Then Solomon prays: "will God really dwell on the earth? Look, the heavens and the heavens of the heavens cannot contain You; how much less this house which I have built!"

John 17 is Jesus' prayer the night before He died. It is the longest prayer of His we have. He prays for Himself, for His disciples, and then for us.

He defines eternal life. "And this is the eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You sent."

Eternal life is not just living forever. It is knowing God. A relationship, starting now and never ending.

Then He prays for "those who will believe in Me through their word." That is you and me. Jesus prayed for you the night before the cross. And what did He pray? "That they all may be one... so that the world may believe that You sent Me."

Our unity as believers is part of our witness. Division in the church makes the world doubt.

Think about it: How well do you know God, not just about Him, but Him?

Pray

Father, I want to know You and Your Son. Thank You that Jesus prayed for me. Make me one with my brothers and sisters, so the world may believe.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 168

What Is Truth?

Today's reading: 1 Kings 9-10; John 18; Psalm 95

> *Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I may testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate says to Him, "What is truth?" And having said this, he went out again to the Jews, and says to them, "I find no cause in Him.*
>
> John 18:37-38 (SLB)

In 1 Kings 10 the Queen of Sheba travels a long way to test Solomon with hard questions. After seeing his wisdom and the temple, she says, "the half was not told to me." Jesus said that someone greater than Solomon was here (Matthew 12:42).

In John 18 Jesus is arrested and brought before Pilate. Pilate asked, "So You are a king?" Jesus said, "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I may testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Pilate answered, "What is truth?" Then he walked out without waiting for an answer.

That is a picture of our age. People ask "what is truth?" but often do not really want to know. They want the question to end the conversation. Truth was standing right in front of Pilate, and he walked away.

Jesus did not say He had a truth or His truth. He said He came to testify to the truth. In John 14:6 He said He is the truth.

Psalm 95 invites us to bow down before our Maker and warns, "Today, if you will listen to His voice," do not harden your hearts.

Think about it: Do you really want to know the truth, even when it is uncomfortable?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are the truth. I do not want to walk away like Pilate. I will listen to Your voice.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 169

A Divided Heart

Today's reading: 1 Kings 11

> *And it was at the time of the old age of Solomon, his wives turned aside his heart after other gods; and his heart was not complete with the LORD his God, like the heart of David his father.*
>
> 1 Kings 11:4 (SLB)

Solomon had everything: wisdom, wealth, peace, fame, and the temple. But 1 Kings 11 explains how it all went wrong. Solomon loved many foreign women, seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. God had warned Israel not to marry into those nations because they would turn their hearts to other gods.

"It was at the time of the old age of Solomon, his wives turned aside his heart after other gods; and his heart was not complete with the LORD his God, like the heart of David his father."

Solomon did not wake up one day and decide to worship idols. It was gradual. One compromise, one marriage, one altar at a time. In his old age, the wisest man who ever lived built shrines for detestable gods on the hill east of Jerusalem.

"The LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned aside from the LORD... who had appeared to him twice."

Knowing a lot about God, even meeting Him, does not protect you from drifting. Only a whole heart does. Finishing well matters more than starting well.

Think about it: Is there any area where your heart is being slowly turned away from God?

Pray

Lord, give me a whole heart for You, all my life. Keep me from slow drift, and help me finish well.

Go deeper: the free 1 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 170

Paid in Full

Today's reading: 1 Kings 12-13; John 19; Psalm 96

> *Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It has been finished." And having bowed **His** head, He delivered up the spirit.*
>
> John 19:30 (SLB)

In 1 Kings 12 Solomon's son Rehoboam rejects the advice of the older men and listens to his young friends. He tells the people he will make their burden heavier. Ten tribes break away and follow Jeroboam, who sets up golden calves so the people will not go to Jerusalem. The kingdom splits in two.

In John 19 Jesus is flogged, crowned with thorns, and crucified. Pilate posts a sign over His head in three languages: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. His mother stands near the cross, and Jesus gives her into John's care.

Then, after receiving the sour wine, "He said, 'It has been finished.' And having bowed ***His*** head, He delivered up the spirit."

In Greek it is one word, tetelestai. It was used in business to mean "paid in full." The debt of sin is paid. Nothing is left owing. Nothing to add.

Notice also that Jesus "delivered up" His spirit. His life was not taken from Him. He gave it.

Psalm 96 calls all the earth to sing a new song and "bring good news of His salvation from day to day."

Think about it: Are you trying to add anything to what Jesus already finished?

Pray

Lord Jesus, it is finished. You paid my debt in full. I rest in what You have done, and I add nothing to it.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 171

Hate Evil

Today's reading: 1 Kings 14; Psalm 97

> *You who love the LORD, hate evil! He guards the lives of His faithful ones; from the hand of the wicked He delivers them.*
>
> Psalm 97:10 (SLB)

In 1 Kings 14 Jeroboam's son gets sick, and he sends his wife in disguise to the prophet Ahijah. The old prophet is blind, but God tells him who is coming. The message is grim. God gave Jeroboam the kingdom, but "you have not been like My servant David, who kept My commandments and who walked after Me with all his heart." You cannot fool God with a disguise.

Psalm 97 pictures the LORD reigning, with clouds and darkness around Him, fire going before Him, and mountains melting like wax. Then it gives a simple command: "You who love the LORD, hate evil!"

We do not talk about hating evil much anymore. We talk about tolerance. But you cannot love God and be comfortable with what He hates. If you love your child, you hate the thing that is hurting him. If you love God, you will hate sin, starting with your own.

The verse goes on: "He guards the lives of His faithful ones; from the hand of the wicked He delivers them." Hating evil is not a burden. It is part of being safe with God.

Think about it: Is there an evil you have grown too comfortable with?

Pray

LORD, I love You, and I want to hate what You hate. Show me the evil I have grown comfortable with, and guard my soul.

DAY 172

My Lord and My God

Today's reading: 1 Kings 15-16; John 20; Psalm 98

> *Then He says to Thomas, "Bring your finger here, and see My hands; and bring your hand, and put **it** into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus says to him, "Because you have seen Me, Thomas, you have believed. Blessed **are** those who have not seen and have believed."*
>
> John 20:27-29 (SLB)

In 1 Kings 15 and 16 kings come and go in the northern kingdom, most of them murdered by the next. In Judah, King Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. Then comes Ahab, who did more evil than all who were before him and married Jezebel.

John 20 is the resurrection. Mary Magdalene meets Jesus in the garden and thinks He is the gardener until He says her name. That evening Jesus appears to the disciples behind locked doors.

Thomas was not there, and he would not believe. Unless I see the nail marks and put my finger in them, I will not believe. A week later Jesus came again and spoke right to him. "Bring your finger here, and see My hands... and do not be unbelieving, but believing."

Thomas answered with one of the clearest statements of who Jesus is in the whole Bible: "My Lord and my God!" Jesus accepted it. He is God.

Then Jesus said, "Blessed ***are*** those who have not seen and have believed." That is us.

John tells us why he wrote: "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

Think about it: Can you say to Jesus, "My Lord and my God"?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I have not seen You, but I believe. You are my Lord and my God.

Go deeper: the free John study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 173

How Long Will You Limp?

Today's reading: 1 Kings 17-18; John 21; Psalm 99

> *And Elijah drew near to all the people and said, "How long **will** you **be** limping on the two crutches? If the LORD **is** the God, walk after Him; and if the Baal, walk after him." And the people did not answer him a word.*
>
> 1 Kings 18:21 (SLB)

Elijah appears out of nowhere in 1 Kings 17 and tells Ahab it will not rain until he says so. Then God sends him to a widow in Zarephath, and her jar of flour and jug of oil do not run out.

After three and a half years of drought, Elijah calls for a showdown on Mount Carmel: 450 prophets of Baal against him. "How long ***will*** you ***be*** limping on the two crutches? If the LORD ***is*** the God, walk after Him; and if the Baal, walk after him." The people said nothing.

Baal's prophets cried out all day, danced, and cut themselves. Nothing. Elijah soaked his altar with water three times, prayed a short prayer, and "the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust." The people fell on their faces: "The LORD, He ***is*** the God!"

In John 21 Jesus restores Peter by a fire on the beach, asking three times, "do you love Me?" Three denials, three affirmations. And three times He gives Peter a job: feed My sheep.

Many people limp between two opinions. They want God and the world. Elijah says pick one.

Think about it: Where are you trying to walk with both God and the world?

Pray

LORD, You are God. I will not limp between two opinions. I choose You, and I want to follow You with my whole heart.

Go deeper: the free 1 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 174

The Still Small Voice

Today's reading: 1 Kings 19; Acts 1; Psalm 100

> *And He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And look, the LORD **was** passing by, and a great and strong wind **was** tearing the mountains and breaking the rocks before the LORD; the LORD **was** not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake; the LORD **was** not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire; the LORD **was** not in the fire. And after the fire a sound of a thin silence.*
>
> 1 Kings 19:11-12 (SLB)

Right after the victory on Mount Carmel, Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah, and he ran for his life. He went a day into the wilderness, sat under a broom tree, and asked to die. "***It is*** enough now, O LORD; take my life."

God's first answer was not a sermon. It was a nap and a meal. An angel woke him and fed him, twice. Sometimes our spiritual crisis is partly physical exhaustion.

Then Elijah went to Mount Horeb. God told him to stand on the mountain. A great wind tore the rocks, but God was not in the wind. An earthquake, but God was not in it. A fire, but God was not in the fire. "And after the fire a sound of a thin silence."

That is where Elijah heard God. Not in the spectacular, but in the quiet.

We often want God to show up in fire like Carmel. But He often speaks in a whisper, through His word, in a quiet moment. You have to be still to hear it.

In Acts 1 Jesus promises power when the Holy Spirit comes, then ascends. The angels say He will come back the same way.

Psalm 100: "Enter His gates with thanksgiving."

Think about it: When do you get quiet enough to hear God's voice?

Pray

Lord, I am tired. Feed me, and let me rest. Then quiet my heart so I can hear Your still small voice.

Go deeper: the free 1 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 175

Sold Out to Do Evil

Today's reading: 1 Kings 20-21; Psalm 101

> *And Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" And he said, "I have found **you**, because you have sold yourself to do the evil in the eyes of the LORD.*
>
> 1 Kings 21:20 (SLB)

In 1 Kings 21 King Ahab wanted his neighbor Naboth's vineyard. Naboth refused to sell his family inheritance, as God's law said. Ahab went home and sulked on his bed and would not eat.

Jezebel said, are you king or not? She wrote letters in Ahab's name, hired false witnesses, and had Naboth stoned to death. Then Ahab went down to take the vineyard.

Elijah met him there. "Have you found me, O my enemy?" Ahab said. Elijah answered, "I have found ***you***, because you have sold yourself to do the evil in the eyes of the LORD."

Ahab did not throw the stones himself. But he wanted what he should not have, let his wife do the dirty work, and enjoyed the results. God held him responsible.

Surprisingly, when Ahab heard God's judgment, he humbled himself, tore his clothes, and fasted. God said, "Have you seen that Ahab has humbled himself before Me?" and delayed the disaster. Even for Ahab, God responded to humility.

Psalm 101 is a king's promise to walk with integrity: "I will not set before my eyes a thing of worthlessness." Ahab set his eyes on a vineyard, and it cost a man his life.

Think about it: Is there something you want so badly that you are tempted to look the other way at how you get it?

Pray

Lord, guard my eyes and my desires. Keep me from wanting what is not mine. And thank You that You respond to the humble.

Go deeper: the free 1 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 176

What Shall We Do?

Today's reading: 1 Kings 22; Acts 2

> *Therefore let all **the** house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." And having heard **this**, they were pierced in the heart, and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What shall we do, men, brothers?" And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
>
> Acts 2:36-38 (SLB)

In 1 Kings 22 four hundred prophets told Ahab what he wanted to hear: go to war and win. One prophet, Micaiah, said, "***As*** the LORD lives, surely what the LORD says to me, that I will speak." He told the truth: Ahab would die. Ahab threw him in prison and went to battle in disguise. A random arrow found the gap in his armor.

In Acts 2 the Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost. The disciples speak in languages they never learned, and people from many nations hear God's works in their own tongues. Peter, the man who denied Jesus, stands up and preaches.

He ends with this: "Let all ***the*** house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

"They were pierced in the heart," and they asked, "What shall we do?" Peter answered, "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Three thousand believed that day. And "they were steadfastly continuing in the teaching of the apostles and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers."

Think about it: Are you steadily continuing in the Word, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are Lord and Christ. I turn from my sin to You. Fill me with Your Spirit, and keep me faithful in Your church.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 177

A Double Portion

Today's reading: 2 Kings 1-2; Psalm 102

> *And it was, when they had passed over, and Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "And please let **there** be a double portion of your spirit to me." And he said, "You have asked a hard thing. If you see me taken from you, let it be so to you; and if not, it will not be."*
>
> 2 Kings 2:9-10 (SLB)

Elijah knew his time was up. He tried three times to leave Elisha behind, and three times Elisha refused. As I live, I will not leave you.

At the Jordan Elijah asked what he could do for him. Elisha said, "please let ***there*** be a double portion of your spirit to me." Elijah said, "You have asked a hard thing." If you see me taken, you will have it.

Then a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated them, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak, struck the Jordan, and said, "Where ***is*** the LORD, the God of Elijah?" The river split, and he walked across.

Elisha did not ask for money or position. He asked for more of God's Spirit. He refused to settle. And notice that he did not ask "Where is Elijah?" He asked "Where is the LORD?" The prophet was gone, but God was not.

Leaders come and go. Pastors move on. Mentors die. The question is whether we have learned to depend on the God they served.

Psalm 102 contrasts our short lives with God's eternity: "You ***are*** He, and Your years will not come to an end."

Think about it: Whose faith have you been leaning on that you need to make your own?

Pray

LORD, give me more of Your Spirit. When the people I lean on are gone, let me find that You are still here.

Go deeper: the free 2 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 178

What Do You Have in the House?

Today's reading: 2 Kings 3-4; Acts 3

> *And Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil." And he said, "Go, ask for yourself vessels from outside, from all your neighbors, empty vessels; do not get few.*
>
> 2 Kings 4:2-3 (SLB)

A prophet's widow came to Elisha. Her husband had died in debt, and the creditor was coming to take her two sons as slaves.

Elisha asked, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" She said she had nothing but a jar of oil.

He told her to borrow empty jars from all her neighbors, "do not get few." Then shut the door and pour. She poured and poured until every jar was full. The oil stopped when the jars ran out. She sold the oil, paid the debt, and lived on the rest.

God started with what she already had, even though it seemed like nothing. And the size of the miracle was limited by how many jars she gathered. Her faith set the limit, not God's supply.

What do you have in your house? A small skill, a little time, a modest income, a story? God can multiply it. But you have to bring the empty jars.

In Acts 3 a lame man asks Peter and John for money. Peter says, "Silver and gold I do not have; but what I have, this I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise up and walk."

Think about it: What small thing do you have that you could offer to God this week?

Pray

Lord, I do not have much, but I give You what I have. Multiply it, and help me bring plenty of empty jars.

Go deeper: the free 2 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 179

Open His Eyes

Today's reading: 2 Kings 5-6; Acts 4; Psalm 103

> *And he said, "Do not be afraid, for more **are** those who **are** with us than those who **are** with them." And Elisha prayed and said, "LORD, please open his eyes, that he may see." And the LORD opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw; and look, the mountain **was** full of horses and chariotry of fire all around Elisha.*
>
> 2 Kings 6:16-17 (SLB)

The king of Aram kept planning ambushes against Israel, but Elisha kept warning Israel's king. So the Aramean king sent an army to capture Elisha. In the morning, Elisha's servant saw the city surrounded by horses and chariots and panicked.

Elisha said, "Do not be afraid, for more ***are*** those who ***are*** with us than those who ***are*** with them." Then he prayed, "LORD, please open his eyes, that he may see." And the servant saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

The danger was real. But there was a bigger reality the servant could not see.

That is still true. When you feel surrounded, outnumbered, and alone, God's resources are all around you. You just cannot see them.

In chapter 5 the Syrian general Naaman wanted to be healed of leprosy in some grand way. Elisha told him to dip in the muddy Jordan seven times. His servants said, if he asked you to do a great thing, would you not do it? Naaman dipped and was healed.

In Acts 4 Peter says, "neither is ***there*** another name under heaven which has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Think about it: Where do you need God to open your eyes to what you cannot see?

Pray

LORD, open my eyes. When I feel surrounded, let me see that those with me are more than those against me.

Go deeper: the free 2 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 180

This Is a Day of Good News

Today's reading: 2 Kings 7-8

> *And they said each to his neighbor, "We are not doing right. This day **is** a day of good news, and we are keeping silent. If we wait until the light of the morning, iniquity will find us. And now, come, and let us go and tell the house of the king."*
>
> 2 Kings 7:9 (SLB)

Samaria was under siege, and the famine was so bad that people were eating unthinkable things. Elisha said that by tomorrow food would be cheap. A royal officer scoffed.

Four lepers sat outside the city gate. They reasoned that they would die if they stayed and die if they went into the city, so they might as well surrender to the Arameans. When they got to the enemy camp, it was empty. God had made the Arameans hear the sound of a great army, and they fled, leaving everything.

The lepers ate, drank, and hid silver and gold. Then their conscience caught up with them. "We are not doing right. This day ***is*** a day of good news, and we are keeping silent."

They went and told the city, and the people were saved.

We have good news too, better than food in a famine. People around us are starving for hope. It is not right for us to keep it to ourselves.

The officer who scoffed saw the food but did not eat it. He was trampled in the gate.

Think about it: Who around you is starving for the good news you have?

Pray

Lord, I have good news, and I have kept silent too long. Give me courage to share what You have done with someone who needs it.

Go deeper: the free 2 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 181

We Must Obey God

Today's reading: 2 Kings 9; Acts 5

> *But Peter and the apostles answering said, "It is necessary to obey God rather than men.*
>
> Acts 5:29 (SLB)

In 2 Kings 9 Jehu is anointed king and drives his chariot "with madness" to carry out God's judgment on Ahab's house. Jezebel dies just as Elijah said she would.

Acts 5 begins with Ananias and Sapphira lying about their gift to the church and dying on the spot. God takes the purity of His church seriously.

Then the apostles are arrested for preaching about Jesus. An angel opens the prison doors in the night, and in the morning they are back in the temple teaching. Brought before the council and told again to stop, Peter answers, "It is necessary to obey God rather than men."

A respected teacher named Gamaliel gave wise advice. If this is from men, it will fail. If it is from God, you will not be able to stop it, and you may find yourselves fighting against God.

The apostles were flogged and released. And "they were departing from ***the*** presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been counted worthy to be dishonored for His name."

Rejoicing after a beating. That is what happens when people know Jesus is alive.

Think about it: Is there a place where you need to obey God even though people are telling you not to?

Pray

Lord, when people's commands go against Yours, help me obey You. And give me joy even when following You costs me.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

Days 182 to 212

DAY 182

Full of the Spirit and Wisdom

Today's reading: 2 Kings 10-11; Acts 6; Psalm 104

> *Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men being well attested, full of **the** Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we will appoint over this need; but we will steadfastly continue in prayer and in the ministry of the word."*
>
> Acts 6:3-4 (SLB)

In 2 Kings 10 and 11 Jehu wipes out Baal worship, but he does not walk with God with all his heart. Then wicked Queen Athaliah tries to kill the whole royal family of Judah. One baby, Joash, is hidden by his aunt in the temple for six years. God protected the line of David, the line of Jesus, through one brave woman.

In Acts 6 the church had a problem. The Greek-speaking widows were being overlooked in the daily food distribution. The apostles did not ignore it, and they did not drop everything to run the food line either. They said, "select from among you seven men being well attested, full of ***the*** Holy Spirit and wisdom... we will steadfastly continue in prayer and in the ministry of the word."

That is good leadership. Name the problem, delegate it to qualified people, and stay focused on your calling.

Notice the qualifications for serving food: full of the Spirit and wisdom. No job in the church is too small for spiritual people.

One of the seven was Stephen. Before long he was doing great wonders and debating with power. When he was dragged before the council, they "saw his face as ***the*** face of an angel."

Psalm 104 praises God for His wisdom in creation.

Think about it: Is there a "small" job in your church that you could do with a big heart?

Pray

Lord, fill me with Your Spirit and wisdom for whatever job You give me, big or small.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 183

Strike the Ground Again

Today's reading: 2 Kings 12-14

> *And he said, "Take the arrows." And he took **them**. And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike toward the ground." And he struck three times and stopped. And the man of God was angry with him and said, "**You should have** struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria until making an end **of them**. And now three times you will strike Syria."*
>
> 2 Kings 13:18-19 (SLB)

In 2 Kings 12 young King Joash did right "all his days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him." When his mentor died, Joash drifted. Some people's faith is really borrowed from someone else.

In chapter 13 Elisha is dying, and King Joash of Israel comes and weeps over him. Elisha tells him to shoot an arrow out the east window: the LORD's arrow of victory over Aram. Then he tells the king to take the arrows and strike the ground.

The king struck the ground three times and stopped.

Elisha was angry. "***You should have*** struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria until making an end ***of them***. And now three times you will strike Syria."

The king's half-hearted effort showed a half-hearted faith. He did not expect much, so he did not try much, and he got exactly what he expected.

How often do we pray once or twice and stop? Try something for God, half-expecting it to fail? God's supply is not limited, but our faith can limit what we receive.

Even after Elisha died, a dead man thrown into his tomb came back to life when he touched Elisha's bones (2 Kings 13:21). God's power did not depend on the prophet.

Think about it: Where have you struck the ground only a few times and stopped?

Pray

Lord, forgive my half-hearted faith. Help me keep praying and keep trusting until You give the full victory.

Go deeper: the free 2 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 184

Lord, Do Not Hold This Against Them

Today's reading: 2 Kings 15; Acts 7

> *And they were stoning Stephen as he was calling upon **the Lord** and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And having knelt down, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And having said this, he fell asleep.*
>
> Acts 7:59-60 (SLB)

2 Kings 15 is a parade of kings. In Judah, Azariah and Jotham did right, "Only the high places were not removed." In Israel, kings were murdered one after another. Without God, there is no stable foundation.

In Acts 7 Stephen preaches the longest sermon in Acts. He walks the council through Israel's history and shows that they always resisted God's messengers: Joseph, Moses, the prophets, and now Jesus. They were furious and ground their teeth at him.

Stephen looked up and saw "the glory of God, and Jesus standing at ***the*** right ***hand*** of God." Jesus is usually described as seated. Here He stood, as if rising to welcome His servant home.

They dragged Stephen out and stoned him. He prayed two prayers. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And then, kneeling, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

Both echo what Jesus prayed on the cross. Stephen had spent so much time with Jesus that he died like Him.

A young man named Saul held the coats and approved. Stephen's prayer for his killers would be answered in a way no one expected. We read about it in two days.

Think about it: Could you pray "do not hold this sin against them" for someone who has hurt you?

Pray

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit when my time comes. Until then, help me forgive like Stephen forgave, and like You forgave.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 185

They Feared the Lord and Served Their Own Gods

Today's reading: 2 Kings 16-17

> *The LORD they were fearing, and their own gods they were serving, according to the custom of the nations from which they had carried them into exile.*
>
> 2 Kings 17:33 (SLB)

2 Kings 17 is the end of the northern kingdom. In 722 B.C. Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel into exile. The writer stops to explain why, and the list is long. They feared other gods. They followed the customs of the nations. They built high places, set up idols, sacrificed their children, and practiced sorcery. God warned them through prophet after prophet, and they would not listen.

Then Assyria moved foreigners into the land. Lions attacked them, so the king sent back a priest to teach them how to worship the LORD. The result: "The LORD they were fearing, and their own gods they were serving."

That describes a lot of people today. They believe in God. They might go to church at Christmas and Easter. They pray when things go wrong. But their lives are really run by other gods: money, success, pleasure, comfort, approval.

Jesus said no one can serve two masters. You can add God to your life without making Him Lord of it. But that is not faith. That is religion with a side of idols.

Chapter 16 shows Ahaz of Judah copying a pagan altar he saw in Damascus. Judah was not far behind.

Think about it: Is God your Lord, or just one of the things you respect?

Pray

LORD, I do not want to fear You and serve other gods. Be the only God I serve.

Go deeper: the free 2 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 186

Do You Understand What You Are Reading?

Today's reading: 2 Kings 18; Acts 8

> *And having run up, Philip heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you indeed understand what you are reading?" And he said, "For how could I be able, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip, having come up, to sit with him.*
>
> Acts 8:30-31 (SLB)

2 Kings 18 introduces Hezekiah. "In the LORD, the God of Israel, he trusted... And he clung to the LORD." He even broke the bronze serpent Moses had made, because the people had started worshiping it. Good things can become idols.

In Acts 8 persecution scattered the church, and "those who had been scattered went about preaching the word." The enemy meant to stamp it out. Instead, it spread.

Philip preached in Samaria, and many believed. Then an angel sent him to a desert road. There an Ethiopian official, the treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia, was riding in his chariot reading Isaiah aloud. Philip ran up and asked, "Do you indeed understand what you are reading?" The man said, "how could I be able, unless someone guides me?"

He was reading Isaiah 53, about the Lamb led to the slaughter. "Philip... having begun from this Scripture, preached Jesus ***as*** the gospel to him." The man believed and was baptized right there by the road.

Sometimes we are the Ethiopian, needing someone to explain the Bible. Sometimes we are Philip, the one who can. Both matter.

Think about it: Who has helped you understand God's Word, and who could you help?

Pray

Lord, thank You for the people who explained Your Word to me. Send me to someone who needs help understanding it.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 187

Spread It Before the Lord

Today's reading: 2 Kings 19-20; Psalm 105

> *And Hezekiah took the letters from the hand of the messengers and read them; and he went up **to** the house of the LORD, and Hezekiah spread it out before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, who sits **on** the cherubim, You **are** He, the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; You made the heavens and the earth.*
>
> 2 Kings 19:14-15 (SLB)

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, had wiped out nation after nation. His army surrounded Jerusalem, and his officials mocked Hezekiah and the LORD. Then he sent Hezekiah a letter saying, do not let your God deceive you. No god has saved any nation from me.

"Hezekiah took the letters... and he went up ***to*** the house of the LORD, and Hezekiah spread it out before the LORD." Then he prayed. He did not start with his problem. He started with who God is: "You ***are*** He, the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; You made the heavens and the earth."

God answered through Isaiah. That night the angel of the LORD struck down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Sennacherib went home and was killed by his own sons in his god's temple.

In chapter 20 Hezekiah gets sick and prays, and God says, "I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears." He added fifteen years to his life.

What letter are you holding? A diagnosis, a bill, a lawsuit, a hard email? Take it to God. Lay it out in front of Him. Remind yourself who He is, and let Him deal with it.

Psalm 105:4: "Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face continually."

Think about it: What "letter" do you need to spread out before the Lord today?

Pray

LORD, You alone are God. I spread this problem out before You. I trust You to answer.

Go deeper: the free 2 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 188

Saul, Why Are You Persecuting Me?

Today's reading: 2 Kings 21-22; Acts 9

> *And having fallen on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.* ***It is*** *hard for you to kick against goads." And trembling and astonished, he said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" And the Lord* ***said*** *to him, "Rise up and enter into the city, and it will be told to you what you must do."*
>
> Acts 9:4-6 (SLB)

In 2 Kings 21 Manasseh became the worst king Judah ever had. He rebuilt idol altars, sacrificed his own son, and filled Jerusalem with innocent blood. Second Chronicles 33 tells us he later repented in prison and God restored him. If God could forgive Manasseh, He can forgive anyone.

In Acts 9 Saul was on the road to Damascus to arrest Christians. A light from heaven flashed, and he fell to the ground. A voice said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Saul asked, "Who are You, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

Notice that Jesus did not say "My followers." He said "Me." When someone attacks His people, He takes it personally.

Saul was blinded for three days. God sent a disciple named Ananias to him. Ananias was understandably nervous, but God said, "this ***man*** is a vessel of choice to Me, to carry My name before Gentiles and kings."

Then Barnabas stood up for Saul when the other believers were afraid of him. Every new believer needs a Barnabas.

The man who held the coats at Stephen's stoning became the apostle Paul. Nobody is beyond God's reach.

Think about it: Is there someone you have written off as too far gone for God?

Pray

Lord Jesus, no one is beyond Your reach. I pray for the people I have given up on. Make me a Barnabas to someone who needs a friend.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 189

With All His Heart

Today's reading: 2 Kings 23-24

> *And like him there was no king before him who turned back to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; and after him **one** like him did not arise.*
>
> 2 Kings 23:25 (SLB)

In 2 Kings 22, while repairing the temple, the high priest found the book of the law. It had been lost so long that no one knew what it said. When it was read to young King Josiah, he tore his clothes. He realized how far his nation had drifted from God.

God told Josiah that because his heart was tender and he humbled himself, judgment would not come in his days.

In chapter 23 Josiah cleaned house. He read the law to all the people, renewed the covenant, tore down every idol and high place, removed the mediums, and held the greatest Passover since the judges. "Like him there was no king before him who turned back to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might."

It all started with reading the Bible. When God's Word is lost, a nation drifts. When it is found and obeyed, revival comes.

But chapter 24 shows the judgment still coming after Josiah. Babylon rises, and Judah's last kings are weak and wicked. One man's revival could not undo generations of sin.

You are reading God's Word every day. Let it do in you what it did in Josiah: tender your heart, show you what needs to go, and turn you back to God.

Think about it: What has God's Word shown you this year that needs to change?

Pray

LORD, give me a tender heart toward Your Word. Show me what to tear down, and help me turn to You with all my heart.

Go deeper: the free 2 Kings study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 190

No Partiality

Today's reading: 2 Kings 25; 1 Chronicles 1; Acts 10

> *And Peter, having opened his mouth, said, "In truth I grasp that God is not one who shows partiality, but in every nation the one fearing Him and working righteousness is acceptable to Him.*
>
> Acts 10:34-35 (SLB)

2 Kings 25 tells of Jerusalem's fall. Babylon burned the temple, broke down the walls, and carried the people away. But the book ends with a small sign of hope. Thirty-seven years into the exile, the king of Babylon released Jehoiachin, a descendant of David, from prison and gave him a seat at his table. The line of David was still alive.

1 Chronicles begins with genealogies from Adam on. It was written after the exile to remind the returning people who they were and that God had not forgotten them.

In Acts 10 God gave Peter a vision of unclean animals and told him to eat. Peter refused. God said, "What God has cleansed, you must not call common." Then messengers came from Cornelius, a Roman centurion. Peter went to his house, something a Jew did not do.

Peter said, "In truth I grasp that God is not one who shows partiality, but in every nation the one fearing Him and working righteousness is acceptable to Him." He preached Jesus, and while he was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard.

The gospel is for every nation, every race, every background.

Think about it: Is there a kind of person you have been slow to share the gospel with?

Pray

Father, You show no partiality. Remove any prejudice from my heart, and help me share Jesus with anyone You put in front of me.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 191

His Love Endures Forever

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 2; Psalm 106

> *Praise **the** LORD! Give thanks to the LORD, for **He is** good; for His steadfast love **is** forever.*
>
> Psalm 106:1 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 2 is a list of names from the tribe of Judah. It is easy to skim, but it traces the family line of David, which means the family line of Jesus. God was keeping track.

Psalm 106 opens and closes with praise. "Praise ***the*** LORD! Give thanks to the LORD, for ***He is*** good; for His steadfast love ***is*** forever."

In between is one of the most honest confessions in the Bible. The psalmist walks through Israel's history and lists their sins: they forgot God's works at the Red Sea, craved meat in the wilderness, envied Moses, made a golden calf, despised the promised land, worshiped Baal, and sacrificed their children to idols.

And every time, God saved them, for His name's sake. "And He saw, when distress ***came*** to them, when He heard their cry" (Psalm 106:44).

The psalm is a mirror. If you put your own life in place of Israel's, it reads the same way. We forget, crave, complain, and wander. God keeps loving us.

That is why the psalm starts and ends with praise. The more honest we are about our sin, the more amazing God's steadfast love becomes.

Think about it: If you listed your own history with God honestly, what would you thank Him for?

Pray

LORD, You are good, and Your love endures forever. I have wandered more than I like to admit, and You have never stopped loving me.

DAY 192

A Good Man, Full of the Spirit

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 3; Acts 11

> *who, having come and having seen the grace of God, rejoiced, and was exhorting all with purpose of heart to remain with the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of **the** Holy Spirit and of faith. And a large crowd was added to the Lord.*
>
> Acts 11:23-24 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 3 lists David's descendants all the way through the exile and beyond. In the middle is Zerubbabel, who will lead the people home and rebuild the temple. God's promise to David survived even Babylon.

In Acts 11 the gospel reached Antioch, and many Greeks believed. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to check it out.

Barnabas, "having come and having seen the grace of God, rejoiced, and was exhorting all with purpose of heart to remain with the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of ***the*** Holy Spirit and of faith."

He did not come to criticize or control. He came looking for God's grace, and he was glad when he found it. Then he encouraged people to keep going.

Barnabas means "Son of Encouragement." He was the one who vouched for Saul when everyone else was afraid. Here, he went and found Saul in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch. Together they taught a whole year, and "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."

Every church needs people like Barnabas. People who look for the good, rejoice in it, encourage others to stay faithful, and help gifted people find their place.

Think about it: Who could you encourage this week, the way Barnabas did?

Pray

Lord, make me a Barnabas. Help me look for Your grace in others, rejoice in it, and encourage them to stay close to You.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 193

The Church Was Praying

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 4-5; Acts 12

> *So Peter was being kept in the prison; but fervent prayer was being made by the church to God for him.*
>
> Acts 12:5 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 4 has a short story tucked into the list of names. Jabez, whose name sounds like the Hebrew word for pain, called on God to bless him, enlarge his territory, keep His hand with him, and keep him from harm. "And God brought what he had asked." In chapter 5 the eastern tribes won a battle "for they cried out to God in the battle, and He was entreated by them, because they trusted in Him."

In Acts 12 King Herod killed James, John's brother, with the sword. Then he arrested Peter and planned to execute him after Passover. Sixteen soldiers guarded him.

"So Peter was being kept in the prison; but fervent prayer was being made by the church to God for him."

The night before his execution, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, chained. An angel woke him, his chains fell off, and he walked out past the guards. He went to the house where the church was praying and knocked. A servant girl named Rhoda was so excited she forgot to open the door. The praying people told her she was crazy.

They were praying for it, and they were still surprised when God answered. That is very human. God answers prayer even when our faith is small.

Think about it: Are you praying for something you would be surprised to see God answer?

Pray

Father, I bring You the people I love who are in hard places. Answer beyond what I expect, and do not let my small faith stop me from praying.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 194

Appointed to Sing

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 6

> *And these **are those** whom David appointed over the direction of song **in** the house of the LORD, from the resting of the ark. And they were serving before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting with song, until Solomon built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem; and they stood according to their custom over their service.*
>
> 1 Chronicles 6:31-32 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 6 lists the descendants of Levi, the priests and Levites. It names the high priests from Aaron to the exile, and it lists the cities where the Levites lived.

In the middle is a detail I enjoy. "These ***are those*** whom David appointed over the direction of song ***in*** the house of the LORD... And they were serving before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting with song."

David organized worship. He did not leave the music to chance. He appointed skilled singers and musicians and gave them a job: lead God's people in praise. Their names are recorded right alongside the priests: Heman, Asaph, and Ethan. Several psalms carry their names.

As someone who builds guitars, I like knowing that God put musicians in His house on purpose. Music in worship is not filler before the sermon. It is serving God.

If you sing, play, run sound, or set up chairs, you are in a long line of people God appointed to help His people praise Him. And if you just sing from the pew, you are part of it too. God hears.

Think about it: How do you take part in worship, and do you see it as serving God?

Pray

Lord, thank You for music and for the people who lead Your people in worship. Let my voice and my life be songs of praise to You.

Go deeper: the free 1 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 195

Set Apart for the Work

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 7; Acts 13

> *And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart now for Me both Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and having prayed and having laid their hands on them, they sent **them** away.*
>
> Acts 13:2-3 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 7 continues the family lists for six tribes. Each name was a real person God knew.

In Acts 13 the church at Antioch had a group of prophets and teachers from very different backgrounds: Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus; Simeon called Niger, likely an African; Lucius from North Africa; Manaen, who grew up with Herod; and Saul, the former persecutor.

"As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart now for Me both Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" They fasted, prayed, laid hands on them, and sent them off. This was the start of Paul's first missionary journey.

Notice what they were doing when God spoke: worshiping and fasting. They were not holding a strategy meeting. They were seeking God, and God gave the direction.

Notice also that the church sent its best. Barnabas and Saul were their top teachers. Real missions costs something.

Later in the chapter Paul preaches, "through this ***One*** forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; and from all things from which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses, by this ***One*** everyone who believes is justified."

Think about it: How could you or your church seek God's direction more than make your own plans?

Pray

Holy Spirit, speak to us as we worship You. Show us the work You have called us to, and give us the courage to send our best.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 196

Let the Redeemed Say So

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 8; Psalm 107

> *Give thanks to the LORD, for **He is** good; for His steadfast love **is** forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say **so**, whom He has redeemed from the hand of **the** adversary,*
>
> Psalm 107:1-2 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 8 traces the family of Benjamin, including Saul's line.

Psalm 107 begins, "Give thanks to the LORD, for ***He is*** good; for His steadfast love ***is*** forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say ***so***."

Then it tells four stories of people in trouble. Some wandered in the desert, hungry and thirsty. Some sat in darkness and chains because they rebelled against God. Some were sick because of their foolish sins. Some were sailors caught in a storm, at their wits' end.

Each story has the same turning point: "they cried out to the LORD when distress ***came*** to them, and from their troubles He brought them out." And each ends with a call to thank Him for His steadfast love.

For the sailors, "He settled the storm into a calm... and He guided them to the harbor of their desire."

Which of these four is your story? Lost, imprisoned, sick from your own choices, or caught in a storm you did not cause? Whichever it is, the way out is the same: cry out to the LORD.

And once He rescues you, say so. Tell people.

Think about it: Which of the four stories in Psalm 107 sounds most like yours?

Pray

LORD, I cried out to You, and You brought me out. You are good, and Your love endures forever. I will say so.

DAY 197

Through Many Tribulations

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 9-10; Acts 14

> *strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting **them** to continue in the faith, and **saying** that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.*
>
> Acts 14:22 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 10 tells of Saul's death and gives the reason. "Saul died for his unfaithfulness... concerning the word of the LORD which he did not keep, and also for asking of a medium... and he did not inquire of the LORD."

In Acts 14 Paul and Barnabas preach in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. At Lystra Paul heals a man lame from birth, and the crowd decides they are gods. Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes and run into the crowd shouting, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men of like nature with you."

Then opponents arrive and turn the crowd. The same people who wanted to worship Paul stone him and drag him out of the city, thinking he is dead. The disciples gather around him, and he gets up and goes back into the city.

Then Paul and Barnabas returned to the cities where they had been attacked, "strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting ***them*** to continue in the faith, and ***saying*** that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God."

Paul did not sell the Christian life as easy. He had the scars to prove it was not. But he went back anyway.

Think about it: Have you been told that following Jesus would be easy? How has it actually been?

Pray

Lord, following You is not always easy. Strengthen my soul to keep going through hard times, knowing they lead to Your kingdom.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 198

Poured Out to the Lord

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 11

> *And David craved, and said, "Who will give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem, which **is** at the gate?" And the three broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water from the well of Bethlehem, which **was** at the gate, and they carried **it** and brought **it** to David; and David was not willing to drink it, and he poured it out to the LORD. And he said, "Far be it from me, from my God, to do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men with their lives? For with their lives they brought it." And he was not willing to drink it. These **things** the three mighty men did.*
>
> 1 Chronicles 11:17-19 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 11 lists David's mighty men and some of their exploits. One story stands out.

David was hiding in a cave while the Philistines held Bethlehem, his hometown. He said, almost to himself, "Who will give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem, which ***is*** at the gate?"

Three of his mighty men heard. They broke through the Philistine camp, drew water from that well, and brought it back to David.

David would not drink it. He poured it out on the ground as an offering to the LORD. "Shall I drink the blood of these men with their lives? For with their lives they brought it."

That could look like a waste. But David understood that what his men had done was too costly to use on himself. Only God was worthy of a gift like that.

It also shows why men would risk their lives for David. He did not take their loyalty for granted. He honored it.

Leaders, do you notice the sacrifices of the people who serve you? And all of us: is there anything we treat as ours that should be poured out to God?

Think about it: Whose sacrifice for you have you taken for granted?

Pray

Lord, everything good I have came at a cost. I pour it back out to You. Help me honor the sacrifices others make for me.

Go deeper: the free 1 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 199

Understanding the Times

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 12-13; Acts 15; Psalm 108

> *And of the sons of Issachar, knowing understanding of the times, to know what Israel should do: their chiefs **were** two hundred, and all their brothers **were** at their command.*
>
> 1 Chronicles 12:32 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 12 lists the warriors who came to David at Hebron to make him king. Thousands came from every tribe, and the writer notes what each group brought.

From Issachar came two hundred chiefs "knowing understanding of the times, to know what Israel should do."

That is a rare gift. Plenty of people understand the times: they can tell you what is wrong with the world, the culture, and the government. Fewer people know what to do about it. The men of Issachar had both.

We need believers like that today. People who read the news and read the Bible, see where things are heading, and can say clearly what God's people should do.

In chapter 13 David tries to bring the ark to Jerusalem: "let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul." A good desire, but done the wrong way. We read about Uzzah back on Day 151.

In Acts 15 the church holds its first council and settles that Gentiles are saved by grace, not by becoming Jews. "Through the grace of ***the*** Lord Jesus Christ we believe ***that we*** are saved in the same manner as they also."

Think about it: What do you think God's people should do in the times we live in?

Pray

Lord, give me understanding of the times, and wisdom to know what to do. Keep me rooted in Your Word as the world changes.

Go deeper: the free 1 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 200

Singing at Midnight

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 14-15; Acts 16

> *Now about midnight Paul and Silas, praying, were singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. And suddenly **there** came about a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and the chains of all were loosed.*
>
> Acts 16:25-26 (SLB)

Day 200. You have been at this for more than half a year. Well done.

In Acts 16 Paul and Silas cast a demon out of a slave girl who made her owners money by fortune-telling. The owners dragged them to the magistrates. They were beaten with rods and thrown into the inner prison with their feet in stocks.

"Now about midnight Paul and Silas, praying, were singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."

Bloody backs, feet locked in wood, in the dark, and they were singing. And the other prisoners were listening.

Then an earthquake shook the prison, the doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, saw the doors open, and drew his sword to kill himself, assuming the prisoners had escaped. Paul shouted, we are all here!

The jailer fell trembling before them and asked, "Sirs, what must I do that I may be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." That night he and his family believed and were baptized.

People are always watching how we handle the midnight hours. Your song in the dark may be the reason someone else comes to Christ.

Think about it: How do you respond when you are in a midnight season?

Pray

Lord, give me a song at midnight. Let the way I handle hard times point others to You.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 201

Seek His Face Continually

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 16-17

> *"Give thanks to the LORD; call on His name; make known His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him; sing praises to Him; speak of all His wonders. Glory in the name of His holiness; let the heart of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face continually.*
>
> 1 Chronicles 16:8-11 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 15 and 16 tell how David brought the ark to Jerusalem the right way, with the Levites carrying it as God commanded. There was music, singing, and great joy.

Then David gave Asaph and his brothers a song of thanks, which includes parts of Psalms 105, 96, and 106. "Give thanks to the LORD; call on His name; make known His deeds among the peoples... Glory in the name of His holiness; let the heart of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face continually."

Look at the verbs: give thanks, call, make known, sing, glory, rejoice, seek. Worship is active.

"Seek His face continually." Not just once, at your conversion. Not just on Sundays. Continually. Every day. That is what you are doing with this reading plan.

In chapter 17 God promises David an eternal dynasty, and David responds, "Who ***am*** I, O LORD God, and what ***is*** my house, that You have brought me this far?"

The song ends with words we have heard before and will hear again: "Give thanks to the LORD, for ***He is*** good; for His steadfast love ***is*** forever."

Think about it: How do you seek God's face "continually," not just occasionally?

Pray

LORD, I seek You and Your strength. I want to seek Your face every day. Thank You that You are good and Your love endures forever.

Go deeper: the free 1 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 202

They Examined the Scriptures

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 18-20; Acts 17; Psalm 109

> *Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures every day **to see** if these things might be so.*
>
> Acts 17:11 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 18 through 20 summarize David's victories. God gave him success wherever he went.

In Acts 17 Paul preached in Thessalonica, and some believed, but jealous opponents formed a mob. So the believers sent Paul to Berea at night.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures every day ***to see*** if these things might be so."

The Bereans did two things. They were eager to hear. And they checked what they heard against the Bible. Even when the apostle Paul was preaching!

That is a good model. Do not swallow everything a preacher, author, or podcast says, including this book. Check it against Scripture. A good teacher will welcome that.

Later Paul went to Athens and preached to philosophers. He told them God "made from one blood every nation of men," and that He "is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and are."

Psalm 109 is a hard prayer against a false accuser, but it ends with trust: "Help me, LORD my God; save me according to Your steadfast love."

Think about it: Do you check what you hear against Scripture?

Pray

Lord, make me eager to hear Your Word and careful to test everything by it. Give me a noble heart like the Bereans.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 203

Into the Hand of the Lord

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 21-22

> *And David said to Gad, "**It is** great distress to me. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His compassions **are** very great; and into the hand of man let me not fall."*
>
> 1 Chronicles 21:13 (SLB)

Satan stirred David to count the fighting men of Israel. Even Joab, not known for spiritual sensitivity, told David it was wrong. David insisted. It seems David wanted to measure his own strength rather than trust God's.

Afterward David's conscience struck him. God offered him three choices for discipline: three years of famine, three months of defeat by his enemies, or three days of plague from the LORD.

David said, "***It is*** great distress to me. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His compassions ***are*** very great; and into the hand of man let me not fall."

That is wisdom. Even when God disciplines, His mercy is greater than any man's. David would rather be corrected by God than handed over to people.

The plague came, and as the angel stretched out his hand over Jerusalem, God said "Enough." David bought the threshing floor of Ornan and built an altar there. Chapter 22 tells us that is where the temple would be built.

David's sin and God's mercy marked the spot where God's house would stand. God can turn the place of our failure into a place of worship.

Think about it: When you have sinned, do you run toward God or away from Him?

Pray

LORD, when I fail, let me fall into Your hands, because Your mercy is great. Turn the places of my failure into places of worship.

Go deeper: the free 1 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 204

I Have Many People in This City

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 23-24; Acts 18; Psalm 110

> *And the Lord said to Paul in the night through a vision, "Do not fear, but keep speaking, and do not be silent; because I am with you, and no one will set upon you to harm you; because I have many people in this city."*
>
> Acts 18:9-10 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 23 and 24 describe how David organized the Levites and priests into divisions, each with a turn to serve. Luke 1:5 mentions that Zechariah belonged to "the division of Abijah," one of these very groups, a thousand years later.

In Acts 18 Paul arrived in Corinth, a city known for wealth and immorality. He worked making tents with Aquila and Priscilla and preached in the synagogue. When the Jews opposed him, he turned to the Gentiles. It was hard going, and he may have been discouraged or afraid.

"And the Lord said to Paul in the night through a vision, 'Do not fear, but keep speaking, and do not be silent; because I am with you, and no one will set upon you to harm you; because I have many people in this city.'"

God had people in Corinth who had not yet believed. They were His already, in His plan, and Paul's job was to keep preaching until they heard.

Paul stayed a year and a half.

Psalm 110 is quoted in the New Testament more than any other psalm. "The LORD declares to my Lord, 'Sit at My right ***hand*** until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'" Jesus is reigning now.

Think about it: Where might God have "many people" who are waiting to hear about Him through you?

Pray

Lord, I will not be afraid or silent. You are with me. Show me the people You have prepared to hear about You.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 205

Burning the Books

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 25-26; Acts 19; Psalm 111

> *And many of those who had practiced the magic arts, having brought the books together, were burning **them** before all; and they counted up their prices and found **it to be** fifty thousand **pieces** of silver. Thus with might the word of the Lord was growing and prevailing.*
>
> Acts 19:19-20 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 25 and 26 list the temple musicians and gatekeepers. Every job in God's house had names attached.

In Acts 19 Paul spent two years in Ephesus, a center of magic and the worship of the goddess Artemis. God did extraordinary miracles through him. Some Jewish exorcists tried to use Jesus' name like a magic word. The evil spirit answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I am acquainted with; but you, who are you?" The possessed man beat them, and they ran out naked and wounded.

Word spread. Fear fell on the city, and the name of Jesus was honored. Then many who had practiced magic brought their scrolls and burned them publicly. They added up the value, fifty thousand pieces of silver, a small fortune.

"Thus with might the word of the Lord was growing and prevailing."

Real repentance costs something. These people did not just stop practicing magic. They destroyed the tools, even though they were worth a lot. They made it hard to go back.

Psalm 111:10: "The fear of the LORD ***is*** the beginning of wisdom."

Think about it: Is there something in your life you need to "burn," not just set aside?

Pray

Lord, I do not want to keep a way back to my old sins. Give me courage to get rid of anything that pulls me away from You, whatever it costs.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 206

Serve Him with a Whole Heart

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 27-28; Psalm 112

> *And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve Him with a whole heart and with a willing soul, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every inclination of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; and if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.*
>
> 1 Chronicles 28:9 (SLB)

1 Chronicles 27 lists David's army commanders and officials. Chapter 28 is David's charge to Solomon and the leaders of Israel.

"And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve Him with a whole heart and with a willing soul, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every inclination of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you."

Notice the first thing David says: know God. Not just know about Him. Know Him personally. Then serve Him with a whole heart, not divided, and a willing mind, not forced.

David also reminds Solomon that God sees everything, every motive and every thought. That is either frightening or comforting, depending on whether you are hiding something.

Then he says, "Be strong and be courageous, and act... for the LORD God, my God, ***is*** with you. He will not let you go, and He will not forsake you." David passed his faith to his son.

Psalm 112:7 says the righteous man "will not be afraid of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD."

Think about it: What would it look like for you to serve God with a whole heart and a willing mind this week?

Pray

LORD, You search my heart. I want to know You, not just about You. Give me a whole heart and a willing mind to serve You.

Go deeper: the free 1 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 207

From Your Hand We Have Given

Today's reading: 1 Chronicles 29; 2 Chronicles 1; Acts 20; Psalms 113-114

> *And indeed, who **am** I, and who **are** my people, that we should retain strength to offer willingly like this? For everything **is** from You, and from Your hand we have given to You.*
>
> 1 Chronicles 29:14 (SLB)

David gave a huge gift of gold and silver from his own treasure for the temple, and the leaders followed his example. The people rejoiced because they gave willingly.

Then David prayed. "To You, O LORD, ***is*** the greatness and the might and the splendor..." And then, "who ***am*** I, and who ***are*** my people, that we should retain strength to offer willingly like this? For everything ***is*** from You, and from Your hand we have given to You."

That is the right way to think about giving. We are not doing God a favor. We are giving back what was His all along. Like a child who borrows money from his dad to buy him a birthday present.

In 2 Chronicles 1 Solomon asks for wisdom, and God gives it.

Psalm 113 asks, "Who ***is*** like the LORD our God?" He sits enthroned on high, yet "from the ash heap He lifts up ***the*** needy, to make ***him*** sit with nobles." Psalm 114 remembers the Exodus, when the sea fled and the mountains skipped like rams.

In Acts 20 Paul reminds the Ephesian elders of Jesus' words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

My faith books are free to read, copy and share. That comes from a simple conviction: everything I know and everything I have came from God first. When you hold your time and work with an open hand, giving stops feeling like a loss. We are only giving back a portion of what already belongs to Him.

Think about it: How does it change your giving to remember that everything already belongs to God?

Pray

LORD, everything I have comes from You. I give back to You gladly, because it was Yours to begin with.

Go deeper: the free 1 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 208

Who Can Build Him a House?

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 2-4

> *And the house which I am about to build **will be** great, for our God **is** great above all the gods. And who will retain strength to build Him a house, for the heavens and the heavens of the heavens do not contain Him? And who **am** I that I should build Him a house, except to burn **incense** before Him?*
>
> 2 Chronicles 2:5-6 (SLB)

2 Chronicles 2 through 4 describe the building of the temple: the materials, the workers, the bronze altar, the great basin called the sea, and the gold furniture.

Solomon wrote to King Hiram of Tyre for cedar and a skilled craftsman. In the letter, he said something that shows he understood the limits of what he was doing.

"The house which I am about to build ***will be*** great, for our God ***is*** great above all the gods. And who will retain strength to build Him a house, for the heavens and the heavens of the heavens do not contain Him? And who ***am*** I that I should build Him a house, except to burn ***incense*** before Him?"

Solomon was building the most magnificent building Israel ever saw. But he knew God did not need it. No building could hold Him. The temple was not a box for God. It was a place for people to meet Him.

That is true of our churches too. God is not in the building in a way He is not elsewhere. But He is pleased to meet His people where they gather to worship Him.

Today Paul says believers themselves are God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16). He lives in you.

Think about it: How does it affect you that the God the heavens cannot contain lives in you?

Pray

God, the highest heavens cannot contain You, and yet You live in me. Make my life a fitting place for You.

Go deeper: the free 2 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 209

The Glory Filled the House

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 5-6; Acts 21; Psalm 115

> *and it was, as one, for the trumpeters and for the singers to make one voice heard, to praise and to give thanks to the LORD; and as **they** lifted up a voice with trumpets and with cymbals and with instruments of song, and in praising the LORD, "For **He is** good, for His steadfast love **is** forever," and the house was filled **with** a cloud, the house of the LORD, and the priests were not able to stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.*
>
> 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 (SLB)

When the temple was finished, the priests brought the ark into the holy of holies. Then the singers and trumpeters, 120 priests with trumpets, joined together "to make one voice heard, to praise and to give thanks to the LORD."

They sang a simple line: "For ***He is*** good, for His steadfast love ***is*** forever."

"And the house was filled ***with*** a cloud... and the priests were not able to stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God."

I notice two things. First, God's glory came when they were united, making one voice. Second, it came during simple, wholehearted praise. Not a complicated program. A simple truth sung with everything they had.

In chapter 6 Solomon prays a long prayer of dedication, asking God to hear whenever His people pray toward this house.

In Acts 21 Paul heads to Jerusalem knowing he will be arrested. His friends beg him not to go. He says, "I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." They finally say, "Let the will of the Lord be done."

Think about it: When was the last time you sang "He is good" with everything you had?

Pray

LORD, You are good, and Your love endures forever. Fill Your church with Your glory as we praise You with one voice.

Go deeper: the free 2 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 210

If My People

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 7-8; Acts 22

> *and My people, over whom My name is called, humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I Myself will hear from the heavens, and I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land.*
>
> 2 Chronicles 7:14 (SLB)

After Solomon's prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the house again. The people bowed with their faces to the ground.

Then God appeared to Solomon at night with a promise. It is one of the most quoted verses in the Old Testament.

"And My people, over whom My name is called, humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I Myself will hear from the heavens, and I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land."

This was spoken first to Israel about their land. But the principle applies to God's people in every age. Notice who it is addressed to: "My people." Not the government, not the culture, not unbelievers. God's people.

Four steps: humble yourselves, pray, seek My face, turn from evil. Revival does not start out there. It starts with us.

God also warned Solomon that if Israel turned away, this beautiful temple would become a heap of ruins. We read back on Day 190, in 2 Kings 25, that it did.

In Acts 22 Paul tells the crowd how Jesus met him on the road to Damascus.

Think about it: Which of the four steps in 2 Chronicles 7:14 do you most need to take?

Pray

LORD, I humble myself, I pray, I seek Your face, and I turn from my sin. Start with me, and heal our land.

Go deeper: the free 2 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 211

He Hears My Voice

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 9-11; Psalm 116

> *I love, for the LORD hears my voice, my supplications. For He has inclined His ear to me, and in my days I will call.*
>
> Psalm 116:1-2 (SLB)

2 Chronicles 9 tells of the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon: "the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told to me." Chapters 10 and 11 show the kingdom split under Rehoboam, who "forsook the counsel of the elders" and listened to his young friends.

Psalm 116 is a song of thanks from someone God rescued from death. "I love, for the LORD hears my voice, my supplications. For He has inclined His ear to me, and in my days I will call."

"He has inclined His ear to me." Picture God leaning down to listen, the way you lean toward a small child to hear what he is trying to say. God does not just tolerate our prayers. He bends down to hear them.

The psalmist goes on to describe being caught in the cords of death, finding distress and sorrow. He called on God's name, and God saved him.

Then he asks, "What shall I return to the LORD ***for*** all His benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116:12). His answer: I will lift up the cup of salvation, call on His name, and keep my promises to Him in front of His people.

Verse 15 says, "Precious in the eyes of the LORD ***is*** the death of His godly ones." Even our deaths matter to Him.

Think about it: How does it feel to know God bends down to listen when you pray?

Pray

LORD, I love You because You hear my voice. Thank You for bending down to listen. I will call on You as long as I live.

DAY 212

The Shortest Chapter

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 12-13; Acts 23; Psalm 117

> *Praise the LORD, all nations; extol Him, all the peoples! For His steadfast love has prevailed over us, and the faithfulness of the LORD **is** forever. Praise **the** LORD!*
>
> Psalm 117:1-2 (SLB)

2 Chronicles 12 and 13 show Rehoboam drifting from God and Egypt invading. The summary of Rehoboam's life is sobering: "he did the evil, for he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD." He did not set his heart. He just drifted.

In Acts 23 Paul's nephew uncovers a plot by forty men who swore not to eat until they killed Paul. The night before, "the Lord, having stood by him, said, 'Take courage, Paul; for as you have solemnly testified the things about Me at Jerusalem, so you must also testify at Rome.'" God had more for Paul to do, and no plot could stop it.

Psalm 117 is the shortest chapter in the Bible, just two verses. It is also the center chapter of the Bible.

"Praise the LORD, all nations; extol Him, all the peoples! For His steadfast love has prevailed over us, and the faithfulness of the LORD ***is*** forever. Praise ***the*** LORD!"

In two verses, a call to every nation, two reasons to praise, and a promise that never ends. Paul quotes it in Romans 15:11 to show that the gospel was always meant for the Gentiles.

Short, but enough. Sometimes the shortest prayer or the simplest truth is exactly what we need.

Think about it: What is one simple reason you can praise God today?

Pray

LORD, Your love has prevailed over me, and Your faithfulness lasts forever. Let all the nations praise You, and let me join them.

Days 213 to 243

DAY 213

His Eyes Run Through the Earth

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 14-17; Acts 24; Psalm 118

> *For the LORD, His eyes are roving in all the earth to show Himself strong with **those** whose heart **is** complete toward Him. You have acted foolishly in this, for from now on there are wars with you."*
>
> 2 Chronicles 16:9 (SLB)

King Asa of Judah started strong. When a huge Ethiopian army came against him, he prayed, "Help us, O LORD our God, for we lean on You" (2 Chronicles 14:11), and God gave a great victory. He removed idols, even deposing his own grandmother for her idol.

But late in his reign, when Israel threatened him, Asa did not pray. He took silver and gold from the temple and paid the king of Aram to help him. It worked. But the prophet Hanani came with a rebuke.

"For the LORD, His eyes are roving in all the earth to show Himself strong with ***those*** whose heart ***is*** complete toward Him. You have acted foolishly in this."

God is looking for people to help. Not perfect people. People whose hearts are fully His. Asa once leaned on God, and God fought for him. Later he leaned on a pagan king, and he lost God's help.

Sadly, Asa got angry at the prophet and threw him in prison. When he later got a disease in his feet, "he did not seek the LORD, but ***sought*** among the physicians" (2 Chronicles 16:12). Using doctors was not the sin. Leaving God out was.

Psalm 118:24: "This ***is*** the day ***which*** the LORD has made; let us be glad, and let us rejoice in it."

Think about it: Whom do you lean on first when trouble comes?

Pray

LORD, Your eyes are searching for hearts that are fully Yours. Make mine one of them. I lean on You, not on my own plans.

Go deeper: the free 2 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 214

No Bribes with God

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 18-19

> *And now, let the dread of the LORD be on you. Take care and act, for there is no injustice with the LORD our God, and **no** lifting up of faces, and **no** taking of a bribe."*
>
> 2 Chronicles 19:7 (SLB)

In 2 Chronicles 18 good King Jehoshaphat made an alliance with wicked King Ahab and went to war with him. Only the prophet Micaiah told the truth, and Ahab died. Jehoshaphat barely escaped. The prophet Jehu asked him, should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD?

Jehoshaphat took the rebuke well. In chapter 19 he went out among the people to bring them back to God, and he appointed judges in every city. His charge to them is worth reading.

"Let the dread of the LORD be on you. Take care and act, for there is no injustice with the LORD our God, and ***no*** lifting up of faces, and ***no*** taking of a bribe."

"Lifting up of faces" means favoritism, treating someone better because of who they are. God does not do that, so His judges must not either.

Most of us are not judges. But we all make judgments: at work, in the family, in church. Do we treat the rich better than the poor, the likable better than the difficult, our friends better than strangers?

God is fair. He cannot be bought. That is good news for the poor and bad news for anyone counting on connections.

Think about it: Where are you tempted to show favoritism?

Pray

LORD, there is no injustice in You and no favoritism. Make me fair in every judgment I make, and keep me from being bought.

Go deeper: the free 2 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 215

Our Eyes Are on You

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 20-21; Acts 25

> *O our God, will You not judge them? For there is no strength in us before this great multitude that is coming against us, and we, we do not know what we should do; but our eyes **are** on You."*
>
> 2 Chronicles 20:12 (SLB)

A huge army from Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir marched against Judah. Jehoshaphat was afraid, so he called a fast and stood before the people in the temple and prayed.

He ended his prayer with one of the most honest lines in the Bible. "There is no strength in us before this great multitude that is coming against us, and we, we do not know what we should do; but our eyes ***are*** on You."

I have prayed that prayer more than once. I do not know what to do, but my eyes are on You.

God answered through a Levite. "Do not be afraid, and do not be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle ***is*** not yours, but God's."

The next morning Jehoshaphat put the singers in front of the army. They marched out singing, "Give thanks to the LORD, for His steadfast love ***is*** forever." "And at the time ***when*** they began with a ringing cry and praise, the LORD set ambushers" against the enemy. The enemy armies turned on each other. Judah did not have to fight at all.

Praise before the battle is faith. It thanks God for what He has not done yet.

Think about it: What situation do you need to pray, "I do not know what to do, but my eyes are on You"?

Pray

Lord, I do not know what to do, but my eyes are on You. The battle is Yours. I will praise You before I see the victory.

Go deeper: the free 2 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 216

Almost Persuaded

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 22-24; Acts 26

> *And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a little you are persuading me to become a Christian." And Paul said, "I would pray to God that, both in a little and in much, not only you but also all who hear me today might become such as I also am, except for these chains."*
>
> Acts 26:28-29 (SLB)

2 Chronicles 22 through 24 tell of wicked Queen Athaliah, the hidden boy Joash, and his rise to the throne. Joash did right as long as the priest Jehoiada lived. After Jehoiada died, Joash turned to idols and even had Jehoiada's son Zechariah stoned in the temple court.

In Acts 26 Paul stands before King Agrippa and tells his story again: how he persecuted Christians, how Jesus met him on the road, and how Jesus sent him "to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God,"

Governor Festus interrupts and says Paul is out of his mind. Paul turns to Agrippa: do you believe the prophets? I know you do.

Agrippa answers, "In a little you are persuading me to become a Christian." Paul says, "I would pray to God that... not only you but also all who hear me today might become such as I also am, except for these chains."

There is no record that Agrippa ever believed. Almost persuaded is still lost.

Many people are close to the kingdom. They respect Jesus, like the church, and agree with much of the Bible. But close is not in.

Think about it: Is there someone you know who is almost persuaded? Pray for them by name today.

Pray

Lord Jesus, I pray for the people I know who are close but not in. Open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 217

When He Was Strong

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 25-26

> *And when he was strong, his heart was lifted up until **he** acted corruptly, and he acted unfaithfully against the LORD his God, and he went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.*
>
> 2 Chronicles 26:16 (SLB)

King Uzziah of Judah reigned fifty-two years. Early on, "he was seeking God in the days of Zechariah... and in the days ***that*** he sought the LORD, God made him prosper." He won wars, built towers, dug wells, and invented war machines. His fame spread to Egypt.

"And when he was strong, his heart was lifted up until ***he*** acted corruptly, and he acted unfaithfully against the LORD his God, and he went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense."

Only priests could do that. Eighty brave priests confronted him. Uzziah got angry, and while he stood there raging with the censer in his hand, leprosy broke out on his forehead. He was a leper until he died, living in a separate house, cut off from God's house.

Chapter 25 tells a similar story about his father Amaziah, who did right "only not with a complete heart."

Notice when Uzziah fell. Not when he was weak. When he was strong. Success is dangerous, because it makes us forget where it came from. We start believing we deserve special access, that the rules do not apply to us.

Isaiah 6:1 says it was in the year King Uzziah died that Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up. When the proud king fell, the true King was seen.

Think about it: Has success ever made you careless with God?

Pray

Lord, every success I have comes from You. Keep me humble when I am strong, and keep me seeking You in the good years.

Go deeper: the free 2 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 218

I Believe God

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 27-28; Acts 27

> *For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and look, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.' Therefore take courage, men; for I believe God that it will be so, in the way in which it has been told to me.*
>
> Acts 27:23-25 (SLB)

2 Chronicles 27 says Jotham "strengthened himself, for he had set his ways before the LORD his God." Chapter 28 shows his son Ahaz doing the opposite. In trouble, he "increased to act unfaithfully against the LORD." Some people turn to God in trouble. Some turn further away.

In Acts 27 Paul is a prisoner on a ship bound for Rome. He warned them not to sail, but they did. A violent storm hit and lasted fourteen days. They threw the cargo overboard and gave up all hope.

Then Paul stood up. "There stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and look, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.' Therefore take courage, men; for I believe God that it will be so, in the way in which it has been told to me."

"The God whose I am and whom I serve." That is how Paul described his relationship with God: I belong to Him, and I work for Him.

"I believe God." Three words that changed the mood of a whole ship. The ship broke apart on a reef, but all 276 people made it to shore.

Think about it: What would it look like for you to say "I believe God" about your current storm?

Pray

God whose I am and whom I serve, I believe You. Give me courage in the storm, and let my faith encourage the people around me.

Go deeper: the free Acts study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 219

God Will Not Turn His Face Away

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 29-30; Acts 28

> *For in your returning to the LORD, your brothers and your sons **will find** compassion before their captors, and **will** return to this land; for gracious and compassionate **is** the LORD your God, and He will not turn aside **His** face from you if you return to Him."*
>
> 2 Chronicles 30:9 (SLB)

After wicked King Ahaz, his son Hezekiah reopened and cleansed the temple in his very first month. Then he did something bold. He sent letters all over Judah and to what was left of the northern tribes, inviting everyone to Jerusalem for Passover.

"For in your returning to the LORD, your brothers and your sons ***will find*** compassion... for gracious and compassionate ***is*** the LORD your God, and He will not turn aside ***His*** face from you if you return to Him."

Many people laughed at the messengers. But some humbled themselves and came. It was the biggest Passover since Solomon's day, so joyful that they extended it another week.

Some people came who had not been purified properly. Hezekiah prayed for them, "May the good LORD make atonement for everyone ***who*** has prepared his heart to seek God" (2 Chronicles 30:18-19), and God healed the people. God looked at the heart more than the ceremony.

Today we finish Acts. Paul lives two years in Rome under house arrest, "proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered." The book ends with the gospel moving forward. The story is not finished. We are part of it.

Think about it: Is there someone you could invite to come back to the Lord?

Pray

LORD, You are gracious and compassionate, and You do not turn Your face from those who return. Use me to invite others home.

Go deeper: the free 2 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 220

A Greater One Is with Us

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 31-32

> *"Be strong and be courageous; do not be afraid and do not be dismayed because of the king of Assyria and before all the multitude that **is** with him, for with us **is** a greater **one** than with him. With him **is** an arm of flesh, and with us **is** the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people leaned on the words of Hezekiah the king of Judah.*
>
> 2 Chronicles 32:7-8 (SLB)

We read about Sennacherib's invasion in 2 Kings. Chronicles adds what Hezekiah said to his people before God delivered them.

"Be strong and be courageous; do not be afraid and do not be dismayed because of the king of Assyria... for with us ***is*** a greater ***one*** than with him. With him ***is*** an arm of flesh, and with us ***is*** the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles."

"And the people leaned on the words of Hezekiah."

An arm of flesh versus the LORD our God. That is the comparison in every battle we face. The enemy may have numbers, money, power, and reputation. But it is all just flesh. It gets tired, it fails, and it dies.

Before the crisis, Hezekiah had done his homework. "In every work that he began... to seek his God, with all his heart he did ***it***, and he prospered" (2 Chronicles 31:21). He also stopped up the springs outside the city and built up the walls. Faith and preparation went together.

Later in the chapter Hezekiah's heart grew proud after his healing, and he had to humble himself. Even good men need to keep watch.

Think about it: What "arm of flesh" are you afraid of right now?

Pray

LORD, the one with me is greater than any arm of flesh against me. I lean on Your word today. Fight my battles.

Go deeper: the free 2 Chronicles study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 221

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 33-34; Romans 1

> *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is **the** power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, both to **the** Jew first and to **the** Greek. For in it **the** righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, even as it has been written, "And the righteous by faith will live."*
>
> Romans 1:16-17 (SLB)

2 Chronicles 33 tells the full story of Manasseh. He was the most wicked king Judah had. He was taken to Babylon in chains. "And when he was in distress, he entreated the face of the LORD his God, and he humbled himself greatly... and He heard his supplication, and He brought him back to Jerusalem... And Manasseh knew that the LORD, He ***is*** God."

If God could forgive Manasseh, He can forgive you.

Chapter 34 tells of Josiah, who began to seek God at sixteen.

Today we start Romans, the most complete explanation of the gospel in the Bible. Paul opens with his thesis: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is ***the*** power of God for salvation to everyone who believes... For in it ***the*** righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith."

The gospel is not just good advice. It is power. The power that changed Manasseh and Paul and can change you.

Then Paul shows why we need it. Creation shows God's eternal power and divine nature, so people are without excuse. Yet people exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped the creation instead of the Creator.

Think about it: Are you ever ashamed to talk about the gospel? Why?

Pray

Lord, I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is Your power to save. Thank You for saving me, and give me boldness to share it.

Go deeper: the free Romans study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 222

Kindness That Leads to Repentance

Today's reading: 2 Chronicles 35-36; Ezra 1; Romans 2

> *Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?*
>
> Romans 2:4 (SLB)

2 Chronicles ends with the fall of Jerusalem and the reason for it. "The LORD... sent to them by the hand of His messengers, rising early and sending, for He had compassion on His people... And they were mocking the messengers of God, and despising His words, and scoffing at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD went up against His people, until ***there was*** no healing."

"Rising early and sending." God did not give up on them easily. Prophet after prophet, warning after warning, for centuries.

Then Ezra 1 opens with hope. Seventy years later, "to fulfill the word of the LORD from the mouth of Jeremiah," God stirred the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to send the Jews home to rebuild the temple.

In Romans 2 Paul warns people who judge others while doing the same things. Then he asks, "do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"

God's patience is not approval. It is an invitation. When God does not punish right away, it is because He is giving us time to turn around. Judah used up His patience. Do not presume on it.

Think about it: Have you been taking God's patience for granted?

Pray

God, thank You for Your patience with me. Let Your kindness lead me to repentance, not to presumption.

Go deeper: the free Romans study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 223

They Gave According to Their Ability

Today's reading: Ezra 2

> *And some of the heads of the fathers, when they came to the house of the LORD which **is** in Jerusalem, offered willingly for the house of God, to erect it on its site.*
>
> Ezra 2:68 (SLB)

Ezra 2 is a long list of the families who came back from Babylon to Jerusalem. About fifty thousand people, counted by family and town, plus servants, singers, horses, mules, camels, and donkeys.

It is easy to skim a chapter like this. But think about what it meant. Each of these families left a settled life in Babylon, where many had been born, to go back to a ruined city they had never seen. They believed God's promise enough to move.

Some families could not prove their genealogy, and some priests were kept from serving until it could be confirmed (Ezra 2:62-63). Belonging mattered.

At the end, "some of the heads of the fathers, when they came to the house of the LORD which ***is*** in Jerusalem, offered willingly for the house of God, to erect it on its site."

Then verse 69 adds, "According to their ability they gave." Not everyone gave the same amount. But everyone who gave, gave willingly, according to what they had.

Your name, like theirs, is written down by God. Hebrews 12:23 speaks of the church of the firstborn, enrolled in heaven. You are on His list.

Think about it: What step of faith has God asked you to take that feels like leaving Babylon?

Pray

Lord, thank You that my name is written in Your book. Give me faith to follow You home, and a willing heart to give.

Go deeper: the free Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 224

Hidden in My Heart

Today's reading: Ezra 3-4; Romans 3; Psalm 119

> *By what will a youth keep his path pure? By keeping **it** according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me stray from Your commandments. In my heart I have treasured Your word, so that I will not sin against You.*
>
> Psalm 119:9-11 (SLB)

Today's reading includes Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible: 176 verses. It is an acrostic, with 22 sections, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Almost every verse mentions God's word in some way: law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, word.

"By what will a youth keep his path pure? By keeping ***it*** according to Your word... In my heart I have treasured Your word, so that I will not sin against You."

The best defense against sin is not willpower. It is God's word stored up in your heart. When temptation comes, you need truth ready to fight back, the way Jesus did in the wilderness.

In Ezra 3 the returned exiles lay the foundation of the new temple. The young people shout for joy. The old men who remembered Solomon's temple weep, because this one is so much smaller. Both sounds mixed together so you could not tell them apart.

In Romans 3 Paul delivers the verdict: "all sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that ***is*** in Christ Jesus."

Think about it: What verse have you hidden in your heart this year?

Pray

Lord, I treasure Your word in my heart so I will not sin against You. Keep my path pure by Your word.

DAY 225

Fully Convinced

Today's reading: Ezra 5-6; Romans 4

> *yet with respect to the promise of God he did not waver in unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, having given glory to God, and having been fully convinced that what He has promised He is able also to do.*
>
> Romans 4:20-21 (SLB)

In Ezra 4 enemies of the Jews offered to help build the temple. When they were turned down, they worked to discourage the builders and wrote letters to the Persian king. The work stopped for about sixteen years. In chapter 5 the prophets Haggai and Zechariah got the people building again, and in chapter 6 King Darius not only allowed it but paid for it. "The LORD had made them rejoice."

In Romans 4 Paul uses Abraham to prove that salvation has always been by faith. Abraham was about a hundred and Sarah was ninety. Their bodies were as good as dead for having children.

Yet "with respect to the promise of God he did not waver in unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, having given glory to God, and having been fully convinced that what He has promised He is able also to do."

Abraham did not ignore the facts. He looked at his old body honestly. But he looked at God's promise more.

Earlier Paul says that to the one who does not work but believes in God "who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness." God declares the ungodly righteous. Not the good. The ungodly who believe.

Think about it: What promise of God do you need to be "fully convinced" of today?

Pray

God, I am fully convinced that what You have promised You are able to do. Strengthen my faith as I give You glory.

Go deeper: the free Romans study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 226

While We Were Still Sinners

Today's reading: Ezra 7-8; Romans 5

> *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
>
> Romans 5:8 (SLB)

In Ezra 7 we meet Ezra, a scribe and priest. "For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of the LORD and to do ***it***, and to teach statute and judgment in Israel." Study, do, teach. That is the right order. Ezra learned it, lived it, then taught it.

In chapter 8 Ezra was leading a group home with a fortune in gold and silver. He was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers, because he had told the king God protects those who seek Him. So they fasted and prayed instead, and God protected them all the way.

Romans 5 is one of the richest chapters in the Bible. "Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then verse 8: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Not after we cleaned up. Not when we started trying. While we were still sinners. God did not love us because we were lovable. He loved us when we were at our worst.

Paul says it is rare for someone to die even for a good man. Christ died for the ungodly.

Think about it: How does it change your view of yourself to know God loved you at your worst?

Pray

Father, You loved me while I was still a sinner. I do not have to earn Your love. Thank You for proving it at the cross.

Go deeper: the free Romans study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 227

The Wages and the Gift

Today's reading: Ezra 9-10; Romans 6

> *For the wages of sin **is** death, but the gift of God **is** eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
>
> Romans 6:23 (SLB)

In Ezra 9 Ezra learned that many of the returned exiles, including leaders, had married women from the pagan nations around them, the very thing that led Israel into idolatry before. Ezra tore his clothes and pulled hair from his head. Then he prayed. "O my God, I am ashamed and disgraced to lift up, O my God, my face to You, for our iniquities have increased above ***our*** head."

Notice he said "our." Ezra was not guilty of this sin, but he confessed it as one of the people.

In Romans 6 Paul answers a question: if grace covers sin, should we keep sinning so grace can increase? "Far be it!" We died to sin. How can we live in it?

"Consider yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Then he sums it up. "For the wages of sin ***is*** death, but the gift of God ***is*** eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Wages are earned. Sin pays exactly what it promises, and it always pays death. A gift is not earned. Eternal life cannot be worked for. It can only be received.

Think about it: Are you still working for wages from sin, or living in God's gift?

Pray

Lord, I deserve sin's wages. Thank You for the gift of eternal life in Jesus. Help me live as someone dead to sin and alive to You.

Go deeper: the free Romans study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 228

A Prayer Between Two Sentences

Today's reading: Nehemiah 1-3; Romans 7

> *And the king said to me, "For what are you requesting?" And I prayed to the God of the heavens. And I said to the king, "If* ***it is*** *good to the king, and if your servant is good before you, that you would send me to Judah, to the city of the tombs of my fathers, and I will build it."*
>
> Nehemiah 2:4-5 (SLB)

Nehemiah was cupbearer to the king of Persia, a position of trust. When he heard that Jerusalem's walls were still broken down and the people were in disgrace, "I sat down and wept and mourned ***for*** days; and I was fasting and praying."

He prayed for four months. Then one day the king noticed his sad face and asked what was wrong. That was dangerous. Servants were not supposed to look sad in front of the king.

Nehemiah explained. The king asked, "For what are you requesting?" And here is the line I love: "And I prayed to the God of the heavens. And I said to the king..."

He prayed between the king's question and his answer. A two-second prayer, backed up by four months of praying. The king gave him everything he asked for.

Nehemiah went to Jerusalem, inspected the walls at night, and rallied the people to build. Chapter 3 lists who built which section, including priests, goldsmiths, perfume makers, and one man with his daughters.

In Romans 7 Paul describes the struggle with sin we all know. "What I want, this I do not practice, but what I hate, this I do... Wretched man I ***am***! Who will deliver me...? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Think about it: Do you pray quick prayers in the moment, backed by long prayers in private?

Pray

God of heaven, I bring You the brokenness I see. Give me long prayers in private and quick prayers in the moment, and send me to rebuild.

Go deeper: the free Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 229

Nothing Can Separate Us

Today's reading: Nehemiah 4-5; Romans 8

> *For I have been persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God which **is** in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
>
> Romans 8:38-39 (SLB)

In Nehemiah 4 enemies mocked the builders and plotted to attack. Nehemiah posted guards and said, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the great and awesome Lord, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses." The builders worked with one hand and held a weapon in the other.

Romans 8 may be the greatest chapter in the Bible. It begins, "***There is*** therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus." It moves through life in the Spirit, adoption as God's children, creation groaning, the Spirit helping us pray, and the promise that "to those who love God all things work together for good."

Then it ends with this: "For I have been persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God which ***is*** in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul went through every category he could think of. Death? No. Life? No. Spiritual forces? No. The future? No. Anything else in creation? No.

If you belong to Christ, nothing can cut you off from His love. Nothing.

Think about it: What are you afraid could separate you from God's love? What does Romans 8 say about it?

Pray

Lord, nothing can separate me from Your love in Christ. No condemnation, no separation. I rest in that today.

Go deeper: the free Romans study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 230

I Am Doing a Great Work

Today's reading: Nehemiah 6

> *And I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work, and I am not able to come down. Why should the work cease while I let it drop and come down to you?"*
>
> Nehemiah 6:3 (SLB)

The wall was almost done when Nehemiah's enemies tried a new tactic. They invited him to a meeting in the plain of Ono. They meant to harm him.

Nehemiah sent back a simple message. "I am doing a great work, and I am not able to come down. Why should the work cease while I let it drop and come down to you?"

They asked four times, and four times he gave the same answer. Then they tried slander, spreading a rumor that he wanted to be king. Then they hired a false prophet to scare him into hiding in the temple. Nehemiah saw through it every time.

Distraction is one of the enemy's best tools. If he cannot stop the work, he will try to pull you away from it, often with something that looks reasonable. A meeting. A debate. A side project. Just come down for a little while.

Nehemiah stayed on the wall. "And the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth ***day*** of Elul, in fifty-two days." When the enemies heard, they lost their confidence, "and they knew that this work had been done from our God."

Fifty-two days. Walls that had been rubble for a hundred and forty years.

Think about it: What is the "great work" God has given you, and what is trying to pull you off the wall?

Pray

Lord, You have given me work to do. Help me stay on the wall and not come down for every distraction.

Go deeper: the free Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 231

The Joy of the Lord

Today's reading: Nehemiah 7-8; Romans 9

> *And he said to them, "Go, eat fat things and drink sweet things, and send portions to him for whom nothing is prepared, for this day **is** holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your stronghold."*
>
> Nehemiah 8:10 (SLB)

With the wall finished, the people gathered in the square by the Water Gate and asked Ezra to bring out the book of the law. He read it aloud from early morning until noon, standing on a wooden platform, and the people stood the whole time.

The Levites helped. "They read in the book, in the law of God, making ***it*** clear and giving the sense, and they understood the reading."

As they understood, the people started weeping. They realized how far they had fallen short.

Nehemiah and Ezra told them to stop crying. "Go, eat fat things and drink sweet things, and send portions to him for whom nothing is prepared, for this day ***is*** holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your stronghold."

There is a time to grieve over sin. But God's word is also meant to bring joy. Understanding God's word should end in celebration and in sharing with people who have nothing.

"The joy of the LORD is your stronghold." Joy in God is not a luxury. It is strength. A joyful believer is hard to knock down.

In Romans 9 Paul wrestles with God's sovereign choice and asks, "who are you, the one answering back to God?"

Think about it: Has God's Word brought you more joy or more guilt lately? Why?

Pray

Lord, help me understand Your word, grieve my sin, and then rejoice in Your grace. Let Your joy be my strength today.

Go deeper: the free Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 232

How Beautiful Are the Feet

Today's reading: Nehemiah 9; Romans 10

> *How then will they call on **Him** in whom they did not believe? And how will they believe **in Him** of whom they did not hear? And how will they hear without one proclaiming? And how will they proclaim unless they are sent? Just as it has been written, "How beautiful **are** the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, of those who preach the gospel of good things!"*
>
> Romans 10:14-15 (SLB)

Nehemiah 9 is a long prayer of confession that retells Israel's history. Over and over the people rebelled, "and You ***are*** a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and great in steadfast love, and You did not abandon them."

Romans 10 explains how to be saved in two verses. "If you confess with your mouth Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him out of ***the*** dead, you will be saved."

Then Paul asks a chain of questions. "How then will they call on ***Him*** in whom they did not believe? And how will they believe ***in Him*** of whom they did not hear? And how will they hear without one proclaiming? And how will they proclaim unless they are sent?"

Work backward through that chain. Someone has to be sent. Someone has to speak. Someone has to hear. Someone has to believe. Then they call on the Lord and are saved.

Every believer is a link in somebody's chain. Someone told you. Who will you tell?

"How beautiful ***are*** the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace." Feet that walked across the street, drove across town, or flew across the ocean to tell someone about Jesus.

When I was a boy in Victorville, I mowed the lawn for a neighbor down the street, Pastor Jimmy Carter. He took me to church and led me to Christ. Years later, I helped lead youth mission trips to Baja, Mexico, five years in a row, and got to pass that same message on. Every believer is part of a chain that started with someone willing to speak up.

Think about it: Who was the link that told you about Jesus? Who might you be a link for?

Pray

Lord, someone told me about You. Make my feet beautiful by carrying the good news to someone who has not heard.

Go deeper: the free Romans study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 233

Oh, the Depth

Today's reading: Nehemiah 10-11; Romans 11

> *O depth of riches and of wisdom and of knowledge of God! How unsearchable **are** His judgments and untraceable His ways! For who has known **the** mind of **the** Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him, and it will be repaid to him? For from Him and through Him and to Him **are** all things. To Him **be** the glory to the ages. Amen.*
>
> Romans 11:33-36 (SLB)

Nehemiah 10 and 11 record the people signing a covenant to obey God's law, keep the Sabbath, and support the temple. "And we will not neglect the house of our God." Then one out of ten families moved into Jerusalem to repopulate the city.

Romans 9 through 11 deal with Israel's place in God's plan. Paul explains that a remnant of Israel believes, that Gentiles have been grafted in like wild branches onto an olive tree, and that "all Israel will be saved" when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in (Romans 11:25-26). God is not finished with Israel. That matters for how we read prophecy.

Then Paul runs out of explanation and breaks into worship.

"O depth of riches and of wisdom and of knowledge of God! How unsearchable ***are*** His judgments and untraceable His ways!... For from Him and through Him and to Him ***are*** all things. To Him ***be*** the glory to the ages. Amen."

Good theology should end in praise. When we study God and hit the edge of what we can understand, the right response is not frustration. It is awe.

Think about it: When you hit something in the Bible you cannot fully understand, do you respond with frustration or worship?

Pray

God, Your wisdom is deeper than I can measure, and Your ways are past finding out. Everything is from You, through You, and to You. To You be the glory.

Go deeper: the free Romans study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 234

A Living Sacrifice

Today's reading: Nehemiah 12; Romans 12; Psalm 120

> *Therefore I exhort you, brothers, through the compassions of God, to present your bodies **as** a living, holy sacrifice, well-pleasing to God, your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God **is**, the good and well-pleasing and perfect **will**.*
>
> Romans 12:1-2 (SLB)

Nehemiah 12 describes the dedication of the wall. Two great choirs marched in opposite directions on top of the wall and met at the temple. "the joy of Jerusalem was heard from afar" (Nehemiah 12:43).

Romans 12 turns from doctrine to daily life. After eleven chapters on what God has done, Paul says, "Therefore I exhort you, brothers, through the compassions of God, to present your bodies ***as*** a living, holy sacrifice, well-pleasing to God."

A sacrifice in the Old Testament was killed and burned. A living sacrifice is different. It stays on the altar every day. The problem with living sacrifices, as someone once said, is that they keep crawling off.

"And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." The world is always pressing us into its mold. God changes us from the inside out, by renewing how we think. That happens largely through His word, which is what you are doing this year.

The rest of the chapter gets practical: use your gifts, love without hypocrisy, bless those who persecute you, and "overcome the evil with the good."

Psalm 120:1: "To the LORD in my distress I called, and He answered me."

Think about it: Where is the world pressing you into its mold?

Pray

Lord, I give You my body as a living sacrifice. Renew my mind, and keep me on the altar when I want to crawl off.

Go deeper: the free Romans study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 235

My Help Comes from the Lord

Today's reading: Nehemiah 13; Esther 1; Romans 13; Psalm 121

> *I lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where will my help come? My help **is** from the LORD, Maker of heaven and earth.*
>
> Psalm 121:1-2 (SLB)

Nehemiah 13 is a disappointing ending. Nehemiah went back to Persia for a while, and when he returned, things had slid. A pagan enemy was living in a temple storeroom. The Levites had not been paid. People were working and selling on the Sabbath. Some had married foreign wives again. Nehemiah cleaned house again and prayed, "Remember me, my God, for good."

Reform is never finished. Every generation has to choose God again.

Esther 1 begins in the palace of the Persian king, with a huge party and a queen who refuses to come when called.

Psalm 121 is one of the Songs of Ascents, sung by pilgrims walking up to Jerusalem. The road was dangerous, and the hills were full of robbers.

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where will my help come? My help ***is*** from the LORD, Maker of heaven and earth."

The One who made the hills is bigger than whatever hides in them. The psalm goes on: He will not let your foot slip. He who keeps you will not slumber. "The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in, from now and until forever."

Romans 13 says, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh."

Think about it: Where do you look first for help?

Pray

LORD, my help comes from You, the Maker of heaven and earth. Keep me today, my going out and my coming in.

DAY 236

For Such a Time as This

Today's reading: Esther 2-4; Romans 14; Psalms 122-123

> *For if you indeed keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, and you and the house of your father will perish. And who knows whether for a time like this you have attained to royalty?"*
>
> Esther 4:14 (SLB)

Esther, a Jewish orphan raised by her cousin Mordecai, was chosen as queen of Persia. She kept her background secret. Then Haman, the king's top official, got angry that Mordecai would not bow to him. He decided to wipe out every Jew in the empire and got the king to sign the order.

Mordecai sent word to Esther: you have to go to the king. Esther answered that anyone who went to the king without being called would be put to death, unless he held out his golden scepter.

Mordecai's reply is famous. "For if you indeed keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, and you and the house of your father will perish. And who knows whether for a time like this you have attained to royalty?"

God's name is never mentioned in Esther. But He is everywhere in it. Mordecai believed deliverance would come no matter what. The question was whether Esther would be part of it.

Esther answered, fast for me three days, "and so I will go in to the king, which ***is*** not according to the law; and as I perish, I perish."

God puts each of us where we are on purpose.

Think about it: Why might God have put you where you are right now?

Pray

Lord, You put me here for a reason. Give me Esther's courage to speak up when it counts, whatever it costs me.

Go deeper: the free Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 237

The King Could Not Sleep

Today's reading: Esther 5-8; Romans 15; Psalm 124

> *On that night the sleep of the king fled, and he said to bring the book of the records, the matters of the days; and they were read before the king.*
>
> Esther 6:1 (SLB)

Esther went to the king, and he held out the scepter. She invited him and Haman to a banquet, and then to a second one. Haman went home proud, then saw Mordecai and was furious. His wife told him to build a gallows seventy-five feet high and ask the king in the morning to hang Mordecai on it.

"On that night the sleep of the king fled, and he said to bring the book of the records."

Of all the nights for insomnia. And of all the records to read, the servant happened to read the one about Mordecai uncovering a plot to kill the king years earlier. The king asked how Mordecai had been rewarded. Nothing had been done.

At that moment Haman walked in to ask about hanging Mordecai. The king asked him, what should be done for the man the king wants to honor? Haman, thinking it was himself, described a royal parade. Then he had to lead Mordecai through the city on the king's horse.

At the second banquet Esther exposed Haman, and they hanged him on the gallows he had built for Mordecai.

God's name is not in the book, but His fingerprints are on every page. A sleepless night. A random record. Perfect timing.

Think about it: Where have you seen God's hidden hand in "coincidences" in your life?

Pray

Lord, You work even when You seem hidden. You control the sleepless nights and the small details. I trust Your timing.

Go deeper: the free Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 238

The Lord Gave, the Lord Has Taken

Today's reading: Esther 9-10; Job 1; Romans 16; Psalm 125

> *And Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the earth and bowed down. And he said, "Naked I came out from the womb of my mother, and naked I shall return there. The LORD has given, and the LORD has taken; let the name of the LORD be blessed." In all this Job did not sin, and he did not ascribe unseemliness to God.*
>
> Job 1:20-22 (SLB)

Esther ends with the Jews delivered and the feast of Purim established to remember it.

Then we start Job, one of the oldest stories in the Bible. Job was blameless and upright, wealthy, with ten children. God Himself said, "***there is*** none like him on the earth."

Satan claimed Job only served God because God protected him. God allowed Satan to test him. In one day Job lost his oxen, donkeys, sheep, camels, servants, and all ten of his children.

Job tore his robe, shaved his head, fell to the ground, and worshiped. "Naked I came out from the womb of my mother, and naked I shall return there. The LORD has given, and the LORD has taken; let the name of the LORD be blessed."

"In all this Job did not sin, and he did not ascribe unseemliness to God."

I cannot read that without being humbled. I complain when my car breaks down. Job lost everything in a day and worshiped.

Job's story does not end in chapter 1. Over the next weeks you will watch him struggle, question, and cry out. That is honest too. But it starts here, with worship in the ashes.

Psalm 125:2: "the LORD ***is*** around His people, from now and until forever."

Think about it: Could you bless God's name if He took what He has given you?

Pray

LORD, everything I have, You gave. If You take it, I still want to bless Your name. Give me faith like Job's.

Go deeper: the free Job study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 239

God Chose the Weak

Today's reading: Job 2-4; 1 Corinthians 1; Psalms 126-127

> *But God chose the foolish things of the world, so that He might put the wise to shame; and God chose the weak things of the world, so that He might put the strong things to shame; and God chose the lowborn things of the world and the despised things, and the things that are not, so that He might bring to nothing the things that are, so that no flesh may boast before Him.*
>
> 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 (SLB)

In Job 2 Satan strikes Job with painful sores from head to foot. His wife tells him to curse God and die. Job answers, "Shall we also accept the good from God, and not accept the evil?"

Then three friends come. "They sat with him on the earth seven days and seven nights, and ***there was*** none speaking a word to him, for they saw that the pain was very great." Those were the best seven days of their friendship. When they started talking, things went downhill.

Today we start 1 Corinthians, Paul's letter to a gifted but messy church. The Corinthians were proud of their wisdom and their favorite teachers.

Paul says, "God chose the foolish things of the world, so that He might put the wise to shame; and God chose the weak things of the world, so that He might put the strong things to shame... so that no flesh may boast before Him."

Look at who God picked: fishermen, tax collectors, a former persecutor. Not many wise or powerful or noble by the world's standards. God does that on purpose, so no one can take the credit.

Psalm 127:1: "If the LORD does not build a house, in vain its builders have toiled on it."

Think about it: Do you ever feel too ordinary for God to use? What does this passage say about that?

Pray

Lord, I am not impressive, and that is fine. You choose the weak to show Your strength. Use me, and keep me from boasting in anything but You.

Go deeper: the free 1 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 240

What God Has Prepared

Today's reading: Job 5-6; 1 Corinthians 2; Psalm 128

> *But just as it has been written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not come up into **the** heart of man, things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*
>
> 1 Corinthians 2:9 (SLB)

Job's friend Eliphaz has started speaking. In chapter 5 he says some true things: "how blessed ***is*** the mortal whom God reproves." But he applies them wrongly, assuming Job must be suffering for some sin.

In chapter 6 Job pushes back. "To the despairing ***is due*** steadfast love from his friend." He needed compassion, not a lecture. When someone is suffering, they usually need us to sit with them more than they need our explanations.

In 1 Corinthians 2 Paul says he came to Corinth not with impressive speech. "I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

Then he quotes Isaiah: "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not come up into ***the*** heart of man, things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

This verse is often used about heaven, and it fits. But Paul's point is also that God has revealed these things to us by His Spirit now. The wisdom of God, hidden from the world, is opened to believers.

Whatever you imagine about what God has for you, it is better than that.

Think about it: When someone you know is suffering, do you tend to explain or to comfort?

Pray

Lord, You have prepared things beyond what I can imagine. Make me a friend who comforts, and keep my focus on Jesus and Him crucified.

Go deeper: the free 1 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 241

God Gives the Growth

Today's reading: Job 7-8; 1 Corinthians 3; Psalm 129

> *I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing **it** to grow. So neither is the one who plants anything, nor the one who waters, but God who causes **it** to grow.*
>
> 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 (SLB)

In Job 7 Job asks God, "What ***is*** man, that You make him great, and that You set Your heart on him, and You visit him every morning, every moment You test him?" It is a twisted version of Psalm 8. Job feels God's attention as a burden. In chapter 8 Bildad tells Job that if his children sinned, they got what they deserved. Bad comfort.

In 1 Corinthians 3 the Corinthians were splitting into fan clubs. I follow Paul. I follow Apollos. Paul shuts that down.

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing ***it*** to grow. So neither is the one who plants anything, nor the one who waters, but God who causes ***it*** to grow."

Paul and Apollos were just farmhands. God is the one who makes things grow. Nobody can make a seed sprout by willpower.

That is freeing. If you share the gospel and nothing seems to happen, you did your job. If someone comes to Christ through you, God did that, not you. Either way, no pressure and no pride.

Later Paul says, "no one is able to lay another foundation besides the ***one*** being laid, which is Jesus the Christ."

Psalm 128 blesses the one who fears the LORD.

Think about it: Is there someone whose faith you have been "watering" who needs your patience?

Pray

Lord, I will plant and water, and I trust You to give the growth. Keep me from pride and from discouragement.

Go deeper: the free 1 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 242

No Arbiter Between Us

Today's reading: Job 9-10; 1 Corinthians 4; Psalms 130-131

> *For **He is** not a man like me, **that** I should answer Him, **that** we should come together in judgment. There is no arbiter between us, **who** might lay his hand on the two of us.*
>
> Job 9:32-33 (SLB)

In Job 9 and 10 Job agrees that God is just, but he does not see how a man can be right with God. God is too great, too powerful, too wise. How could anyone argue with Him?

Then he says something remarkable. "For ***He is*** not a man like me, ***that*** I should answer Him, ***that*** we should come together in judgment. There is no arbiter between us, ***who*** might lay his hand on the two of us."

An arbiter is a go-between, someone who can stand in the middle and put one hand on each side. Job felt the gap between a holy God and a suffering man, and he wished someone could bridge it.

Two thousand years later, Paul wrote, "***there is*** one God, and one mediator of God and men, ***the*** man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus is the arbiter Job longed for. He is fully God, so He can lay His hand on God. He is fully man, so He can lay His hand on us.

In 1 Corinthians 4 Paul says, "it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." Not successful. Faithful.

Psalm 130:3-4: "If You keep iniquities, LORD, Lord, who will stand? For with You ***is*** forgiveness."

Think about it: How does it comfort you to know Jesus stands between you and God?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are the Mediator Job longed for. You lay Your hand on God and on me. Thank You for bridging the gap.

Go deeper: the free Job study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 243

Clean Out the Old Leaven

Today's reading: Job 11-12; 1 Corinthians 5

> *Therefore cleanse out the old leaven, so that you may be a new lump, just as you are unleavened. For also our Passover was sacrificed for us: Christ. So then let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with **the** leaven of malice and wickedness, but with **the** unleavened **bread** of sincerity and truth.*
>
> 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 (SLB)

In Job 11 Zophar tells Job he is getting less than he deserves. Then he asks, "Will you find the searching of God?" A good question, poorly applied. In chapter 12 Job answers with sarcasm, no doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you. But he also says something true: in God's hand "***is*** the life of every living thing, and the breath of all the flesh of man."

In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul confronts a terrible situation. A man in the church was sleeping with his father's wife, and the church was proud of how open-minded it was. Paul tells them to remove the man from fellowship, hoping it will bring him to repentance.

Then he uses a Passover picture. Before Passover, Jewish families cleaned every bit of leaven, yeast, out of the house. A little leaven works through the whole lump of dough.

"Therefore cleanse out the old leaven, so that you may be a new lump... For also our Passover was sacrificed for us: Christ. So then let us celebrate the feast... with ***the*** unleavened ***bread*** of sincerity and truth."

Tolerated sin spreads. In a person and in a church. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. Now live clean.

Think about it: Is there any "leaven" in your life that is spreading?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are my Passover Lamb. Help me clean out the old leaven and live with sincerity and truth.

Go deeper: the free 1 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

Days 244 to 273

DAY 244

Though He Slay Me

Today's reading: Job 13-14; 1 Corinthians 6; Psalm 132

> *Look, He will kill me; I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways to His face.*
>
> Job 13:15 (SLB)

In Job 13 Job is fed up with his friends. He calls them "physicians of worthlessness" and tells them they would be wise to keep quiet. Then he turns to God.

"Look, He will kill me; I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways to His face."

Both halves matter. Job will hope in God even if God takes his life. That is faith. And Job will still bring his complaint straight to God. That is honesty. Job does not pretend he is fine. But he also does not walk away.

That is what faith often looks like in suffering. Not neat answers or a smile pasted on. Hanging on to God with one hand and arguing with Him with the other.

In chapter 14 Job asks, "If a man dies, will he live ***again***?" He does not know yet. We do, because Jesus rose.

In 1 Corinthians 6 Paul reminds believers, "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit... and you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body."

Psalm 132 remembers David's promise to find a dwelling place for God. Now God dwells in us.

Think about it: Can you hope in God even when you do not understand what He is doing?

Pray

Lord, even if You take everything, I will hope in You. I bring You my questions honestly, and I am not letting go.

Go deeper: the free Job study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 245

How Good and Pleasant

Today's reading: Job 15-17; 1 Corinthians 7; Psalms 133-134

> *Look, how good and how pleasant **is** the dwelling of brothers, also together!*
>
> Psalm 133:1 (SLB)

In Job 15 through 17 Eliphaz speaks again, sharper this time. Job answers, "comforters of trouble ***are*** all of you" (Job 16:2). Then Job says something surprising. Even now, "my witness ***is*** in the heavens" (Job 16:19). Job senses there is someone in heaven who will speak up for him.

In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul answers questions about marriage, singleness, and divorce. One principle runs through it: "as God has assigned to each, as the Lord has called each, so let him walk." Serve God where you are.

Psalm 133 is short and sweet. "Look, how good and how pleasant ***is*** the dwelling of brothers, also together!"

David compares unity to the oil poured on Aaron's head, running down his beard to his robes, and to the dew of Mount Hermon falling on the mountains of Zion. Both pictures are of something rich flowing down from above. Unity is a gift from God that blesses everything it touches.

Then the psalm ends, "For there the LORD has commanded the blessing: life until forever." God sends His blessing where His people live in unity.

Contrast that with Job's friends, who should have been a comfort and became a burden.

Think about it: Is there someone in your church or family you need to make peace with?

Pray

Lord, make me a peacemaker. Let Your people live in unity, and let me do my part, so Your blessing flows.

DAY 246

I Know That My Redeemer Lives

Today's reading: Job 18-19; 1 Corinthians 8

> *And I, I know **that** my Redeemer lives, and last He will stand on **the** dust. And after my skin has been struck off, this, and from my flesh I will see God, whom I, I will see for myself, and my eyes will see, and not a stranger. My kidneys have failed within my bosom.*
>
> Job 19:25-27 (SLB)

Job 19 is Job at his lowest. His brothers have abandoned him. His friends have forgotten him. His servants ignore him. His breath is repulsive to his wife. Little children mock him. He is skin and bones.

And then, out of the bottom of that pit, comes one of the greatest statements of faith in the Old Testament.

"And I, I know ***that*** my Redeemer lives, and last He will stand on ***the*** dust. And after my skin has been struck off, this, and from my flesh I will see God, whom I, I will see for myself, and my eyes will see, and not a stranger."

A redeemer was a close relative who would buy back a family member, avenge a wrong, or take up his cause. Job is saying, someone is on my side, He is alive, and in the end He will stand on the earth. And even after I die, I will see God with my own eyes, in my own body.

That is the resurrection, written by a man who did not know how it would happen. We know His name. Jesus is our living Redeemer.

In 1 Corinthians 8 Paul says, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up."

Think about it: What do you know for sure, even on your worst day?

Pray

Lord, I know my Redeemer lives. Even when everything else is gone, I will see You with my own eyes.

Go deeper: the free Job study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 247

Run to Win

Today's reading: Job 20-21; 1 Corinthians 9; Psalm 135

> *Do you not know that those who run in a stadium all run, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain **it**. And everyone who competes exercises self-control in all things. They then **do it** that they may receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable.*
>
> 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (SLB)

In Job 20 Zophar describes the downfall of the wicked. Job answers in chapter 21 with a hard observation. "Why do the wicked live, grow old, also become mighty ***in*** strength?" Life does not always work out the way the friends' tidy theology says.

In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul explains that he gave up his rights so he would not hinder the gospel. "I have become all things to all ***men***, so that by all means I may save some."

Then he uses a picture the Corinthians knew well. Corinth hosted the Isthmian Games, second only to the Olympics.

"Do you not know that those who run in a stadium all run, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain ***it***. And everyone who competes exercises self-control in all things. They then ***do it*** that they may receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable."

Winners at the Isthmian Games received a wreath of pine or celery. It wilted in days. Athletes trained for years for it. Paul says, if they work that hard for a wreath that dies, how much more should we train for a crown that never fades?

Discipline is not legalism. It is how you finish the race.

Think about it: What discipline would help you run your race better?

Pray

Lord, help me run to win. Give me self-control for the things that matter forever.

Go deeper: the free 1 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 248

The Way Out

Today's reading: Job 22-23; 1 Corinthians 10

> *No temptation has taken you except what is human; and God **is** faithful, who will not let you be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way out, so that you may be able to endure **it**.*
>
> 1 Corinthians 10:13 (SLB)

In Job 23 Job says he cannot find God. He looks forward, back, left, and right. "For He knows the way with me; He has tested me; like the gold I will come forth." Job cannot see God, but he trusts that God sees him.

In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul uses Israel's wilderness years as a warning. They all had the same spiritual privileges, yet most fell in the desert because of idolatry, immorality, testing God, and grumbling. "These things happened to them as examples."

Then comes a promise every believer should know by heart.

"No temptation has taken you except what is human; and God ***is*** faithful, who will not let you be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way out, so that you may be able to endure ***it***."

Three truths. Your temptation is not unique. Others have faced it and won. God is faithful and puts a limit on it. And He always provides a way out.

The way out is often simple and early: walk away, turn it off, call a friend, do not go there. The longer you wait, the harder it gets to see the exit.

Paul ends the chapter, "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all things to the glory of God."

Think about it: What is the "way out" God has given you for your most common temptation?

Pray

God, You are faithful. When I am tempted, show me the way out early, and give me the will to take it.

Go deeper: the free 1 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 249

Until He Comes

Today's reading: Job 24-26; 1 Corinthians 11; Psalm 136

> *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which He was being betrayed, took bread; and having given thanks, He broke **it** and said, "Take, eat; this is My body, which is being broken for you; do this in My remembrance." Likewise also **He took** the cup after having supped, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink **it**, in My remembrance." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes.*
>
> 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (SLB)

In Job 24 through 26 Job describes the suffering of the poor and the darkness of the wicked. Bildad gives a short speech, and Job answers by describing God's power over creation. Then he says, "these ***are*** the ends of His ways, and what a whisper of a word we hear of Him!" All we see of God is the edge of His robe.

In 1 Corinthians 11 the Corinthians were turning the Lord's Supper into a party where the rich ate and drank and the poor went hungry. Paul reminds them what it is about.

"The Lord Jesus, in the night in which He was being betrayed, took bread; and having given thanks, He broke ***it*** and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body, which is being broken for you; do this in My remembrance.'"

Then the cup: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood."

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes."

Communion looks back to the cross and forward to His return. Every time we take it, we preach a sermon: He died, and He is coming again.

Psalm 136 repeats twenty-six times, "His steadfast love ***is*** forever."

Think about it: What goes through your mind when you take communion?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I remember Your body broken and Your blood poured out for me. I proclaim Your death until You come.

Go deeper: the free 1 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 250

Every Part Matters

Today's reading: Job 27-28; 1 Corinthians 12

> *But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He willed. And if they all were one member, where **would** the body **be**? But now **there are** indeed many members, but one body. And the eye is not able to say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."*
>
> 1 Corinthians 12:18-21 (SLB)

Job 27 and 28 contain a beautiful poem about wisdom. Men dig deep into the earth for silver, gold, and sapphires. But where can wisdom be found? It cannot be bought. Only God knows the way to it. Then the answer: "Look, the fear of the Lord, that ***is*** wisdom, and to turn aside from evil ***is*** understanding."

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul compares the church to a human body. Each believer has a gift from the Spirit, and every gift is needed.

"But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He willed... And the eye is not able to say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; or again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'"

Some people think they are not important because they do not have a visible gift. Others think they do not need anyone else. Paul says both are wrong.

God put you in the body where He wanted you. You are needed. And you need others.

"And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with ***it***; if one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with ***it***."

Think about it: What part of the body do you think God has made you, and are you doing your part?

Pray

Lord, You put me in Your church on purpose. Help me use my gift and value everyone else's.

Go deeper: the free 1 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 251

The Greatest Is Love

Today's reading: Job 29-30; 1 Corinthians 13; Psalm 137

> *Love is patient, is kind; love is not envious; love does not boast, is not puffed up, does not behave improperly, does not seek its own things, is not provoked, does not count the evil, does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
>
> 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (SLB)

In Job 29 Job remembers the good old days, when he was respected. "I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame ***was*** I. I ***was*** a father to the needy." In chapter 30 he describes how far he has fallen. Now even young men mock him.

1 Corinthians 13 is read at weddings, but Paul wrote it to a church that was fighting over spiritual gifts. He says that without love, the greatest gifts are nothing.

"Love is patient, is kind; love is not envious; love does not boast, is not puffed up, does not behave improperly, does not seek its own things, is not provoked, does not count the evil, does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

Try this. Read the passage again and put your name in place of "love." It is humbling. Then put Jesus' name in. It fits perfectly. He is love in person.

"But now faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these ***is*** love."

Psalm 137 is the cry of exiles in Babylon. "How shall we sing the song of the LORD on foreign ground?"

Think about it: Which line of 1 Corinthians 13 is hardest for you to live out?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are love. Make me patient and kind, not envious, proud, or easily provoked. Love others through me.

Go deeper: the free 1 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 252

A Covenant with My Eyes

Today's reading: Job 31-32; 1 Corinthians 14; Psalm 138

> *I have made a covenant for my eyes; and how would I look attentively at a virgin?*
>
> Job 31:1 (SLB)

Job 31 is Job's final defense. He lists the sins he has not committed, and he calls down curses on himself if he is lying. He has not lied, cheated, ignored the poor, trusted in gold, rejoiced at his enemy's fall, or hidden his sin.

He starts with this: "I have made a covenant for my eyes; and how would I look attentively at a virgin?"

Job made a decision ahead of time about where his eyes would go. He did not wait until temptation showed up. He settled it in advance.

Jesus said looking at a woman with lust is adultery in the heart (Matthew 5:28). In our world, with screens everywhere, a covenant with your eyes is not old-fashioned. It is survival. Decide now what you will not look at, and put guardrails in place to keep that promise.

In chapter 32 a young man named Elihu, who has been listening quietly, finally speaks. He is angry at Job for justifying himself rather than God, and at the friends for condemning Job without answers.

In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul says, "Let all things be done properly and in order." Psalm 138:8: "The LORD will complete ***it*** for me."

Think about it: What "covenant for your eyes" do you need to make or renew?

Pray

Lord, I make a covenant with my eyes. Guard what I look at, and keep my heart pure before You.

Go deeper: the free Job study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 253

Raised on the Third Day

Today's reading: Job 33-34; 1 Corinthians 15

> *For I delivered to you among **the** first **things** what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,*
>
> 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (SLB)

1 Corinthians 15 is the great resurrection chapter. Some in Corinth were saying there is no resurrection of the dead. Paul answers by going back to the core of the gospel.

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

Then he lists the witnesses: Peter, the Twelve, more than five hundred at once (most still alive when he wrote), James, all the apostles, and finally Paul himself. This was not a legend. It was something people saw.

If Christ is not raised, Paul says, our faith is worthless and we are still in our sins. But Christ has been raised.

Near the end he says, "Look, I tell you a mystery: we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in ***the*** blink of an eye, at the last trumpet." Some believers will be alive when Jesus comes for His church, and they will be changed without dying. I believe that is the rapture, which comes before the tribulation.

"Where, O death, ***is*** your sting?... thanks ***be*** to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In Job 33 and 34 Elihu continues his speech.

Think about it: How does the resurrection of Jesus change how you face death?

Pray

Risen Lord, You died for my sins and rose on the third day. Death has lost its sting. Thank You for the victory.

Go deeper: the free 1 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 254

Where Could I Go?

Today's reading: Job 35-36; 1 Corinthians 16; Psalm 139

> *Where shall I go from Your Spirit? And where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend* ***to the*** *heavens, You* ***are*** *there; and* ***if*** *I make my bed* ***in*** *Sheol, look, You* ***are there****.* ***If*** *I take up the wings of dawn,* ***if*** *I dwell at the end of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right* ***hand*** *will grasp me.*
>
> Psalm 139:7-10 (SLB)

In Job 35 and 36 Elihu says that God teaches through suffering. "He rescues the afflicted by his affliction" (Job 36:15).

In 1 Corinthians 16 Paul closes with a strong charge: "Watch, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strengthened. Let everything of yours be done in love."

Psalm 139 is one of the most personal psalms. God knows when I sit down and when I get up. He knows my words before I say them. Then David asks, "Where shall I go from Your Spirit? And where shall I flee from Your presence?"

Heaven? You are there. The grave? You are there. The far side of the sea? "Even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right ***hand*** will grasp me."

If you are running from God, that is frightening. If you are His child, it is the most comforting thing in the world. There is nowhere you can go that He is not already there.

Then David marvels at how God made him: "You wove me together in the womb of my mother... ***in awesome ways I am distinguished."***

He ends by asking God, "Search me, God, and know my heart... and lead me in the everlasting way."

Think about it: Is God's presence everywhere a comfort or a discomfort to you right now?

Pray

God, there is nowhere I can go that You are not. Hold me with Your right hand. Search me, and lead me in the everlasting way.

DAY 255

The God of All Comfort

Today's reading: Job 37; 2 Corinthians 1

> *Blessed **be** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those in every affliction through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God;*
>
> 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (SLB)

Job 37 ends Elihu's speech with a description of God's power in a storm: lightning, thunder, snow, rain, and ice. He is setting the stage, because in the next chapter God Himself will speak out of the whirlwind.

Today we begin 2 Corinthians, Paul's most personal letter. He opens with praise.

"Blessed ***be*** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those in every affliction through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

Paul had just been through suffering so great that he despaired of life itself. And he learned that God's comfort is not just for us. It flows through us to others.

That gives your pain a purpose. The comfort God gave you in your divorce, your diagnosis, your loss, your addiction, is meant to be passed on. Nobody comforts a grieving parent like another parent who has walked that road and found God faithful.

Later in the chapter: "as many as ***are the*** promises of God, in Him ***is*** the Yes."

Think about it: Whom could you comfort with the comfort God has given you?

Pray

Father of compassion, You have comforted me in my troubles. Use my story to comfort someone else who is hurting.

Go deeper: the free 2 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 256

Where Were You?

Today's reading: Job 38-39; 2 Corinthians 2; Psalm 140

> *Where were you when I founded the earth? Tell **Me**, if you know understanding. Who set its measurements, if you know? Or who stretched a measuring line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*
>
> Job 38:4-7 (SLB)

For thirty-seven chapters Job has asked God to answer him. Now God does, out of the whirlwind. But He does not answer Job's questions. He asks His own.

"Where were you when I founded the earth? Tell ***Me***, if you know understanding. Who set its measurements, if you know?... when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

God takes Job on a tour of creation. The sea, the dawn, the snow, the stars, the lion, the raven, the mountain goat, the wild donkey, the ostrich, the horse, the hawk. Can you do this? Do you understand this?

God never tells Job about the conversation with Satan in chapter 1. He does not explain the suffering. He shows Job who He is.

And that turns out to be enough. When you see how big God is, your questions do not disappear, but they shrink. You realize that a God who runs the universe can be trusted with your life, even when you cannot see the reasons.

In 2 Corinthians 2 Paul writes, "thanks ***be*** to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ."

Think about it: How does seeing God's greatness help when you do not understand what He is doing?

Pray

Lord, I was not there when You made the world. You know what I do not. I trust You with what I cannot understand.

Go deeper: the free Job study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 257

From Glory to Glory

Today's reading: Job 40-41; 2 Corinthians 3; Psalm 141

> *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of **the** Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from **the** Lord, **the** Spirit.*
>
> 2 Corinthians 3:18 (SLB)

In Job 40 God says, will the faultfinder argue with the Almighty? Job answers, "Look, I am insignificant; what shall I reply to You? I have put my hand on my mouth." Then God describes two huge creatures, Behemoth and Leviathan, that no man can tame. If you cannot control them, how can you stand against their Maker?

In 2 Corinthians 3 Paul contrasts the old covenant with the new. When Moses came down from Sinai, his face shone, and he put a veil over it so the people would not see the glory fade. Paul says a veil still lies over hearts when the old covenant is read, but when a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of ***the*** Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from ***the*** Lord, ***the*** Spirit."

We become like what we look at. As we keep looking at Jesus, in His word, in prayer, in worship, the Spirit changes us bit by bit to look more like Him.

It is gradual. From one degree of glory to another. You may not see it day to day, but look back a year and you should.

Psalm 141:3: "Set, LORD, a guard for my mouth."

Think about it: What are you spending the most time looking at? How is it shaping you?

Pray

Lord, I want to look at You more than anything else. Change me into Your image, one degree at a time.

Go deeper: the free 2 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 258

Now My Eye Sees You

Today's reading: Job 42; Ecclesiastes 1-2; 2 Corinthians 4; Psalm 142

> *Therefore we do not lose heart; but even if our outer man is being brought to decay, yet the inner **man** is being renewed day by day. For the momentary lightness of our affliction is producing for us, excessively to excess, an eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things being seen but at the things not being seen; for the things being seen **are** temporary, but the things not being seen **are** eternal.*
>
> 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (SLB)

Job 42 ends the story. Job answers God, "By the hearing of the ear I had heard of You, and now my eye has seen You. Therefore I reject ***it***, and I repent on dust and ashes."

Job had known about God. Now he knew God. That was worth more than the answers he had demanded.

God rebuked the three friends, who had not spoken rightly about Him, and told Job to pray for them. "And the LORD turned back the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends." God restored double what Job had lost.

Today we also start Ecclesiastes. The Preacher opens with "Futility of futilities... Everything ***is*** futility." He tried pleasure, work, wisdom, and building, and found it all like chasing wind.

In 2 Corinthians 4 Paul gives the answer to both books. "We do not lose heart; but even if our outer man is being brought to decay, yet the inner ***man*** is being renewed day by day. For the momentary lightness of our affliction is producing for us... an eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things being seen but at the things not being seen."

Life under the sun is futile. Life with eyes on eternity is not.

Think about it: Is your eye on the things that are seen or the things that are unseen?

Pray

Lord, I have heard of You, and now I want to see You. Keep my eyes on eternity, and renew my inner man day by day.

Go deeper: the free 2 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 259

A New Creation

Today's reading: Ecclesiastes 3-4; 2 Corinthians 5; Psalm 143

> *Therefore if anyone **is** in Christ, **he is** a new creation; the old things have passed away; look, all things have become new.*
>
> 2 Corinthians 5:17 (SLB)

Ecclesiastes 3 is the famous "time for everything" passage: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to weep and a time to laugh. Then the Preacher says, "He has made everything beautiful in its time; also He has put eternity in their heart." We were made for more than this world. That is why nothing here fully satisfies.

In chapter 4 he writes, "The two ***are*** better than the one... For if they fall, the one will raise up his companion."

In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul writes about our earthly tent and our heavenly home. Then he says, "Therefore if anyone ***is*** in Christ, ***he is*** a new creation; the old things have passed away; look, all things have become new."

Not improved. Not cleaned up. New. When you trust Christ, God does not just patch up the old you. He makes a new creation.

How? Verse 21 explains: "He made the One who did not know sin ***to be*** sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus took our sin. We get His righteousness. That is the great exchange.

Psalm 143:8: "Make me hear Your steadfast love in the morning."

Think about it: What "old things" in your life has God made new?

Pray

Lord, thank You for making me a new creation. You took my sin and gave me Your righteousness. Help me live in the newness You have given.

Go deeper: the free 2 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 260

Never Enough

Today's reading: Ecclesiastes 5-7; 2 Corinthians 6

> ***He who*** *loves silver will not be satisfied with silver, and whoever loves abundance* ***will*** *not* ***be satisfied with*** *income. This also* ***is*** *futility.*
>
> Ecclesiastes 5:10 (SLB)

Ecclesiastes 5 through 7 give practical wisdom. Be careful with your words before God: "God ***is*** in the heavens and you ***are*** on the earth; therefore let your words be few." Keep your vows. And this one: "***He who*** loves silver will not be satisfied with silver, and whoever loves abundance ***will*** not ***be satisfied with*** income. This also ***is*** futility."

That is as true today as it was three thousand years ago. Ask a millionaire how much is enough, and the honest answer is usually "a little more." The more you have, the more you worry about keeping it, and the more people show up to help you spend it.

The Preacher is not against money. He says it is good to enjoy the fruit of your work as a gift from God (Ecclesiastes 5:19). The problem is loving it. Money is a good servant and a terrible master.

In 2 Corinthians 6 Paul says, "Look, now ***is*** a well-accepted time; look, now ***is*** a day of salvation." He also warns, "Do not become unequally yoked with unbelievers."

Paul describes his own life as "having nothing, and ***yet*** possessing all things" (2 Corinthians 6:10). That is real wealth.

Think about it: Are you satisfied with what God has given you, or always wanting a little more?

Pray

Lord, free me from the love of money. Teach me contentment, and let me find my real wealth in You.

Go deeper: the free Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 261

Godly Sorrow

Today's reading: Ecclesiastes 8-10; 2 Corinthians 7; Psalm 144

> *For the grief according to God produces repentance to salvation without regret, but the grief of the world produces death.*
>
> 2 Corinthians 7:10 (SLB)

Ecclesiastes 8 through 10 continue with observations about life under the sun. The righteous sometimes get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked get what the righteous deserve. Death comes to everyone. So, "All that your hand finds to do, do with your strength."

In 2 Corinthians 7 Paul says he had written the Corinthians a painful letter and regretted it for a while. But he was glad now, because it led them to repent.

"For the grief according to God produces repentance to salvation without regret, but the grief of the world produces death."

There are two kinds of sorrow over sin. Worldly sorrow is being sorry you got caught, sorry about the consequences, sorry about how it makes you look. It leads to shame, self-pity, and sometimes despair. Judas had worldly sorrow.

Godly sorrow is being sorry you hurt God and others. It leads to change. Peter had godly sorrow. He wept, came back, and was restored.

How do you tell them apart? Look at the fruit. Paul lists what godly sorrow produced in the Corinthians: earnestness, eagerness to clear themselves, indignation, fear, longing, zeal, and readiness to make things right.

Think about it: When you are sorry for sin, is it worldly sorrow or godly sorrow?

Pray

Lord, give me godly sorrow that leads to real change, not just regret. Thank You that Your forgiveness leaves no regret.

Go deeper: the free 2 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 262

The End of the Matter

Today's reading: Ecclesiastes 11-12; Song of Songs 1-2; 2 Corinthians 8

> *The end of the matter, everything has been heard: fear God and keep His commandments, for this **is** all of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether good or evil.*
>
> Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (SLB)

Ecclesiastes ends with old age. "Remember your Creator in the days of your young manhood, before the days of evil come." Then comes a poem about aging: the keepers of the house tremble, the grinders stop because they are few, those who look through the windows grow dim. Your arms, teeth, and eyes all wear out.

After twelve chapters of looking at life under the sun, the Preacher gives his conclusion. "The end of the matter, everything has been heard: fear God and keep His commandments, for this ***is*** all of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether good or evil."

Everything else is vapor. God is not.

Today we also begin the Song of Songs, a love poem celebrating marriage. "His banner over me ***is*** love." God made romance and married love, and He calls it good.

In 2 Corinthians 8 Paul encourages generous giving with the greatest example. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sake He became poor, being rich, so that you by His poverty might become rich."

If you are young, remember your Creator now. If you are older, it is not too late.

Think about it: What would change if you lived as though "fear God and keep His commandments" is the whole of life?

Pray

Lord, You are my Creator. Help me remember You in every season, and live for what lasts.

Go deeper: the free Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 263

A Cheerful Giver

Today's reading: Song of Songs 3-5; 2 Corinthians 9; Psalm 145

> *Each **one should give** just as he purposes in the heart, not out of grief or out of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God **is** able to make all grace abound to you, so that, always having all sufficiency in everything, you may abound to every good work;*
>
> 2 Corinthians 9:7-8 (SLB)

Song of Songs 3 through 5 continue the love poem between the bride and her beloved. The groom praises his bride's beauty, and she longs for him. It is honest, warm, and pure. God is not embarrassed by married love.

In 2 Corinthians 9 Paul continues teaching about the offering for the poor believers in Jerusalem.

"Each ***one should give*** just as he purposes in the heart, not out of grief or out of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God ***is*** able to make all grace abound to you, so that, always having all sufficiency in everything, you may abound to every good work."

God does not want gifts squeezed out of us by guilt or pressure. He wants gifts that come from a glad heart. The Greek word for "cheerful" is where we get our word "hilarious." God loves a giver who gives with joy.

And He promises to make sure we have enough to keep giving. Not so we can hoard, but so we can abound in every good work.

Paul ends with, "Now thanks ***be*** to God for His indescribable free gift!" Every gift we give is a small echo of the one He gave us.

Psalm 145:3: "Great ***is*** the LORD and greatly to be praised."

Think about it: Do you give cheerfully, grudgingly, or not at all?

Pray

Lord, You gave Your indescribable gift. Make me a cheerful giver, and supply me so I can keep giving.

Go deeper: the free 2 Corinthians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 264

White as Snow

Today's reading: Song of Songs 6-8; Isaiah 1; 2 Corinthians 10; Psalm 146

> *"Come now, and let us argue **the case** together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they will become white like snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.*
>
> Isaiah 1:18 (SLB)

Song of Songs ends with the strongest statement about love in the Bible: "love ***is*** strong like death... Many waters are not able to quench the love, and rivers will not overflow it."

Then we start Isaiah, one of the greatest books of prophecy. Isaiah 1 opens with God bringing a case against His people. They have rebelled. They are sick from head to foot. Their worship is empty: God is tired of their sacrifices and festivals while their hands are full of blood.

Then God makes an offer.

"'Come now, and let us argue ***the case*** together,' says the LORD. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they will become white like snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.'"

Scarlet dye was permanent. You could not wash it out. God says He can do what no one else can. He can make deep-stained sins white as fresh snow.

In 2 Corinthians 10 Paul talks about "taking every thought captive into the obedience of Christ."

Psalm 146 says, "Do not trust in nobles... How blessed ***is he*** whose help ***is*** the God of Jacob."

Think about it: What sin do you think is too deep a stain for God to wash out?

Pray

LORD, my sins are scarlet. Wash me white as snow through the blood of Jesus. I accept Your offer.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 265

Swords into Plowshares

Today's reading: Isaiah 2-3; 2 Corinthians 11

> *And many peoples will come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us from His ways, and that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion* ***the*** *law will go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations and will decide for many peoples, and they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning knives; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and they will not learn war again.*
>
> Isaiah 2:3-4 (SLB)

Isaiah 2 looks ahead to "the last days," when the mountain of the LORD's house will be raised above every other, and the nations will stream to it.

"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD... that He may teach us from His ways... and they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning knives; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and they will not learn war again."

These words are carved on a wall across from the United Nations. But the UN cannot bring this about. Only the King can. I believe this describes Christ's thousand-year reign on earth after He returns. Real peace will come when the Prince of Peace rules from Jerusalem.

Until then, the rest of Isaiah 2 and 3 describes judgment on human pride. "the haughtiness of mankind will be humbled" (Isaiah 2:17). Leaders will fail, and the proud women of Jerusalem with their jewelry and fine clothes will be brought low.

In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul warns that "Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light." Not all spiritual-sounding things are from God.

Think about it: Where do you see the world's attempts at peace falling short?

Pray

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, come and reign. Until then, make me a peacemaker, and keep me from pride.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 266

Here Am I, Send Me

Today's reading: Isaiah 4-6; 2 Corinthians 12; Psalm 147

> *And I said, "Woe to me! For I am destroyed, for I **am** a man of unclean lips, and in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of armies." And one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand **was** a live coal; with tongs he had taken **it** from on the altar. And he made **it** touch my mouth and said, "Look, this has touched your lips, and your iniquity is removed, and your sin is atoned for." And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom will I send, and who will go for Us?" And I said, "Here I **am**; send me."*
>
> Isaiah 6:5-8 (SLB)

"In the year of the death of King Uzziah, and I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up" (Isaiah 6:1). Seraphim cried, "Holy, holy, holy ***is*** the LORD of armies." The temple shook and filled with smoke.

Isaiah's response: "Woe to me! For I am destroyed, for I ***am*** a man of unclean lips... for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of armies."

When you really see God, you really see yourself. Isaiah was a prophet, probably the best man in the nation. He fell apart.

Then a seraph took a burning coal from the altar and touched his lips. "Your iniquity is removed, and your sin is atoned for."

Then God asked, "Whom will I send, and who will go for Us?" And Isaiah answered, "Here I ***am***; send me."

Notice the order: vision of God, conviction of sin, cleansing, then calling. You cannot skip steps. People who volunteer for God without first being humbled and cleansed tend to serve themselves.

In 2 Corinthians 12 Jesus tells Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness." Isaiah and Paul both learned that God uses people who know they cannot do it alone.

I volunteered at church camp for several years and helped lead youth mission trips to Baja, Mexico, for five straight years. Some of those teams were 16 people and some were 45, kids from 12 to 20 and up. I did not feel qualified for all of it. I learned that God mostly asks us to show up where there is a need. Willing hands are what He asks for.

Think about it: Have you ever said to God, "Here I *am*; send me"?

Pray

Holy LORD, I am unclean, and You have cleansed me. Here am I. Send me.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 267

God with Us

Today's reading: Isaiah 7-8; 2 Corinthians 13

> *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Look, the virgin **is** pregnant and bearing a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*
>
> Isaiah 7:14 (SLB)

King Ahaz of Judah was terrified. The kings of Syria and Israel had joined forces against him. God sent Isaiah to tell him not to fear and to ask for a sign, any sign. Ahaz, pretending to be pious, refused. He had already decided to trust Assyria instead.

God gave a sign anyway. "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Look, the virgin ***is*** pregnant and bearing a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

Immanuel means "God with us." Matthew 1:23 tells us this was fulfilled in Jesus, born of the virgin Mary. God did not just send help. He came Himself.

Ahaz did not want God with him. He wanted Assyria's army. Many people today are the same. They want God's help on their terms, or not at all.

In chapter 8 Isaiah says, do not fear what this people fears. The LORD of armies is the one you should fear. "To the law and to the testimony!" (Isaiah 8:20). Go to God's word, not to mediums.

2 Corinthians 13:5: "Test yourselves ***to see*** whether you are in the faith."

Think about it: Do you want God with you, or just His help on your terms?

Pray

Immanuel, thank You for coming to be with us. I want You, not just Your help. Be with me today.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 268

Wonder, Counselor, Mighty God

Today's reading: Isaiah 9-10; Galatians 1; Psalm 148

> *For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us; and the dominion is on His shoulder; and **one** has called His name Wonder, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of the dominion and of peace **there will be** no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to sustain it with justice and with righteousness from now and until forever. The zeal of the LORD of armies will do this.*
>
> Isaiah 9:6-7 (SLB)

Isaiah 9 opens in darkness, in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali in Galilee, the first area of Israel crushed by Assyria. Then: "The people who walk in the darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9:2). Matthew 4 says Jesus started His ministry right there in Galilee.

Then the great promise.

"For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us; and the dominion is on His shoulder; and ***one*** has called His name Wonder, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace."

A child born, a Son given. Fully human and fully God. Look at the names. He is a Wonder, beyond understanding. A Counselor who never gives bad advice. The Mighty God, not just a good man. The Father of Eternity, who cares for His people forever. The Prince of Peace.

"Of the increase of the dominion and of peace ***there will be*** no end, on the throne of David." His kingdom will keep growing forever. "The zeal of the LORD of armies will do this." God guarantees it.

In Galatians 1 Paul is astonished that the Galatians are turning to a different gospel. Any other gospel, even from an angel, is no gospel at all.

Think about it: Which of Jesus' names in Isaiah 9:6 do you need most today?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are Wonder, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. Rule in my life, and let Your peace increase.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 269

A Shoot from the Stump

Today's reading: Isaiah 11-14; Galatians 2; Psalm 149

> *And a shoot will come forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, **the** spirit of wisdom and understanding, **the** spirit of counsel and might, **the** spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.*
>
> Isaiah 11:1-2 (SLB)

Isaiah 10 shows Assyria as a tool in God's hand to judge Israel, and then judged itself for its pride. Like a forest, it will be cut down.

Then Isaiah 11 begins with a tree stump. The royal line of David would be cut down, like a tree chopped to the ground. But from that stump, life.

"And a shoot will come forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him."

Jesse was David's father. By the time Jesus was born, David's royal family was a forgotten stump. Joseph was a carpenter. But God brought the King out of it.

The rest of the chapter describes His reign. He will judge the poor with righteousness. The wolf will live with the lamb. A child will play by the cobra's hole. "The earth will be full ***of*** the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." That is the coming kingdom.

Isaiah 14 describes the fall of the king of Babylon in words that many see as also describing Satan's fall: "I will ascend ***to*** the heavens... I will make myself like the Most High."

In Galatians 2 Paul says he has been crucified with Christ, and Christ lives in him.

Think about it: Where does your life feel like a stump? How might God bring new growth?

Pray

Lord, You bring life from stumps. Do it in me. And come soon, Lord Jesus, and fill the earth with the knowledge of You.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 270

Let Everything That Has Breath

Today's reading: Isaiah 15-17; Galatians 3; Psalm 150

> *Let everything that has breath praise **the** LORD. Praise **the** LORD!*
>
> Psalm 150:6 (SLB)

Isaiah 15 through 17 are oracles against Moab, Damascus, and Israel. Moab weeps. Damascus becomes a heap of ruins. But in the middle of judgment, Isaiah 17:7 says, "In that day man will look to his Maker."

In Galatians 3 Paul asks the Galatians whether they received the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith. He explains that the law was "our child-guardian to Christ, so that we might be justified by faith." Then a great verse: "There is not Jew nor Greek, there is not slave nor free, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Today we finish the Psalms. You started them back on Day 1, and you have read all 150. Psalm 150 is the grand finale. Praise Him in His sanctuary. Praise Him for His mighty deeds. Praise Him with trumpet, harp, lyre, timbrel, dancing, strings, pipe, and loud cymbals.

Then the last verse of the whole book: "Let everything that has breath praise ***the*** LORD. Praise ***the*** LORD!"

If you have breath, you qualify. That is the only requirement. The Psalms have taken us through every emotion: fear, grief, anger, guilt, joy. They end in praise.

Think about it: Do you have breath? Then what will you praise God for today?

Pray

LORD, I have breath, so I will praise You. Thank You for walking with me through every psalm and every emotion this year. Praise the LORD!

DAY 271

No Longer a Slave, but a Son

Today's reading: Isaiah 18-21; Galatians 4

> *But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, so that He might redeem those under law, so that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, also an heir of God through Christ.*
>
> Galatians 4:4-7 (SLB)

Isaiah 18 through 21 continue the oracles against the nations. One short oracle has a haunting question: "Watchman, what of the night?" The watchman answers, "Morning comes, and also night." Hard times come and go, but morning is coming.

In Galatians 4 Paul explains what Jesus came to do.

"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, so that He might redeem those under law, so that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, also an heir of God through Christ."

"The fullness of the time." Jesus came exactly when God planned: one language across the empire, Roman roads, relative peace, and a world hungry for hope.

"Abba" is the Aramaic word a child used for his father, warm and close, like "Dad." The Spirit in us teaches us to talk to God that way.

You are not a servant hoping to earn your keep. You are a son or daughter, and an heir. Live like it.

Think about it: Do you relate to God more like a nervous servant or a loved child?

Pray

Abba, Father, thank You for adopting me through Jesus. I am not a slave but Your child and heir. Help me live like it.

Go deeper: the free Galatians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 272

The Fruit of the Spirit

Today's reading: Isaiah 22-24; Galatians 5; Proverbs 1

> *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such **things** there is no law.*
>
> Galatians 5:22-23 (SLB)

Isaiah 22 through 24 include an oracle against Jerusalem, a promise about a key placed on a faithful servant's shoulder (Revelation 3:7 applies this to Jesus), and the start of what some call Isaiah's "little apocalypse," describing judgment on the whole earth.

We also start Proverbs today. "The fear of the LORD ***is*** the beginning of knowledge; wisdom and discipline fools have despised."

Galatians 5 begins, "In the freedom with which Christ set us free, stand firm therefore, and do not be entangled again in a yoke of slavery." But freedom is not permission to sin. "Through love be slaves to one another."

Then Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

Notice it says "fruit," singular. It is one fruit with nine flavors. The Spirit does not give you love and skip patience. He grows all of it, together.

And fruit is not manufactured. It grows. You do not get an apple by gluing it to a branch. It comes from the life of the tree. Stay connected to Christ, walk by the Spirit, and the fruit will come.

Think about it: Which part of the fruit of the Spirit do you most need Him to grow in you?

Pray

Holy Spirit, grow Your fruit in me: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Go deeper: the free Galatians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 273

Perfect Peace

Today's reading: Isaiah 25-27; Galatians 6

> *The steadfast mind You will keep **in** peace, peace, for **it is** trusting in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for in **the** LORD, the LORD, **is** an everlasting rock.*
>
> Isaiah 26:3-4 (SLB)

Isaiah 25 through 27 are songs of the coming kingdom. "He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces." On that day people will say, "Look, this ***is*** our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us."

Then Isaiah 26 gives a promise for today. "The steadfast mind You will keep ***in*** peace, peace, for ***it is*** trusting in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for in ***the*** LORD, the LORD, ***is*** an everlasting rock."

The Hebrew says "peace, peace," doubled for emphasis. Perfect peace. Complete peace.

Who gets it? The person whose mind is steadfast, stayed on God. Not someone with no problems. Someone whose thoughts keep coming back to God and resting there.

Where your mind goes, your peace follows. Fix your mind on your problems, and you will be anxious. Fix it on the Rock, and you will have peace.

Galatians 6 warns, "God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." Then it encourages, "let us not lose heart in doing the good, for in ***its*** own time we will reap, not fainting." Paul ends, "may it not be to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Think about it: Where does your mind go when you are anxious?

Pray

LORD, keep my mind stayed on You. Give me Your perfect peace, because I trust You. You are my everlasting Rock.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

Days 274 to 304

DAY 274

Every Spiritual Blessing

Today's reading: Isaiah 28-29; Ephesians 1; Proverbs 2

> *Blessed **be** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly **places** in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before **the** foundation of **the** world, **for** us to be holy and blameless before Him in love, having predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to **the** praise of **the** glory of His grace, in which He graced us in the Beloved, in whom we have the redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of the trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,*
>
> Ephesians 1:3-7 (SLB)

Isaiah 28 and 29 warn leaders who scoffed at God and made deals to protect themselves. In the middle of the warning comes a promise: "Look, I ***am He who*** has laid in Zion a stone, a stone of testing, a precious corner of a foundation, firmly founded; the one who believes will not hurry." Peter tells us that stone is Jesus.

Today we start Ephesians, and Paul opens with one long burst of praise.

Count what you have in Christ. Every spiritual blessing. Chosen before the world was made. Adopted as a son. Redeemed through His blood. Forgiven. And all of it is "according to the riches of His grace," not according to how well you did this week.

Notice how often Paul says "in Him" or "in Christ." Every blessing comes through being joined to Jesus. Outside of Him you have none of it. In Him you have all of it.

Some people spend their lives trying to earn what God already gave them. You do not have to climb up to these blessings. You were placed into them the day you trusted Christ.

Proverbs 2 adds that wisdom is worth searching for like silver and hidden treasure.

Think about it: Which of these blessings do you most need to remember today?

Pray

Father, thank You for every spiritual blessing in Christ. Thank You for choosing me, adopting me and forgiving me by the riches of Your grace.

Go deeper: the free Ephesians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 275

Saved by Grace

Today's reading: Isaiah 30-32; Ephesians 2

> *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this **is** not from yourselves; the gift **is** of God, not from works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.*
>
> Ephesians 2:8-10 (SLB)

Isaiah 30 through 32 scold Judah for running to Egypt for help instead of trusting God. "In returning and rest you will be saved" is the heart of it, but they would not have it. God still waits to be gracious.

Ephesians 2 describes where we were. Dead in our trespasses. Following the world and the devil. By nature children of wrath. Then come two of the best words in the Bible: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even us, being dead in the trespasses, He made alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

Then Paul makes it plain.

You are not saved by works. You are saved for works. Works are the fruit, never the root. A dead man cannot do anything to raise himself. God made us alive, and now we walk in the good works He prepared for us.

That word "workmanship" is the word for something crafted with care. I have built guitars, and every one of them shows the hand of the builder. You are God's handiwork, made in Christ for a purpose.

The rest of the chapter says Jesus tore down the wall between Jew and Gentile and made one new people.

Think about it: Are you trusting your works, or the grace of God?

Pray

But God, rich in mercy, made me alive with Christ. Thank You that I am saved by grace through faith. Show me the good works You prepared for me today.

Go deeper: the free Ephesians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 276

Far More Abundantly

Today's reading: Isaiah 33-34; Ephesians 3

> ***for*** *Christ to dwell through faith in your hearts, having been rooted and founded in love, so that you may be fully able to grasp with all the saints what* ***is*** *the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do above all things, far more abundantly than what we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, to Him* ***be*** *the glory in the church in Christ Jesus to all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.*
>
> Ephesians 3:17-21 (SLB)

Isaiah 33 and 34 contrast the King who will reign in beauty with the judgment that falls on the nations who oppose Him.

In Ephesians 3 Paul explains a mystery hidden for ages. Gentiles are fellow heirs with Israel, members of the same body, sharing in the promise in Christ. Then Paul kneels and prays for the church.

Paul prays that you would grasp the size of Christ's love. Breadth, length, height and depth. Then he says it "surpasses knowledge." You can know it, but you will never get to the end of it.

Then comes the praise. God is able to do "far more abundantly than what we ask or think." Think of the biggest thing you would dare to ask. God can go past that. And notice where His power is at work: "in us."

This does not mean God gives us whatever we want. It means our prayers are never too big for Him. Our problem is usually that we ask too little.

Think about it: Are you asking God for too little?

Pray

Father, root me in Your love, and help me grasp how wide and long and high and deep it is. You are able to do far more than I ask or think. To You be the glory.

Go deeper: the free Ephesians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 277

Kind and Tenderhearted

Today's reading: Isaiah 35-37; Ephesians 4; Proverbs 3

> *Let no rotten word go out of your mouth, but whatever **is** good for building up of the need, so that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for **the** day of redemption. Let all bitterness and rage and wrath and clamor and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.*
>
> Ephesians 4:29-32 (SLB)

Isaiah 35 is pure hope. The desert will bloom, the blind will see, the lame will leap, and the redeemed will walk on a highway called the Way of Holiness. "Say to those who are hasty of heart, 'Be strong; do not be afraid.'"

Isaiah 36 and 37 tell of Assyria at the gates of Jerusalem. Hezekiah takes the enemy's threatening letter, spreads it out before the LORD and prays. That night the angel of the LORD strikes the Assyrian camp, and Sennacherib goes home.

Ephesians 4 says Christ gave the church leaders to equip the saints, so that we grow up into Him. Then Paul gets practical about how we talk.

"Rotten word" is the word for spoiled food. Some words go bad and make people sick. Before you speak, ask whether it builds up.

Then there is a list of things to remove: bitterness, rage, wrath, clamor, slander, malice. And a list of things to put on: kindness, a tender heart and forgiveness.

Why forgive? "Even as God also in Christ forgave you." You have been forgiven far more than anyone will ever owe you.

Proverbs 3 adds a verse many of us memorized as children: trust in the LORD with all your heart.

Think about it: Who do you need to forgive the way God forgave you?

Pray

Lord, put a guard on my mouth. Remove bitterness and anger from me. Make me kind, tenderhearted and forgiving, as You forgave me in Christ.

Go deeper: the free Ephesians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 278

Redeeming the Time

Today's reading: Isaiah 38-39; Ephesians 5

> *Therefore see carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Because of this do not be foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord **is**. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is debauchery, but be filled with **the** Spirit,*
>
> Ephesians 5:15-18 (SLB)

Isaiah 38 and 39 tell of Hezekiah's sickness. He prays and weeps, and God answers, "I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Look, I am He who will add to your days fifteen years." Sadly, Hezekiah then shows his treasures to envoys from Babylon, and Isaiah warns that Babylon will one day carry it all away.

Ephesians 5 calls us to walk in love and walk as children of light.

"Redeeming the time" means buying up every opportunity. Time is the one thing you cannot make more of. Hezekiah got fifteen extra years. None of us knows how many we have.

Then Paul compares two kinds of control. Do not be drunk with wine, controlled by a substance. Be filled with the Spirit, controlled by God. Being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time event. It is ongoing, day by day.

The rest of the chapter shows what that looks like at home. Wives respect their husbands, and husbands love their wives "even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her."

Think about it: What opportunity is God giving you today that you should not waste?

Pray

Lord, teach me to walk wisely and make the most of my time. Fill me with Your Spirit today, and let my home show Your love.

Go deeper: the free Ephesians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 279

Wings Like Eagles

Today's reading: Isaiah 40-41; Ephesians 6

> *Have you not known? Or have you not heard? The LORD **is** the God of perpetuity, the Creator of the ends of the earth; He does not grow faint, and He does not grow weary; **there is** no searching of His understanding. He gives power to the faint, and to **him who has** no vigor He increases might. And youths may grow faint and grow weary, and young men will surely stumble; and those who wait for the LORD will renew power; they will go up **with** wings like the eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not grow faint.*
>
> Isaiah 40:28-31 (SLB)

Isaiah 40 begins a new section of the book. "Comfort, comfort My people," says your God. A voice cries out to prepare the way of the LORD, the verse John the Baptist claimed. "Grass dries up, a flower withers, and the word of our God will stand forever."

Then Isaiah asks who could measure the oceans in His hand or count the stars. God calls every star by name. Then comes this.

God never runs low. Young, strong people run out of steam. But those who wait for the LORD get new strength.

Waiting does not mean doing nothing. It means looking to God, trusting Him, and depending on His timing instead of your own strength.

Notice the order: fly, run, walk. Some days you soar. Some days you run. And some days the best you can do is walk without fainting. God gives strength for all three.

Ephesians 6 tells us to put on the full armor of God, because our fight is not against flesh and blood. We stand in His strength, not ours.

Before May 29, 2020, I was running on willpower. I was successful at work and wearing down on the inside, and I would not admit it. Real strength came back only when I stopped trying to power through and started waiting on the Lord. God renews our strength when we stop pretending we do not need Him.

Think about it: Are you running on your own strength or waiting on the LORD?

Pray

LORD, You never grow faint or weary. I am tired. I wait on You. Renew my strength so I can rise, run and walk with You today.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 280

You Are Mine

Today's reading: Isaiah 42-43; Philippians 1

> *And now thus says the LORD, who created you, Jacob, and who formed you, Israel: Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called **you** by your name; you **are** Mine. When you pass through the waters, I **will be** with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you; when you walk through fire, you will not be burned, and a flame will not burn you.*
>
> Isaiah 43:1-2 (SLB)

Isaiah 42 introduces the Servant of the LORD, who will not break a bruised reed or snuff out a smoldering wick. Matthew 12 says this Servant is Jesus.

Then Isaiah 43 brings one of the most tender promises in the Bible.

God does not say "if" you pass through the waters. He says "when." Hard times will come. The promise is not that you skip them. The promise is "I ***will be*** with you."

And look at the reason: "I have called ***you*** by your name; you ***are*** Mine." You are not a number to God.

We start Philippians today. Paul is in chains, yet this is his most joyful letter. He writes, "He who began a good work in you will complete ***it*** until ***the*** day of Jesus Christ." God does not quit halfway on a project.

And Paul says, "For to me, to live ***is*** Christ, and to die ***is*** gain." If you live, you get more of Christ. If you die, you get all of Christ. Either way, you win.

Think about it: What water or fire are you passing through right now?

Pray

LORD, You created me and redeemed me. You call me by name, and I am Yours. Walk with me through the waters and the fire today.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 281

The Mind of Christ

Today's reading: Isaiah 44-46; Philippians 2; Proverbs 4

> *For let this be thought in you which **was** also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in **the** form of God, did not consider being equal with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, having taken **the** form of a slave, having come to be in **the** likeness of men; and having been found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, having become obedient as far as death, even death of a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted Him and granted to Him a name, the **one** above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of **those** in heaven and **those** on earth and **those** under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ **is** Lord, to **the** glory of God **the** Father.*
>
> Philippians 2:5-11 (SLB)

Isaiah 44 through 46 mock the idol maker. He cuts down a tree, warms himself with half of it, then carves the other half into a god and bows down to it. Our God is different. "To gray hair I, I will bear ***you***." Idols must be carried. Our God carries us.

Philippians 2 shows us Jesus.

Jesus is God. He did not stop being God. But He laid aside His rights and came as a servant, all the way to death on a cross.

And Paul says this is the mind we should have. Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is thinking of yourself less, and looking to the needs of others.

One day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The only question is whether we bow now, gladly, or later.

Proverbs 4 says, "More than all guarding, guard your heart, for from it ***are*** the outflows of life."

Think about it: Whose needs can you put ahead of your own this week?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You emptied Yourself and became a servant for me. Give me Your mind. Make me humble, and help me look out for others. You are Lord.

Go deeper: the free Philippians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 282

Pressing On

Today's reading: Isaiah 47-48; Philippians 3

> *Brothers, I **do** not count myself to have laid hold **of it**; but one **thing I do**: forgetting the **things** behind and reaching forward to the **things** ahead, I pursue toward **the** goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.*
>
> Philippians 3:13-14 (SLB)

Isaiah 47 and 48 tell of Babylon's fall. Then God tells Israel, "Look, I have refined you, and not with silver; I have chosen you in a furnace of affliction." Hard times can be God's refining fire.

In Philippians 3 Paul lists his religious record: circumcised, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee, blameless under the law. Then he throws it all away.

Paul says all of it was "rubbish" compared to knowing Christ. The word is stronger than that. It is what you throw out to the dogs.

Then he says he has not arrived. He forgets what is behind and reaches for what is ahead.

Forgetting what is behind means two things. Do not rest on past success. And do not be chained by past failure. Both can stop you from moving forward.

Paul ends the chapter, "For our citizenship exists in ***the*** heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, ***the*** Lord Jesus Christ." He was watching for Jesus to come. So should we.

Think about it: What from your past do you need to let go of so you can press on?

Pray

Lord, I count everything as loss next to knowing You. Help me forget what is behind and press on toward the prize of Your upward call.

Go deeper: the free Philippians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 283

The Peace That Guards

Today's reading: Isaiah 49-51; Philippians 4; Proverbs 5

> *Rejoice in **the** Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord **is** near. Be anxious about nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.*
>
> Philippians 4:4-7 (SLB)

Isaiah 49 through 51 speak of the Servant who will be a light to the nations. When Zion says the LORD has forgotten her, God answers, "Will a woman forget her nursing child, from having compassion on the son of her womb? Even these will forget, and I, I will not forget you. Look, I have engraved you on ***My*** palms."

Philippians 4 gives us a cure for worry.

"Be anxious about nothing." That sounds impossible until you read the rest. Instead of worrying, pray. Bring everything to God, with thanksgiving. Then His peace will guard your heart like a soldier standing watch.

Notice what Paul does not promise. He does not promise that you will get what you asked for. He promises peace, even before the answer comes.

And "the Lord ***is*** near." That is the reason we can rejoice. He is close to us now, and His coming is close too.

Paul also writes, "I have learned to be content in whatever ***circumstances*** I am." Contentment is learned. It does not come naturally to any of us.

Proverbs 5 warns young men about the adulteress, because "before the eyes of the LORD ***are*** the ways of a man."

Think about it: What are you anxious about that you need to turn into prayer right now?

Pray

Father, here is everything I am worried about. I hand it to You with thanks. Guard my heart and mind with Your peace in Christ Jesus.

Go deeper: the free Philippians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 284

Pierced for Our Transgressions

Today's reading: Isaiah 52-55; Colossians 1

> *Surely our sicknesses He Himself bore, and our pains, He carried them; and we, we considered Him stricken, struck by God, and afflicted. And He **was** pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; the chastening of our peace **was** on Him, and by His wound **there** was healing for us. All of us like the sheep have gone astray; each to his own way we have turned; and the LORD has caused to fall on Him the iniquity of all of us.*
>
> Isaiah 53:4-6 (SLB)

Isaiah 52 through 55 bring us to the heart of the book. "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news." Then comes Isaiah 53, written some seven hundred years before the cross.

Read it slowly. "He was pierced for our transgressions." That is a crucifixion described some seven hundred years before it happened.

Every "we" and "our" in this passage is us. We went astray. We turned to our own way. And the LORD laid on Him the iniquity of all of us.

That is the gospel in Isaiah. Jesus took what I deserved so I could have what He deserved.

Isaiah 55 opens the invitation to everyone who is thirsty: come and buy without money. "For My thoughts ***are*** not your thoughts, and your ways ***are*** not My ways." And God's word will not return to Him empty.

Colossians 1 says Jesus "is ***the*** image of the invisible God" and that "in Him all things hold together." The One who was pierced is the One who holds the universe together.

Think about it: How does it change you to read Isaiah 53 with your own name in it?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You were pierced for my transgressions and crushed for my iniquities. By Your wounds I am healed. Thank You for taking my place.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 285

Rooted in Him

Today's reading: Isaiah 56-59; Colossians 2

> *Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, having been rooted and being built up in Him and being established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*
>
> Colossians 2:6-7 (SLB)

Isaiah 56 through 59 open God's house to foreigners and eunuchs who hold fast to His covenant. Isaiah 58 says true fasting is breaking chains and feeding the hungry. Then Isaiah 59 explains why prayers seem to hit the ceiling: "Look, the hand of the LORD is not too short to save, and His ear is not too heavy to hear. But your iniquities have been separating between you and your God."

Colossians 2 shows the cure.

You started with Christ by faith. Keep going the same way. Some believers start with grace and then try to grow by rules. Paul warns against "philosophy and empty deceit" and against people who judge you over food, festivals and Sabbaths.

Then he tells us what Christ did with our sin: "having blotted out the handwriting against us in the decrees, which was opposed to us; and He has taken it out of the midst, having nailed it to the cross."

The record of every sin you ever committed was nailed to the cross. Paid in full.

Roots grow out of sight, but everything above ground depends on them. Keep putting your roots down into Christ.

Think about it: Are you trying to grow by rules, or by staying rooted in Christ?

Pray

Lord Jesus, as I received You by faith, help me walk in You by faith. Root me deep, build me up, and fill me with thankfulness.

Go deeper: the free Colossians and Philemon study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 286

As to the Lord

Today's reading: Isaiah 60-62; Colossians 3; Proverbs 6

> *And everything, whatever you do, work from **the** soul, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from **the** Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.*
>
> Colossians 3:23-24 (SLB)

Isaiah 60 through 62 describe the future glory of Zion. In Isaiah 61 the Servant says, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD ***is*** on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to bring good news to ***the*** humble." Jesus read this passage in Nazareth and said it was fulfilled in Him. He stopped before "a day of vengeance," because that part waits for His second coming.

Colossians 3 tells us to set our minds on things above and put on love. Then Paul speaks to slaves, the lowest workers of his day.

If that was true for a slave, it is true for you in your job. Your boss may never notice. The customer may not care. But you serve the Lord Christ.

I have managed projects most of my working life, and I can tell you the best people are not the ones who work hard only when someone is watching. They do good work because of who they are.

Do the small jobs well. Sweep the floor as if Jesus will walk on it. He will see it, and He keeps the books.

Proverbs 6 tells the lazy man to go watch the ant.

Think about it: What part of your work do you need to start doing for the Lord?

Pray

Lord, whatever I do today, help me do it from the heart for You. You are the One I serve, and You are the One who rewards.

Go deeper: the free Colossians and Philemon study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 287

The Potter and the Clay

Today's reading: Isaiah 63-65; Colossians 4

> *And now, LORD, You **are** our Father; we **are** the clay, and You **are** our Potter; and all of us **are** the work of Your hand.*
>
> Isaiah 64:8 (SLB)

Isaiah 63 through 65 are a prayer and an answer. Isaiah cries, "Oh that You had torn the heavens ***and*** come down." He admits that even our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment. Then he says this.

Clay does not tell the potter what to make. It does not demand to be a vase instead of a bowl. It yields to the hands that shape it.

Notice that Isaiah calls God "Father" and "Potter" in the same breath. The hands shaping you are a Father's hands. When He presses hard, it is to make you into something good.

Then God answers in Isaiah 65: "For look, I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former ***things*** will not be remembered."

Colossians 4 ends Paul's letter with this: "***Let*** your word ***be*** always in grace, seasoned with salt, to know how you must answer each one." Salt makes food better and keeps it from spoiling. So should our words.

Think about it: Are you resisting the Potter's hands somewhere in your life?

Pray

Father, You are the Potter and I am the clay. Shape me however You see best. Season my words with grace today.

Go deeper: the free Isaiah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 288

Before I Formed You

Today's reading: Isaiah 66; Jeremiah 1; 1 Thessalonians 1

> *And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the belly I knew you, and before you came forth from **the** womb I consecrated you; a prophet to the nations I appointed you." And I said, "Alas, Lord GOD! Look, I do not know **how** to speak, for I **am** a youth." And the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I **am** a youth,' for to all to whom I send you, you will go, and all that I command you, you will speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I **am** with you to deliver you," declares the LORD.*
>
> Jeremiah 1:4-8 (SLB)

Isaiah 66 closes the book with new heavens and a new earth that will endure forever. Today we also begin Jeremiah.

Jeremiah was a young man called to preach to a nation that would not listen for about forty years. He is called the weeping prophet.

God knew Jeremiah before he was born. Every life in the womb is known to God. That is one reason I believe life begins at conception.

Jeremiah's answer was the same excuse many of us use: "I do not know ***how*** to speak." God did not argue about Jeremiah's skills. He said, "I ***am*** with you." God's presence is bigger than our weakness.

God also showed Jeremiah an almond branch. The almond tree is the first to wake in spring, and God said He watches over His word to perform it.

In 1 Thessalonians 1 Paul praises a young church that turned "to God from the idols to serve a living and true God, and to await His Son from the heavens." They were waiting for "Jesus, who is delivering us from the wrath that is coming." That is the hope of the rapture.

Think about it: What excuse are you giving God for not doing what He asked?

Pray

LORD, You knew me before I was born. When I feel too weak or young or unready, remind me that You are with me.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 289

Broken Cisterns

Today's reading: Jeremiah 2-3; 1 Thessalonians 2

> *"For My people has done two evils: they have forsaken Me, a spring of living water, to hew out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which cannot hold the water.*
>
> Jeremiah 2:13 (SLB)

Jeremiah 2 and 3 are a courtroom scene. God reminds Israel how she followed Him in the wilderness like a young bride. Now she has run after other gods.

A cistern is a hole cut in rock to catch rain. A spring is water that flows on its own, fresh and clean. Israel traded the spring for a cracked hole in the ground.

We still do that. We chase money, approval, pleasure or success, hoping it will satisfy. But every one of them leaks. You keep pouring in, and you are always empty.

Jesus said He gives living water. He is the spring.

In Jeremiah 3 God pleads, "Return, O backsliding sons." He is still calling us home.

1 Thessalonians 2 shows Paul's heart for the church. He was gentle among them "as a nursing mother would cherish her own children." He did not come with flattery or greed. He shared not only the gospel, but his own life.

Think about it: What broken cistern have you been trying to drink from?

Pray

LORD, You are the spring of living water. Forgive me for digging broken cisterns. I come back to You to drink.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 290

Break Up the Hard Ground

Today's reading: Jeremiah 4-5; 1 Thessalonians 3; Proverbs 7

> *For thus says the LORD to the man of Judah and to Jerusalem: "Break up for yourselves unplowed ground, and do not sow among thorns.*
>
> Jeremiah 4:3 (SLB)

Jeremiah 4 and 5 describe a disaster coming from the north. God tells Jerusalem to search the streets for one honest person. They could not find one.

Unplowed ground is hard. Seed bounces off it. You have to break it up before anything will grow.

Our hearts get that way too. Years of ignoring God, or just going through the motions, can make the soil hard. The Word gets read, but nothing grows.

How do you break up hard ground? Honesty with God. Confession. Turning from the sin you have been holding onto. Then the seed can sink in.

In 1 Thessalonians 3 Paul prays, "May the Lord make you increase and abound in love toward one another and toward all." And he prays this would strengthen their hearts "blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." That is the second coming, when Jesus returns with His people.

Proverbs 7 warns about the woman who leads a young man astray. He follows her "like an ox ***that*** goes to the slaughter."

Think about it: Has your heart gotten hard? What needs to be broken up?

Pray

LORD, break up the hard ground in my heart. Show me where I have stopped listening. Let Your Word sink in and grow.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 291

Caught Up Together

Today's reading: Jeremiah 6-7; 1 Thessalonians 4

> *because the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout of command, with **the** voice of an archangel and with **the** trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are living, who remain, will be caught away together with them in **the** clouds to meet the Lord in **the** air; and so we will always be with **the** Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.*
>
> 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (SLB)

Jeremiah 6 and 7 show God's people ignoring every warning. God says, "Stand by the roads and look, and ask for the paths of ancient time, where this ***is***, the good way, and walk in it, and find rest for your soul." And they said, "We will not walk ***in it***." In Jeremiah 7 He stands Jeremiah at the temple gate to tell people that a building cannot save them if their hearts are far away.

1 Thessalonians 4 answers a question the church had. What about believers who die before Jesus comes back?

This is the rapture. The old Latin Bible translated "caught away" with the word that gives us "rapture." It means snatched up suddenly. Jesus comes in the air, the dead in Christ rise, and the living are caught up to meet Him.

I believe this happens before the tribulation. Paul says God did not appoint us for wrath, and the next event on the calendar for the church is not the antichrist. It is Jesus.

And notice why Paul wrote it: "Therefore encourage one another with these words." The rapture is meant to comfort us, not scare us. If you have lost a loved one in Christ, you will see them again.

Think about it: Who do you need to encourage with this hope today?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I am watching for You. Thank You that the dead in Christ will rise and we will always be with You. Help me comfort others with this hope.

Go deeper: the free 1 and 2 Thessalonians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 292

Rejoice, Pray, Give Thanks

Today's reading: Jeremiah 8-9; 1 Thessalonians 5

> *Rejoice always. Pray unceasingly. In everything give thanks; for this **is the** will of God in Christ Jesus toward you.*
>
> 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (SLB)

Jeremiah 8 and 9 are full of tears. "Is there no balm in Gilead?" Jeremiah wishes his head were a spring of water so he could weep day and night for his people. Then God says, "Let not a wise ***man*** boast in his wisdom, and let not the mighty ***man*** boast in his might; let not a rich ***man*** boast in his riches." Boast only in knowing Him.

1 Thessalonians 5 says the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. But Paul tells believers, "God did not appoint us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then he gives three short commands.

Rejoice always. Not just when it is easy.

Pray unceasingly. That does not mean you never stop to eat. It means you keep the line open all day. Talk to God at your desk, in the truck, at the sink.

In everything give thanks. Not for everything, but in everything. You may not be thankful for cancer, but you can be thankful in it, because God is still good and still with you.

If you have ever wondered what God wants for you, here is part of the answer, in plain words.

Think about it: Which of the three is hardest for you right now?

Pray

Father, help me rejoice always, pray without stopping, and give thanks in everything. This is Your will for me, and I want to do it.

Go deeper: the free 1 and 2 Thessalonians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 293

Not in Man to Direct His Steps

Today's reading: Jeremiah 10-11; 2 Thessalonians 1; Proverbs 8

> *I know, O LORD, that his way **is** not to mankind; **it is** not to a man who walks to direct his step.*
>
> Jeremiah 10:23 (SLB)

Jeremiah 10 mocks idols again. They are like scarecrows in a cucumber field. They cannot speak and have to be carried. "And the LORD ***is the*** true God."

In Jeremiah 11 the men of his own hometown plot to kill him. Jeremiah did not know it until God told him. He was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.

Then Jeremiah prays this.

We like to think we are in charge of our lives. We make plans, set goals and map out the next ten years. Planning is good. But none of us can see around the next corner. Only God can.

This verse is not a reason to stop planning. It is a reason to hold your plans loosely and ask God to direct your steps.

2 Thessalonians 1 says Jesus will be revealed "from heaven with ***the*** angels of His power, in flaming fire." That is His second coming in judgment, after the tribulation.

Proverbs 8 has wisdom calling out in the street: "I love those who love me, and those who seek me earnestly find me."

Think about it: Whose hands are your plans in right now?

Pray

LORD, I cannot direct my own steps. I give You my plans. Lead me where You want me to go.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 294

The One Who Restrains

Today's reading: Jeremiah 12-13; 2 Thessalonians 2

> *And now you know that which is restraining, for him to be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already working; only the one restraining now **will restrain** until he is out of the midst. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and will abolish by the appearing of His coming,*
>
> 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8 (SLB)

Jeremiah 12 asks the old question: "Why does the way of the wicked prosper?" God answers that Jeremiah has more to face before it gets easier. In Jeremiah 13 God has him bury a linen belt until it rots. That is what pride does to a people.

In 2 Thessalonians 2 the church had been shaken by a false teaching that the day of the Lord had already come. Paul says no. That day cannot come until the man of sin is revealed. And he cannot be revealed until something is taken out of the way.

Who is restraining evil right now? I believe it is the Holy Spirit, working through the church. When the church is caught up in the rapture, the restraint is removed, and the lawless one rises.

But look how short his story is. Jesus will "consume with the breath of His mouth" and destroy him at His coming. The antichrist gets a few years. Jesus gets forever.

Paul opens by talking about "our gathering together to Him." That is the rapture, and it comes first.

Think about it: Does the news make you anxious, or watchful?

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You that evil is restrained today and that its days are numbered. Keep me faithful and watching for You.

Go deeper: the free 1 and 2 Thessalonians study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 295

Your Words Were Found

Today's reading: Jeremiah 14-16; 2 Thessalonians 3

> *Your words were found, and I ate them; and Your word became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for Your name is called on me, O LORD God of armies.*
>
> Jeremiah 15:16 (SLB)

Jeremiah 14 through 16 are hard chapters. Drought, famine and the sword are coming. God even tells Jeremiah not to marry, as a sign of how bad things will be.

Jeremiah feels the weight. He wishes he had never been born. Then, in the middle of it, he says this.

Jeremiah did not just read God's words. He ate them. He took them in until they became part of him. And in the worst season of his life, God's Word was his joy.

That is why we read every day. Not to check a box, but to feed on the Word until it becomes the delight of our heart.

2 Thessalonians 3 says, "But the Lord is faithful, who will strengthen you and guard ***you*** from the evil." Paul also says anyone unwilling to work should not eat. Then he adds, "But you, brothers, do not grow weary doing good."

You have been reading for 295 days now. Do not grow weary. Keep going.

Think about it: Has God's Word become your joy, or just your duty?

Pray

LORD, Your words are my food. Make them the joy and delight of my heart, even in hard days. Help me not grow weary.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 296

A Tree by the Water

Today's reading: Jeremiah 17-18; 1 Timothy 1; Proverbs 9

> *Blessed **is** the man who trusts in the LORD, and the LORD is his trust. And he will be like a tree transplanted by water, and **that** sends out its roots by a stream; and it will not see when heat comes, and its leaves will be luxuriant; and in a year of drought it will not be anxious, and it will not cease from producing fruit.*
>
> Jeremiah 17:7-8 (SLB)

Jeremiah 17 contrasts two people. The one who trusts in man is like a bush in the desert. The one who trusts in the LORD is like a tree by the water.

A tree by a stream does not panic when the heat comes. Its roots go down to water no drought can touch. That is the person who trusts God.

The next verse is a warning: "The heart ***is*** deceitful more than everything, and it ***is*** incurable; who can know it?" Our hearts lie to us. That is why we need God's Word, not our feelings, to guide us.

In Jeremiah 18 God sends Jeremiah to the potter's house. The clay was ruined, so the potter made it into another vessel. God can still reshape a life that has been marred.

In 1 Timothy 1 Paul calls himself the foremost of sinners. "Faithful ***is*** the word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." If God could save Paul, He can save anyone.

Proverbs 9 says, "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD."

Think about it: Where are your roots? In what you can see, or in the LORD?

Pray

LORD, I trust You. Send my roots down deep so I do not fear the heat or the drought. Search my deceitful heart and make me true.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 297

One Mediator

Today's reading: Jeremiah 19-21; 1 Timothy 2

> *For **there is** one God, and one mediator of God and men, **the** man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself **as** a ransom for all, the testimony in **its** own times,*
>
> 1 Timothy 2:5-6 (SLB)

Jeremiah 19 through 21 get darker. Jeremiah smashes a clay jar as a picture of Jerusalem's coming ruin. Pashhur the priest beats him and puts him in the stocks. Jeremiah complains to God, but says His word is like a fire shut up in his bones. He cannot keep quiet.

1 Timothy 2 starts with prayer for everyone, including kings and those in authority. That includes leaders we did not vote for. Then Paul says this.

A mediator stands between two parties and brings them together. Between a holy God and sinful people, there is only one: Jesus.

Not a priest. Not a saint. Not Mary. Not your good works. Only the man Christ Jesus.

And He is the right mediator because He is both. He is God, so He can reach God. He became man, so He can reach us.

"Ransom" is the price paid to set a captive free. Jesus paid it with His own life, "for all." The door is open to anyone.

Think about it: Are you trusting anyone or anything other than Jesus to bring you to God?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are my only mediator. Thank You for giving Yourself as my ransom. I come to the Father through You alone.

Go deeper: the free Timothy and Titus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 298

The LORD Our Righteousness

Today's reading: Jeremiah 22-23; 1 Timothy 3; Proverbs 10

> *"Look, days are coming," declares the LORD, "and I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign **as** king, and He will act prudently, and He will do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell in security; and this **is** His name **by** which one will call Him: 'The LORD Our Righteousness.'*
>
> Jeremiah 23:5-6 (SLB)

Jeremiah 22 and 23 condemn the wicked kings and the lying prophets of Judah. The shepherds scattered the flock. Then God makes a promise.

Out of the cut-down family tree of David, God will raise a Branch. He will be a King who does justice. And His name is "The LORD Our Righteousness."

That is Jesus. And look at His name. He does not just give us righteousness. He is our righteousness. When God looks at a believer, He sees the righteousness of Christ.

I cannot make myself righteous. I have tried. But Jesus became my righteousness when I trusted Him.

In 1 Timothy 3 Paul lists what God wants in church leaders. Notice how much of it is about character and home life, not talent. "If anyone aspires to ***the*** office of overseer, he desires a good work."

Proverbs 10 says, "In a multitude of words transgression does not cease, and he who restrains his lips acts prudently." The more we talk, the more likely we are to sin.

Think about it: Are you standing before God in your own righteousness, or His?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are the righteous Branch, the LORD my Righteousness. I have none of my own. Thank You for clothing me with Yours.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 299

Be a Pattern

Today's reading: Jeremiah 24-25; 1 Timothy 4

> *Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern for the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*
>
> 1 Timothy 4:12 (SLB)

Jeremiah 24 and 25 show two baskets of figs, one good and one rotten. The good figs are the exiles, and God says, "I will give them a heart to know Me." Then Jeremiah gives a number: seventy years in Babylon. Daniel later read this and prayed.

In 1 Timothy 4 Paul writes to young Timothy, who was probably in his thirties and leading older men.

Age does not have to stop you. Example matters more than years. Timothy was to be a pattern in what he said, how he lived, how he loved, his faith and his purity.

Paul also writes, "Train yourself for godliness; for bodily training is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things." I believe in exercise. But you will not take your muscles to heaven. Godliness lasts.

Training takes time and repeated effort. Nobody gets in shape in a day. Godliness grows the same way, one day at a time, which is what you are doing with this book.

Think about it: Who is watching your life as a pattern?

Pray

Lord, train me in godliness. Make me a pattern for others in my words, my conduct, my love, my faith and my purity.

Go deeper: the free Timothy and Titus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 300

Provide for Your Own

Today's reading: Jeremiah 26-27; 1 Timothy 5

> *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for **those of his** household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*
>
> 1 Timothy 5:8 (SLB)

Jeremiah 26 and 27 put Jeremiah on trial for his life. The officials remember that the prophet Micah said the same thing a hundred years earlier and was not killed. So Jeremiah is spared. Then God tells him to wear an ox yoke as a sign that the nations must serve Babylon.

Day 300. Keep going.

1 Timothy 5 teaches how to treat people in the church. Older men as fathers. Younger men as brothers. Older women as mothers. Younger women as sisters, in all purity. Then it addresses widows and families.

Paul does not mince words. Taking care of your family is not optional for a believer. That includes your children, your spouse, and your aging parents.

This hits close to home for many of us. Caring for parents takes time, money and patience. It is part of following Christ. Jesus Himself, while dying on the cross, made sure His mother was cared for.

Paul also says elders who lead well are worthy of honor, and that we should not accept an accusation against an elder without two or three witnesses.

Think about it: Is there someone in your family you need to care for better?

Pray

Father, help me care for my family well. Give me patience and love for my parents, my spouse and my children. Let my home honor You.

Go deeper: the free Timothy and Titus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 301

Plans of Hope

Today's reading: Jeremiah 28-29; 1 Timothy 6

> *For I, I know the plans which I am planning concerning you,' declares the LORD, 'plans of welfare and not for calamity, to give you a latter end and a hope. And you will call on Me, and you will come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find **Me**, when you seek Me with all your heart.*
>
> Jeremiah 29:11-13 (SLB)

In Jeremiah 28 a false prophet named Hananiah breaks Jeremiah's wooden yoke and says Babylon will fall in two years. God says it will be iron instead, and Hananiah dies that same year.

Jeremiah 29 is a letter to the exiles in Babylon. Build houses. Plant gardens. Have families. "And seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf." Then comes a famous promise.

This verse is often pulled out of context, so let me put it back. It was written to people who would be in Babylon for seventy years. Most of them would die there. God's plans for hope were real, but they were long term.

So do not read this as a promise that life will be easy. Read it as a promise that God has not forgotten you, even in exile, and that His plans end in hope.

And the key is in the next verses: seek Him with all your heart, and you will find Him.

In 1 Timothy 6 Paul writes, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world." And "the love of money is a root of all the evils."

Think about it: Where do you feel like you are in exile right now?

Pray

LORD, You know the plans You have for me. Even when I am in a hard place, You have not forgotten me. I will seek You with all my heart.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 302

A New Covenant

Today's reading: Jeremiah 30-31; 2 Timothy 1; Proverbs 11

> *For this **is** the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put My law in their inward part, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be God to them, and they, they will be a people to Me. And they will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for all of them will know Me, from the least of them and to the greatest of them, declares the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will not remember again.*
>
> Jeremiah 31:33-34 (SLB)

Jeremiah 30 and 31 are called the Book of Comfort. After all the warnings, God promises to bring His people home. "***With*** an everlasting love I have loved you."

Then comes the New Covenant.

The old covenant was written on stone. The new covenant is written on the heart. God does not just tell us what is right. He changes us from the inside so we want to do it.

And the last line is the best: "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will not remember again." God does not forget the way we forget. He chooses not to hold it against us.

Jesus said at the Last Supper that the cup is the New Covenant in His blood. This promise to Israel is also how every believer is saved today.

In 2 Timothy 1 Paul tells Timothy, "For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of self-control." He also says, "I know whom I have believed."

Proverbs 11 says, "Pride comes, and shame comes; and with ***the*** modest ***is*** wisdom."

Think about it: Do you live like your sin is forgiven and forgotten?

Pray

Father, thank You for the New Covenant in Jesus' blood. Write Your law on my heart, and thank You for remembering my sin no more.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 303

Nothing Too Difficult

Today's reading: Jeremiah 32; 2 Timothy 2

> *And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, "Look, I **am** the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?*
>
> Jeremiah 32:26-27 (SLB)

Jeremiah 32 has a strange business deal. Babylon is at the gates. Jeremiah is in prison. And God tells him to buy a field from his cousin.

Who buys land in a war zone? Jeremiah did, because God said houses and fields would again be bought in this land. It was a down payment on God's promise.

Jeremiah prays, "Ah, Lord GOD! Look, You, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great strength and by Your outstretched arm; nothing is too difficult for You." God answers with His own question.

Some things in your life may look as hopeless as buying a field while the enemy is at the gate. But nothing is too difficult for God.

That does not mean He always does what we ask. It means our problem is never bigger than our God. We can obey Him even when it does not make sense, like Jeremiah did.

2 Timothy 2 gives Timothy pictures of the Christian life: a soldier, an athlete and a farmer. "You therefore suffer hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Then, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker not needing to be ashamed, cutting straight the word of truth."

Think about it: What feels too difficult in your life right now?

Pray

Lord GOD, You made the heavens and the earth. Nothing is too difficult for You. I trust You with what looks hopeless to me.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 304

Every Scripture God-Breathed

Today's reading: Jeremiah 33-35; 2 Timothy 3

> *But you, abide in the things which you learned and were assured of, knowing from whom you learned **them**, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which **is** in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture **is** God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which **is** in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.*
>
> 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (SLB)

Jeremiah 33 through 35 keep the promises coming. "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and inaccessible things which you have not known." Then God holds up the Rechabites, a family who obeyed their forefather's command not to drink wine for generations. If they could obey a man, why could Judah not obey God?

2 Timothy 3 describes the last days. People will be lovers of self, lovers of money, and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, "having a form of godliness, but having denied its power." That sounds like today.

So what does Paul tell Timothy to do? Stick with the Scriptures.

God-breathed. The Bible did not come from men's ideas. God breathed it out through them. That is why it has authority.

And it is useful. Teaching tells you what is right. Reproof tells you what is not. Correction shows you how to get back on track. Training keeps you there.

You have read most of the Bible by now. Keep going. It is equipping you for every good work.

Think about it: How has God's Word corrected or trained you this year?

Pray

Father, thank You for breathing out Your Word. Teach me, reprove me, correct me and train me by it, so I am equipped for every good work.

Go deeper: the free Timothy and Titus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

Days 305 to 334

DAY 305

I Have Kept the Faith

Today's reading: Jeremiah 36-37; 2 Timothy 4; Proverbs 12

> *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on **there** is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me in that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.*
>
> 2 Timothy 4:6-8 (SLB)

In Jeremiah 36 King Jehoiakim has the scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies read to him. Every few columns, he cuts it off with a knife and throws it into the fire. God simply has Jeremiah write it all again, with more added. You cannot burn up the Word of God.

In Jeremiah 37 Jeremiah is beaten and thrown into a dungeon, but the king still sends for him in secret to ask, "Is there a word from the LORD?"

2 Timothy 4 is Paul's last letter. He knows he is about to be executed. He tells Timothy, "preach the word; be ready in season, out of season." Then he looks back on his life.

Fought. Finished. Kept. Paul did not say he won every battle or never stumbled. He said he stayed in the fight, he finished the race, and he kept the faith to the end.

And the crown is not just for Paul. It is for "all who have loved His appearing." That is everyone who longs for Jesus to come back.

That is how I want to finish too. Not perfect, but faithful.

Proverbs 12 says, "Lips of falsehood ***are*** an abomination of the LORD, and doers of faithfulness ***are*** His delight."

Think about it: If your life ended today, could you say you kept the faith?

Pray

Lord Jesus, help me fight the good fight, finish the race and keep the faith. I love Your appearing. Keep me faithful to the end.

Go deeper: the free Timothy and Titus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 306

Pulled Out of the Mud

Today's reading: Jeremiah 38-39; Titus 1

> *And they took Jeremiah, and they threw him into the cistern of Malchiah the son of the king, which **was** in the court of the guard; and they let down Jeremiah with ropes. And in the cistern **there was** no water, but mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.*
>
> Jeremiah 38:6 (SLB)

Jeremiah 38 might be the lowest point of Jeremiah's life.

The officials said Jeremiah was weakening the soldiers by telling them Babylon would win. So they dropped him into a cistern with no water, only mud, and left him to die.

Then a man named Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian servant in the palace, went to the king and pleaded for him. He took thirty men, old rags and ropes, and pulled Jeremiah out. He even had Jeremiah put the rags under his arms so the ropes would not cut him.

In Jeremiah 39 Jerusalem falls, just as Jeremiah said. But God sends word to Ebed-melech: "For I will certainly rescue you, and by the sword you will not fall; and your life will be to you for plunder, for you have trusted in Me."

Sometimes you are Jeremiah, stuck in the mud. Sometimes you are Ebed-melech, the one who can pull someone else out. Both matter to God.

Titus 1 begins with "hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before eternal times." God cannot lie. What He promised, He will do.

Think about it: Who do you know who is stuck in the mud right now? How can you help?

Pray

LORD, when I am in the pit, send help and lift me out. And when someone else is sinking, make me the one who brings the ropes.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 307

The Blessed Hope

Today's reading: Jeremiah 40-42; Titus 2; Proverbs 13

> *For the grace of God has appeared, which brings salvation to all men, training us that, having denied ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live sensibly and righteously and godly in the present age, awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify for Himself a special people, zealous for good works.*
>
> Titus 2:11-14 (SLB)

Jeremiah 40 through 42 tell what happened after Jerusalem fell. The governor Gedaliah is murdered. The people left behind ask Jeremiah to pray and promise, "Whether good or whether bad, to the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we are sending you, we will listen." God tells them to stay in the land. They had already decided to run to Egypt.

It is easy to ask God for direction when we have already made up our minds.

Titus 2 shows what grace does.

Grace does more than save us. It trains us. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and yes to a life that honors God, right now, in this present age.

And grace points us forward to "the blessed hope." I believe that hope is the rapture, when Jesus comes for His church. It is called blessed because it is not something to dread. It is the best day we will ever see.

Notice too that Paul calls Jesus "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." That is a plain statement that Jesus is God.

Proverbs 13 says, "He who walks with wise ***ones*** will become wise, and he who associates with fools will be harmed."

Think about it: Are you looking for the blessed hope, or have you stopped watching?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are my great God and Savior. Let Your grace train me to live for You today, while I wait for the blessed hope of Your coming.

Go deeper: the free Timothy and Titus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 308

According to His Mercy

Today's reading: Jeremiah 43-45; Titus 3

> *But when the kindness and the love for mankind of God our Savior appeared, not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy He saved us, through **the** washing of regeneration and renewal of **the** Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by the grace of that One, we might become heirs according to **the** hope of eternal life.*
>
> Titus 3:4-7 (SLB)

In Jeremiah 43 and 44 the people go down to Egypt anyway, and they drag Jeremiah with them. There they go right back to burning incense to the queen of heaven. Jeremiah 45 is a short word to Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, who was worn out. God tells him, "You are seeking great things for yourself; do not seek ***them***." But God promises to keep him alive.

Titus 3 tells us how we were saved.

Not by works. Paul says it plainly again. We were saved "according to His mercy."

Look at what God did. He washed us. He made us new by the Holy Spirit. He poured out the Spirit richly. He justified us by grace. He made us heirs. That is a lot of verbs, and God is the One doing all of them.

Our part was to receive it. We did not earn any of it.

The chapter goes on to say that those who have believed God should "take care to devote themselves to good works." Again, works come after grace, never before it. A changed life is the result of being saved, not the cause.

Think about it: Have you been trying to add your works to God's mercy?

Pray

God my Savior, thank You that You saved me according to Your mercy, not my works. Thank You for washing me and pouring out Your Spirit on me.

Go deeper: the free Timothy and Titus study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 309

Charge It to Me

Today's reading: Jeremiah 46-48; Philemon

> *For perhaps for this reason he was separated **from you** for an hour, so that you might have him back eternally, no longer as a slave, but above a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in **the** flesh and in **the** Lord. If then you consider me a partner, receive him as me. But if he has wronged you **in** anything, or owes **you**, charge this to me.*
>
> Philemon 1:15-18 (SLB)

Jeremiah 46 through 48 begin the prophecies against the nations: Egypt, the Philistines and Moab. God rules over every nation, not just Israel.

Today we read all of Philemon. It is a short letter about a runaway slave named Onesimus. He had wronged his master Philemon and run away. Then somehow he met Paul in Rome and came to Christ.

Now Paul sends him back, with this letter.

"Charge this to me." That is the gospel in four words. We wronged God and ran from Him. Jesus stepped in and said, in effect, charge it to Me. And He paid the whole debt on the cross.

Paul did not ask Philemon to pretend nothing happened. He asked him to receive Onesimus as a brother, and he offered to pay what was owed.

The name Onesimus means "useful." Paul even makes a joke about it. Once he was useless to Philemon, but now he is useful. Christ can make anyone useful.

I needed a lot of grace myself. I made choices that hurt my marriage and the people closest to me, and I fought alcohol for years. So when someone who has failed repents and wants to walk right again, I try to remember how much grace I was given. Holding a man's past over his head blocks what God is doing. Grace means clearing the ledger, just as Christ cleared ours.

Think about it: Is there someone you need to receive back as a brother or sister?

Pray

Lord Jesus, I owed a debt I could not pay, and You paid it for me. Thank You. Help me forgive and receive others the way You received me.

Go deeper: the free Colossians and Philemon study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 310

God Has Spoken in His Son

Today's reading: Jeremiah 49; Hebrews 1

> *In many portions and in many ways God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us in a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the ages; who, being **the** radiance of the glory and **the** exact representation of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, having made purification of our sins through Himself, sat down at **the** right hand of the Majesty on high,*
>
> Hebrews 1:1-3 (SLB)

Jeremiah 49 speaks against Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor and Elam. Even in judgment, God says something kind: "Leave your fatherless; I, I will keep ***them*** alive; and your widows, let them trust in Me."

Today we begin Hebrews. It was written to Jewish believers who were tempted to go back to the old system of temple and sacrifice. The writer's message is simple: Jesus is better.

God spoke through prophets in bits and pieces over many centuries. Now He has given His final Word, and that Word is a Person: His Son.

Look at what this says about Jesus. He made the universe. He is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of His nature. He holds everything together by His word. He made purification for our sins. Then He sat down.

Why sat down? Because the work was finished. The priests in the temple never sat. Their work was never done. Jesus finished it once for all.

The rest of the chapter shows Jesus is better than the angels. God says to the Son, "Your throne, O God, ***is*** to the age of the age."

Think about it: Are you listening to what God has said in His Son?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are the radiance of God's glory and the exact image of His nature. You made purification for my sins and sat down. Thank You.

Go deeper: the free Hebrews study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 311

Free from the Fear of Death

Today's reading: Jeremiah 50; Hebrews 2; Proverbs 14

> *Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He Himself also likewise partook of the same, so that through death He might render powerless the one who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and might set free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery throughout all **their** life.*
>
> Hebrews 2:14-15 (SLB)

Jeremiah 50 announces the fall of Babylon, the empire that had crushed Judah. "Their Redeemer ***is*** strong; the LORD of armies ***is*** His name; He will surely plead their case."

Hebrews 2 warns us not to drift away from what we have heard. Then it explains why Jesus became a man.

Jesus took on flesh and blood so He could die. Through His death He broke the devil's power and set us free from the fear of death.

Many people live their whole lives afraid of dying. They avoid thinking about it. But a believer does not have to live like that. Death is not the end. It is the doorway to being with Christ.

Then comes this: "For in that He Himself has suffered, having been tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted." Jesus knows what it is like. He is not a distant God watching from far away.

Proverbs 14 warns, "There is a way right before a man, and its end ***is*** ways of death." What seems right to us is not always right.

Think about it: Does the fear of death still have a hold on you?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You became flesh and blood and died to set me free from the fear of death. Help me when I am tempted, because You know what it is like.

Go deeper: the free Hebrews study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 312

Today

Today's reading: Jeremiah 51; Hebrews 3

> *Take heed, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from **the** living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "Today," so that no one of you may be hardened by **the** deceitfulness of sin.*
>
> Hebrews 3:12-13 (SLB)

Jeremiah 51 continues the judgment on Babylon. "***He is*** the Maker of the earth by His power, the Establisher of the world by His wisdom." At the end Jeremiah has the scroll tied to a stone and thrown into the Euphrates. Babylon would sink and not rise again.

Hebrews 3 says Jesus is better than Moses. Moses was a faithful servant in God's house. Jesus is the Son over it. Then the writer remembers Israel in the wilderness, who heard God's voice and hardened their hearts.

Sin is deceitful. It does not show up looking like sin. It promises fun, freedom or comfort. And little by little, a heart gets hard.

The cure? "Exhort one another every day." We need other believers. We need people who will look us in the eye and ask how we are doing with God.

And notice the word "Today." The writer says it again and again in this chapter. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart. Tomorrow is not promised.

Think about it: Who in your life has permission to ask you hard questions?

Pray

Lord, keep my heart from getting hard. Give me brothers and sisters who will encourage me every day, and help me be that for them.

Go deeper: the free Hebrews study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 313

The Throne of Grace

Today's reading: Jeremiah 52; Lamentations 1; Hebrews 4

> *Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the confession. For we do not have a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but **one** who has been tempted in all things according to likeness, without sin. Let us therefore come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.*
>
> Hebrews 4:14-16 (SLB)

Jeremiah 52 tells the fall of Jerusalem one more time. Then we begin Lamentations, five sad poems over the ruined city. "Look and see if there is pain like my pain."

Hebrews 4 talks about God's rest. Then it says, "For the word of God ***is*** living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword." The Bible reads us while we read it.

Then come these verses.

A high priest stood between God and the people. Jesus is our great High Priest. And He is not cold or far away. He knows our weaknesses, because He was tempted in every way we are. The difference is He never sinned.

So come boldly. Not because you are good, but because He is. The throne you approach is not a throne of judgment for a believer. It is a throne of grace.

And notice what you find there: mercy for what you did, and grace for what you need. "Timely help" means help right when you need it.

Think about it: What do you need to bring boldly to the throne of grace today?

Pray

Lord Jesus, my great High Priest, You understand my weakness. I come boldly to Your throne of grace. I need mercy and help today.

Go deeper: the free Hebrews study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 314

A Soft Answer

Today's reading: Lamentations 2; Hebrews 5; Proverbs 15

> *A soft answer turns away rage, and a word of pain raises anger.*
>
> Proverbs 15:1 (SLB)

Lamentations 2 describes the LORD's anger poured out on Jerusalem. The walls are down, the children faint in the streets, and the prophets saw false visions.

Hebrews 5 says Jesus was appointed High Priest by God. "Although being a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." Then the writer scolds his readers. They should be teachers by now, but they still need milk instead of solid food.

Proverbs 15 opens with a verse I wish I had learned sooner.

You can feel this one. Someone snaps at you. You snap back, and it gets worse. Or you answer gently, and the heat drops.

A soft answer is not weak. It takes more strength to stay calm than to blow up. Anyone can raise their voice. It takes self-control to lower it.

I have been in plenty of tense meetings. The person who keeps their cool usually ends up leading the room.

This works at home, at work, on the phone with customer service, and especially online.

Think about it: Where do you need to give a soft answer this week?

Pray

Lord, give me a gentle answer when someone is angry with me. Help me cool things down instead of heating them up.

Go deeper: the free Proverbs study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 315

New Every Morning

Today's reading: Lamentations 3-4; Hebrews 6

> *This I bring back to my heart; therefore I will wait. The steadfast loves of the LORD, for we are not finished, for His compassions do not come to an end.* ***They are*** *new in the mornings; great* ***is*** *Your faithfulness. "The LORD* ***is*** *my portion," says my soul; "therefore I will wait for Him." Good* ***is*** *the LORD to those who wait for Him, to the soul* ***that*** *seeks Him. Good* ***it is*** *that* ***one*** *should wait, and silently, for the salvation of the LORD.*
>
> Lamentations 3:21-26 (SLB)

Lamentations 3 starts with some of the darkest words in the Bible. Jeremiah says God has walled him in, made his chains heavy and shut out his prayer. He feels like a target for God's arrows.

Then, in the middle of the book, in the middle of the ruins, he remembers something.

"Steadfast loves" is plural. God's love is not just one big thing. It is many acts of kindness, fresh every day.

Every morning you wake up to a new supply of God's mercy. Yesterday's failures do not use up today's mercy. It does not run out.

Notice that Jeremiah had to bring it back to his heart. The feelings did not change first. He chose to remember the truth, and then hope followed.

Lamentations 4 goes back to grief. Hope does not erase sorrow. It holds us up inside it.

Hebrews 6 calls our hope in Christ "an anchor of the soul, both sure and firm." An anchor does not stop the storm. It keeps you from drifting.

Think about it: What truth about God do you need to bring back to your heart today?

Pray

LORD, Your steadfast love never ends, and Your mercies are new this morning. Great is Your faithfulness. You are my portion, and I will wait for You.

Go deeper: the free Jeremiah and Lamentations study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 316

Able to Save Completely

Today's reading: Lamentations 5; Ezekiel 1; Hebrews 7

> *Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, always living to intercede for them.*
>
> Hebrews 7:25 (SLB)

Lamentations 5 ends with a prayer: "Cause us to return, O LORD, to Yourself, and let us return; renew our days as of old."

Then we begin Ezekiel. He was a priest carried off to Babylon. By the river Chebar, the heavens opened and he saw the glory of God: living creatures, wheels full of eyes, and a throne with someone like a man on it. "That ***was*** the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And I saw ***it***, and I fell on my face."

Hebrews 7 talks about Melchizedek, a king and priest who met Abraham. Jesus is a priest like him, forever.

"To the uttermost" means completely, all the way, forever. Jesus does not save you partway and leave the rest to you.

And He is "always living to intercede." Right now, Jesus is praying for you. When you fall, He is not giving up on you. He is speaking up for you before the Father.

Human priests died and had to be replaced. Jesus lives forever, so His priesthood never ends.

Think about it: How does it help to know Jesus is praying for you right now?

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You that You save me completely and that You are praying for me right now. I draw near to God through You.

Go deeper: the free Hebrews study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 317

The Watchman

Today's reading: Ezekiel 2-4; Hebrews 8

> *"Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; and you shall hear a word from My mouth, and you shall warn them from Me.*
>
> Ezekiel 3:17 (SLB)

Ezekiel 2 through 4 tell of Ezekiel's call. God tells him, "You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refrain." He eats a scroll that tastes like honey. Then God gives him a job.

A watchman stood on the city wall and watched for danger. If he saw an enemy and blew the trumpet, he did his job, even if no one listened. If he stayed quiet, the blood was on his hands.

Every believer is a watchman in some way. We know the danger of sin and the way of rescue. We are not responsible for how people respond. We are responsible to speak.

In Ezekiel 4 God has Ezekiel act out the siege of Jerusalem, lying on his side for over a year. God's messengers sometimes had strange jobs.

Hebrews 8 says Jesus brings a better covenant, the New Covenant from Jeremiah 31. "Because I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will certainly not remember any more."

Think about it: Who has God put in your life that needs to hear the warning and the good news?

Pray

LORD, make me a faithful watchman. Give me courage to speak Your truth with love, and leave the results to You.

Go deeper: the free Ezekiel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 318

He Will Appear a Second Time

Today's reading: Ezekiel 5-7; Hebrews 9; Proverbs 16

> *And inasmuch as it is appointed to men to die once, and after this judgment, so the Christ also, having been offered once to bear **the** sins of many, will appear a second time, apart from sin, to those who eagerly await Him for salvation.*
>
> Hebrews 9:27-28 (SLB)

Ezekiel 5 through 7 announce the end for Jerusalem. Ezekiel shaves his head and divides the hair into three parts, a picture of what was coming to the people. "The end has come."

Hebrews 9 compares the earthly tabernacle with the true one in heaven. The high priest went into the Most Holy Place once a year with blood. "Apart from shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Jesus entered heaven itself with His own blood, once for all.

Then the chapter closes with this.

Everyone dies once. Then comes judgment. There is no second chance after death, and there is no reincarnation.

But Jesus died once too, to bear our sins. And He will appear a second time, not to deal with sin again, but to bring salvation to those waiting for Him.

I believe that He first comes in the air for His church, and then after the tribulation He returns to the earth to reign. Either way, we are told to eagerly wait.

Proverbs 16 says, "The heart of a man plans his way, and the LORD directs his step." And "Before breaking ***is*** pride."

Think about it: Are you eagerly waiting for Jesus to appear?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You bore my sins once and for all. I am eagerly waiting for You to appear. Find me ready.

Go deeper: the free Hebrews study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 319

Do Not Give Up Meeting Together

Today's reading: Ezekiel 8-10; Hebrews 10

> *Let us hold fast the confession of **our** hope without wavering, for He who promised **is** faithful; and let us consider one another for stirring up of love and of good works, not forsaking the assembling together of ourselves, as **is the** custom of some, but encouraging **one another**, and so much the more as you see the day drawing near.*
>
> Hebrews 10:23-25 (SLB)

Ezekiel 8 through 10 take Ezekiel in a vision to the temple in Jerusalem. He sees idols in secret rooms, women weeping for a false god, and men with their backs to the temple worshiping the sun. They were saying, "The LORD does not see us." Then the glory of the LORD lifts and leaves the temple.

Hebrews 10 says Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins forever and sat down. So we can draw near to God with a true heart.

Then three "let us" statements. Let us hold fast. Let us consider one another. Let us keep meeting.

Some had stopped coming to church. The writer says that is a mistake. We need each other. Coals that stay together keep burning. One pulled out of the fire goes cold.

And look at why: "as you see the day drawing near." The closer we get to the return of Christ, the more we need to be together, not less.

Church is not a building or a show. It is a family. Find one that teaches the Bible and get involved.

Think about it: Have you drifted from meeting with other believers?

Pray

Father, thank You for my church family. Help me hold fast, stir others up to love and good works, and never give up meeting together.

Go deeper: the free Hebrews study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 320

Without Faith

Today's reading: Ezekiel 11-12; Hebrews 11

> *And without faith **it is** impossible to please **Him**; for the one who draws near to God must believe that He is, and **that** He becomes a rewarder to those who earnestly seek Him.*
>
> Hebrews 11:6 (SLB)

Ezekiel 11 and 12 bring a promise in the middle of judgment: "I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh." Then Ezekiel packs his bags and digs through a wall, acting out the exile.

Hebrews 11 is the hall of faith. It begins, "Now faith is ***the*** assurance of ***things*** hoped for, ***the*** conviction of things not seen." Then it walks through Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Rahab and many more.

Faith is not a feeling. It is trust. Believing God is, and believing He rewards those who seek Him.

Look at the list in this chapter. These were not perfect people. Abraham lied. Moses killed a man. Rahab was a prostitute. Gideon was afraid. What they had in common was not perfection. It was faith.

And some of them never saw the promise come true in their lifetime. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises." They saw it from far away and welcomed it.

Faith keeps going when you cannot see the end.

Think about it: What would you do if you really believed God rewards those who seek Him?

Pray

Father, I believe You are, and that You reward those who earnestly seek You. Grow my faith, even when I cannot see the end.

Go deeper: the free Hebrews study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 321

Run the Race

Today's reading: Ezekiel 13-15; Hebrews 12; Proverbs 17

> *Therefore we also, having so great a cloud of witnesses encompassing us, having laid aside every weight and the sin that easily entangles, let us run with endurance the race lying before us, looking to the founder and perfecter of the faith, Jesus, who for the joy lying before Him endured* ***the*** *cross, having despised* ***the*** *shame, and sat down at* ***the*** *right hand of the throne of God.*
>
> Hebrews 12:1-2 (SLB)

Ezekiel 13 through 15 warn against false prophets who cry "Peace" when there is no peace. They whitewash a wall that is about to fall. Ezekiel 14 names Noah, Daniel and Job as three righteous men.

Hebrews 12 picks up right after the hall of faith.

The cloud of witnesses are the people of faith from chapter 11. Their lives testify that it is worth it to keep going.

Lay aside every weight. Some things are not sin, but they still slow you down. A runner does not carry a backpack in a race.

And keep your eyes on Jesus. He is the founder and perfecter of our faith. He started it, and He will finish it. He endured the cross because of the joy on the other side.

Then the writer talks about discipline. "Now all discipline for the present does not seem to be of joy, but of grief; but afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness." God disciplines us because we are His children.

Proverbs 17 says, "At every time the friend loves, and a brother is born for adversity."

Think about it: What weight do you need to lay aside?

Pray

Lord Jesus, help me lay aside every weight and sin that slows me down. I fix my eyes on You. Help me run with endurance.

Go deeper: the free Hebrews study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 322

I Will Never Forsake You

Today's reading: Ezekiel 16; Hebrews 13

> ***Let your*** *way of life* ***be*** *without love of money, being content with the things present; for He Himself has said, "I will certainly not leave you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we, being confident, say, "****The*** *Lord* ***is*** *my helper, and I will not be afraid; what will man do to me?"*
>
> Hebrews 13:5-6 (SLB)

Ezekiel 16 is a hard chapter. God describes Jerusalem as an abandoned baby He found "kicking about in your blood." He said, "Live!" He raised her, married her and made her beautiful. And she ran after other lovers. But the chapter ends with God remembering His covenant and making atonement.

That is our story too. We were found helpless, loved, and given everything, and still we wandered. Yet God remains faithful.

Hebrews 13 ends the letter with practical commands. Love the brothers. Show hospitality. Remember prisoners. Honor marriage. Then this.

God's promise to never leave you is the reason you can be content. You do not need more money to be secure. You have God.

And "Jesus Christ ***is*** the same yesterday and today and forever." The Jesus who healed the sick and forgave sinners is the same Jesus today.

Think about it: What are you afraid of losing? What does this promise say to that fear?

Pray

Lord, You will never leave me or forsake me. You are my helper, so I will not be afraid. Teach me to be content with what You have given me.

Go deeper: the free Hebrews study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 323

Consider It All Joy

Today's reading: Ezekiel 17-18; James 1; Proverbs 18

> *Consider **it** all joy, my brothers, whenever you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let the endurance have a perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. And if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask from God, who gives to all generously and does not reproach, and it will be given to him.*
>
> James 1:2-5 (SLB)

Ezekiel 17 and 18 contain a parable of two eagles and a vine, and then a chapter on personal responsibility. Each person answers for his own sin. And God asks, "Do I indeed take pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD? ***Is it*** not in his turning back from his ways, that he may live?"

Today we start James. James was the half-brother of Jesus. He did not believe until after the resurrection. Then he became a leader of the church in Jerusalem.

James opens with a hard word.

Joy in trials? James does not say the trial itself is joy. He says to consider it joy because of what it produces. Trials test our faith like fire tests metal. And endurance grows.

And if you do not know what to do in the trial, ask God for wisdom. He gives generously and does not scold you for asking.

James also says, "But be doers of ***the*** word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." Reading this book every day is good. Doing what it says is the point.

Proverbs 18 says, "A tower of strength ***is*** the name of the LORD."

Think about it: What trial are you in right now? What might God be growing in you through it?

Pray

Father, help me count it joy when trials come, knowing You are growing endurance in me. Give me wisdom, and help me do what Your Word says.

Go deeper: the free James study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 324

Faith That Works

Today's reading: Ezekiel 19-20; James 2

> *So also the faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*
>
> James 2:17-18 (SLB)

Ezekiel 19 and 20 are a lament for Israel's princes and a review of Israel's history of rebellion. Over and over God says He acted "for the sake of My name."

James 2 begins by warning against favoritism. If a rich man and a poor man walk into church, do not give the rich man the best seat.

Then James says something that seems to clash with Paul.

Paul says we are saved by faith, not works. James says faith without works is dead. Do they disagree? No. Paul is talking about how we are saved. James is talking about how you can tell.

Saving faith always shows up in a changed life. If someone says they have faith but nothing about their life is different, James asks whether that faith is real.

Think of it like a tree. The root is faith. The fruit is works. You are not saved by fruit, but a living tree will produce it.

James gives Abraham and Rahab as examples. They believed God, and they acted on it.

Think about it: What does your life show about your faith?

Pray

Lord, I do not want a dead faith. Let my faith show in how I live, how I treat people and how I serve You.

Go deeper: the free James study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 325

Taming the Tongue

Today's reading: Ezekiel 21; James 3

> *But no one of men is able to tame the tongue; **it is** an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the God and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made according to **the** likeness of God. Out of the same mouth come forth blessing and cursing. These things ought not, my brothers, to be so.*
>
> James 3:8-10 (SLB)

Ezekiel 21 is the song of the sword. Babylon's king stands at a fork in the road, using omens to decide where to attack, and God sends him to Jerusalem. The crown will be removed "until he comes to whom the judgment belongs." That points to the Messiah.

James 3 talks about the tongue. He says it is small like a horse's bit or a ship's rudder, but it steers the whole body. "Look, how great a forest a small fire kindles!"

Then he says this.

James is blunt. No man can tame the tongue. But God can. That is why we need His Spirit in control of our mouths.

Notice the problem James points to. We praise God on Sunday, then curse people made in His image on Monday. "These things ought not, my brothers, to be so."

One unkind word can do damage that takes years to repair. One kind word can lift someone for a lifetime.

The chapter ends with two kinds of wisdom. The wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle and full of mercy.

Think about it: What would change if God had control of your tongue this week?

Pray

Lord, I cannot tame my tongue, but You can. Set a guard over my mouth. Let me use my words to bless, not to curse.

Go deeper: the free James study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 326

Draw Near to God

Today's reading: Ezekiel 22-23; James 4; Proverbs 19

> *Be subject therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse **your** hands, **you** sinners, and purify **your** hearts, **you** double-minded.*
>
> James 4:7-8 (SLB)

Ezekiel 22 and 23 list Jerusalem's sins. Then God says, "And I sought from among them a man building a wall and standing in the breach before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; and I did not find ***one***." God was looking for someone to pray and stand in the gap.

James 4 asks where fights come from. From our own desires. "You do not have because you do not ask."

Then James gives a simple plan.

Submit to God first. Then resist the devil. The order matters. You cannot resist the devil in your own strength.

And here is the promise: draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. God is not hiding. He is waiting for us to come.

James also warns about making plans without God. "For what ***is*** your life? For it is a vapor that appears for a little ***while*** and then vanishes." Plan, but say, "If the Lord wills."

Proverbs 19 agrees: "Many ***are*** the plans in the heart of a man, and the counsel of the LORD, it will stand."

Think about it: What step can you take today to draw near to God?

Pray

Father, I submit to You. Help me resist the devil. I draw near to You now, and I thank You for drawing near to me.

Go deeper: the free James study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 327

The Prayer of a Righteous Man

Today's reading: Ezekiel 24; James 5

> *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous **man**, being at work, prevails much.*
>
> James 5:16 (SLB)

Ezekiel 24 is one of the saddest chapters in the Bible. God tells Ezekiel, "I ***am*** taking from you the desire of your eyes with a stroke." That evening his wife died. And God told him not to mourn openly, as a sign to the people. Ezekiel obeyed.

I cannot imagine it. But it shows the cost some of God's servants have paid.

James 5 warns rich people who cheat their workers. Then it calls believers to be patient "until the coming of the Lord." Like a farmer waiting for rain, we wait for Jesus. "The coming of the Lord has drawn near."

Then James talks about prayer.

Confession and prayer go together. When we confess our sins to one another, the walls come down, and healing can start.

"Righteous" here does not mean perfect. James gives the example of Elijah, "a man of like nature to us." He prayed, and it did not rain for three and a half years. He prayed again, and it rained. Ordinary people can pray powerful prayers.

Think about it: Who do you need to pray for, and who could you ask to pray for you?

Pray

Father, I confess my sins to You. Give me friends I can confess to and pray with. Make my prayers powerful and effective.

Go deeper: the free James study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 328

A Living Hope

Today's reading: Ezekiel 25-27; 1 Peter 1

> *Blessed **be** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy begot us again to a living hope through **the** resurrection of Jesus Christ from **the** dead, to an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, reserved in **the** heavens for you, who are being guarded by **the** power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in **the** last time.*
>
> 1 Peter 1:3-5 (SLB)

Ezekiel 25 through 27 speak against the nations around Israel, and especially Tyre, the great trading city on the coast. Ezekiel says Tyre will be scraped bare like a rock and become a place to spread fishing nets. That is what happened.

Today we start 1 Peter. Peter wrote to believers scattered and suffering for their faith.

A living hope. Not a wish. Not a maybe. A hope that is alive because Jesus is alive.

And look at the inheritance waiting for you. It cannot perish. It cannot be spoiled. It cannot fade. Everything on earth wears out, but not this.

And while the inheritance is being kept for you, you are being kept for it, "guarded by ***the*** power of God through faith."

Peter also reminds us that we were redeemed "with ***the*** precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." And he quotes Isaiah: "All flesh ***is*** like grass... but the declaration of ***the*** Lord abides forever."

Think about it: How does a living hope change the way you face hard days?

Pray

Father, thank You for a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. Thank You for an inheritance that will never fade, and for keeping me by Your power.

Go deeper: the free 1 and 2 Peter study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 329

A Chosen People

Today's reading: Ezekiel 28-29; 1 Peter 2; Proverbs 20

> *But you **are** a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for **His** possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once **were** not a people, but now **are the** people of God; who had not received mercy, but now have received mercy.*
>
> 1 Peter 2:9-10 (SLB)

Ezekiel 28 speaks to the ruler of Tyre, who said, "I ***am*** a god." Then the chapter turns to the king of Tyre, and the words seem to go beyond any man, describing one who was in Eden, the anointed cherub, perfect until wickedness was found in him. Many believe this describes Satan, the power behind the throne.

Ezekiel 29 speaks against Egypt.

1 Peter 2 calls Jesus the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God. And it tells us who we are.

You may feel like a nobody. But God says you are chosen, royal, holy and His own.

Once you were not a people. Now you are. Once you had not received mercy. Now you have. That is what grace does.

And why did God make us His people? To proclaim His excellencies. We are rescued to tell others about the One who rescued us.

Peter also writes that Jesus "Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree... by whose wound you were healed."

Proverbs 20 asks, "Who will say, 'I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin'?" No one. That is why we need Jesus.

Think about it: Do you see yourself the way God describes you here?

Pray

Father, thank You that I am chosen, royal, holy and Yours. You called me out of darkness into Your marvelous light. Help me tell others.

Go deeper: the free 1 and 2 Peter study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 330

Ready to Give an Answer

Today's reading: Ezekiel 30-31; 1 Peter 3

> *but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **be** ready always for a defense to everyone who asks you an account concerning the hope in you, with gentleness and fear,*
>
> 1 Peter 3:15 (SLB)

Ezekiel 30 and 31 continue the judgment on Egypt. Egypt is pictured as a great cedar tree, taller than all the others, that is cut down because of its pride.

1 Peter 3 speaks to wives and husbands, then to everyone. Do not repay evil for evil. Bless instead. Then Peter says this.

"Defense" is the word apologia, where we get "apologetics." It does not mean apologizing. It means giving reasons.

People will ask why you have hope. You do not need a seminary degree to answer. You need to know what you believe and why, and to be able to say it simply.

And notice how: "with gentleness and fear." Not arguing to win. Not making people feel stupid. Gentle and respectful.

Peter also gives us one of the clearest statements of the gospel: "Christ also suffered once for sins, ***the*** righteous for ***the*** unrighteous, so that He might bring us to God."

If someone asked you today why you believe, that verse is a good place to start.

Think about it: Could you explain your hope in Christ in two minutes?

Pray

Lord, make me ready to give an answer for the hope I have. Give me the words, and help me speak with gentleness and respect.

Go deeper: the free 1 and 2 Peter study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 331

Why Will You Die?

Today's reading: Ezekiel 32-33; 1 Peter 4

> *Say to them, '**As** I live, declares the Lord GOD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked **man**, but in a wicked **man** turning back from his way, and **that** he live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! And why will you die, O house of Israel?'*
>
> Ezekiel 33:11 (SLB)

Ezekiel 32 is a funeral song for Pharaoh. Then Ezekiel 33 repeats Ezekiel's call as a watchman. And news arrives: Jerusalem has fallen.

In that moment, God speaks His heart.

God does not enjoy judgment. He takes no pleasure when the wicked die. What He wants is for people to turn and live.

"Why will you die?" That is not the voice of an angry judge looking for a reason to punish. It is a Father pleading with His children.

Ezekiel 33 also says people loved to hear Ezekiel preach. He was like a lovely song to them. But they did not do what he said. That warning still fits.

1 Peter 4 says, "And above all things, having fervent love among yourselves, because love will cover a multitude of sins." And it tells us not to be surprised by fiery trials: "Beloved, do not think it strange at the burning among you." When we suffer for Christ, we share in His sufferings, and one day we will rejoice when His glory is revealed.

Think about it: Is there someone you know who needs to hear God pleading with them to turn and live?

Pray

Lord GOD, You take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Thank You for calling me to turn and live. Use me to call others too.

Go deeper: the free Ezekiel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 332

Cast Your Anxiety on Him

Today's reading: Ezekiel 34-35; 1 Peter 5

> *Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you in **due** time, having cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares about you. Be sober, be watchful, because your adversary, **the** devil, walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*
>
> 1 Peter 5:6-8 (SLB)

Ezekiel 34 condemns the shepherds of Israel who fed themselves instead of the flock. Then God says, "Look, I, I Myself, will search for My flock and seek them out." He promises, "The lost I will seek, and the strayed I will bring back, and the broken I will bind up, and the sick I will strengthen." Jesus later said, "I am the good shepherd."

1 Peter 5 tells elders to shepherd the flock willingly, not for money. Then Peter speaks to all of us.

Humble yourself, and cast your anxiety on Him. Those go together. Pride says, "I can handle this." Humility says, "I cannot carry this. You take it."

"Cast" is the word for throwing something. It is not gently setting your worries down, then picking them back up. It is throwing them onto Him.

And why? "Because He cares about you." Not because you earned it, but because He cares.

Then a warning. The devil is like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Lions go after the weak and the stragglers. Stay alert, and stay close to the flock.

Think about it: What worry do you need to throw onto Jesus today?

Pray

Father, I humble myself under Your mighty hand. I throw all my anxiety on You, because You care for me. Keep me watchful and close.

Go deeper: the free 1 and 2 Peter study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 333

A New Heart

Today's reading: Ezekiel 36; 2 Peter 1; Proverbs 21

> *And I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; from all your uncleannesses and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And My Spirit I will put within you, and I will bring about that you walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do* ***them****.*
>
> Ezekiel 36:25-27 (SLB)

Ezekiel 35 speaks against Edom. Then Ezekiel 36 turns to the mountains of Israel with a promise: God will bring His people home, not because they deserve it, but for the sake of His holy name.

And then this.

This is the New Covenant again, like Jeremiah 31, but Ezekiel adds something. God will put His Spirit within us.

God does not just clean us up on the outside. He gives us a new heart and puts His own Spirit inside to move us to obey Him. That is why a believer can actually change.

I believe this promise is also for the nation of Israel in the future. God brought the Jews back to their land in 1948, and one day the nation will turn to Christ.

2 Peter 1 says God's divine power "has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness." Peter also says Scripture did not come by the will of man: "being borne by ***the*** Holy Spirit, holy men of God spoke."

Proverbs 21 says, "Streams of water ***is*** the heart of a king in the hand of the LORD; to all that He desires He turns it."

Think about it: Where have you seen God change your heart?

Pray

Father, thank You for washing me, giving me a new heart and putting Your Spirit in me. Move me to walk in Your ways.

Go deeper: the free Ezekiel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 334

Can These Bones Live?

Today's reading: Ezekiel 37-39; 2 Peter 2

> *And He said to me, "Son of man, shall these bones live?" And I said, "O Lord GOD, You, You know." And He said to me, "Prophesy over these bones, and you shall say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Look, I am bringing breath into you, and you shall live.*
>
> Ezekiel 37:3-5 (SLB)

Ezekiel 37 is one of the most famous visions in the Bible. God sets Ezekiel down in a valley full of dry bones. Then He asks a question.

Ezekiel did not say yes or no. He said, "You, You know." Then he obeyed. He spoke God's word to the bones. They rattled together, grew flesh and skin, and when the breath came into them, "they lived and stood on their feet, a very, very great army."

God says the bones are the whole house of Israel, who said their hope was lost. And He promises to bring them back to their land and make them one nation.

Maybe something in your life feels like dry bones. A marriage, a dream, a faith that has gone cold. The question is the same. Can these bones live? With God, yes.

Ezekiel 38 and 39 describe a future invasion of Israel by Gog and a coalition of nations "at the end of the days." God Himself defeats them, and the nations know He is the LORD.

2 Peter 2 warns about false teachers, but it also promises that "***the*** Lord knows ***how*** to rescue ***the*** godly out of trials."

Think about it: What dry bones in your life do you need to bring to God?

Pray

Lord GOD, You know whether these bones can live. Breathe Your life into the dry places in me. Make me stand up again.

Go deeper: the free Ezekiel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

Days 335 to 365

DAY 335

The Lord Is Not Slow

Today's reading: Ezekiel 40; 2 Peter 3

> *But do not let this one thing be hidden from you, beloved, that one day with **the** Lord **is** like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow concerning the promise, as some consider slowness, but is patient toward us, not wishing any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in **the** night, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and **the** elements, burning with heat, will be dissolved, and **the** earth and the works in it will be burned up.*
>
> 2 Peter 3:8-10 (SLB)

Ezekiel 40 begins the last big vision of the book. In the twenty-fifth year of the exile, God sets Ezekiel on a high mountain and shows him a temple. A man with a measuring rod walks him through it, gate by gate and room by room. Many believe this temple belongs to the coming kingdom when Christ reigns on the earth.

2 Peter 3 answers people who mock and say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Peter says this.

It has been almost two thousand years since Jesus went up to heaven. Some think He is late. Peter says God does not keep time the way we do. A thousand years is like a day to Him.

And the delay is not slowness. It is patience. God is holding the door open so more people can come in. Every day He waits is another day of mercy.

But the day will come. Then Peter adds, "But according to His promise we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."

He closes the letter, "but grow in grace and in ***the*** knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Think about it: Who are you praying for who needs God's patience to last a little longer?

Pray

Lord, thank You for Your patience with me and with the people I love. Help me use this time well, and keep me ready for Your coming.

Go deeper: the free 1 and 2 Peter study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 336

Walk in the Light

Today's reading: Ezekiel 41-42; 1 John 1; Proverbs 22

> *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we do not have sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous so that He may forgive us the sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
>
> 1 John 1:7-9 (SLB)

Ezekiel 41 and 42 keep measuring the temple: the inner rooms, the carved cherubim and palm trees, and the rooms for the priests.

Today we begin 1 John. John wrote as an old man to help believers know they have eternal life. He starts with what he saw and touched himself. Jesus was real.

Walking in the light does not mean being sinless. John says if we claim to have no sin, we are fooling ourselves. Walking in the light means living honestly before God, not hiding.

And when we do sin, there is a promise. If we confess, He forgives and cleanses. Not because we earned it, but because He is "faithful and righteous." He keeps His word, and Jesus already paid.

"Confess" means to say the same thing. You agree with God about your sin. You call it what He calls it.

Proverbs 22 says, "Train the youth according to his way; even when he is old he will not turn aside from it."

Think about it: Is there anything you have been hiding that you need to bring into the light?

Pray

Father, I want to walk in the light. I confess my sins to You now. Thank You that You are faithful to forgive and cleanse me through Jesus' blood.

Go deeper: the free 1, 2, 3 John and Jude study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 337

Our Advocate

Today's reading: Ezekiel 43-44; 1 John 2

> *My little children, these things I write to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ **the** Righteous **One**; and He Himself is **the** propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.*
>
> 1 John 2:1-2 (SLB)

Ezekiel 43 and 44 bring back what left in chapter 10. "And look, the glory of the God of Israel came from the direction of the east; and His sound ***was*** like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone from His glory." The glory returns to the temple.

1 John 2 says this.

An advocate is a lawyer who stands beside you in court. When the accuser points to your sin, Jesus stands up for you. And He does not argue that you are innocent. He points to His own blood. The debt is paid.

"Propitiation" means the sacrifice that satisfies God's justice and turns away His wrath. Jesus is that sacrifice.

John also warns, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world." The world is passing away. "But the one doing the will of God abides forever."

And then, "And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He is manifested we may have boldness and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Think about it: When you sin, do you run from God or to your Advocate?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are my Advocate with the Father and the payment for my sins. When I fail, help me run to You, not away from You.

Go deeper: the free 1, 2, 3 John and Jude study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 338

We Will Be Like Him

Today's reading: Ezekiel 45-46; 1 John 3

> *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we may be called children of God! Because of this the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we will be. But we know that when He is revealed, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*
>
> 1 John 3:1-3 (SLB)

Ezekiel 45 and 46 describe the land given to the prince and the offerings and feasts of the future temple.

1 John 3 begins with wonder.

"See what kind of love." John is amazed. God did not just forgive us. He made us His children.

And there is more to come. We do not know yet all we will be. But we know this: when Jesus appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He is.

That is the hope of the rapture and the resurrection. New bodies. No more sin. Seeing Jesus face to face.

And look what that hope does: "And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." Looking for Jesus changes how you live now. If you expect a guest, you clean the house.

The rest of the chapter says we know we have passed from death to life because we love the brothers. Love in deed and truth, not just in words.

Think about it: How does the hope of seeing Jesus change the way you live today?

Pray

Father, thank You for calling me Your child. I long to see Jesus and be like Him. Purify me while I wait.

Go deeper: the free 1, 2, 3 John and Jude study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 339

This Is Love

Today's reading: Ezekiel 47-48; 1 John 4; Proverbs 23

> *By this the love of God was revealed among us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son **as** a propitiation for our sins.*
>
> 1 John 4:9-10 (SLB)

Ezekiel 47 shows a river flowing out from the temple. First ankle deep, then knee deep, then too deep to cross. "And everything shall live wherever the river goes." It even heals the Dead Sea. Ezekiel 48 divides the land and names the city: "The LORD ***Is*** There."

1 John 4 says God is love. Then John shows us what love looks like.

Love did not start with us. We did not go looking for God. He loved us first and sent His Son to die for us.

That is how you know what love is. Not a feeling. Not a movie. A cross.

John goes on: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." If you know how much God loves you, you do not have to live afraid of Him. "We love Him because He first loved us."

And since God loved us that much, we ought to love one another.

Proverbs 23 says, "For as he calculates in his soul, so ***is*** he."

Think about it: Do you live like you are deeply loved by God?

Pray

Father, thank You for loving me first and sending Jesus for my sins. Let Your perfect love drive out my fear, and help me love others.

Go deeper: the free 1, 2, 3 John and Jude study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 340

That You May Know

Today's reading: Daniel 1-2; 1 John 5

> *And this is the testimony, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The one who has the Son has life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life, and so that you may believe in the name of the Son of God.*
>
> 1 John 5:11-13 (SLB)

Today we begin Daniel. Daniel was a teenager when he was carried off to Babylon. In Daniel 1 he decides not to defile himself with the king's food, and God honors him.

In Daniel 2 King Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a great statue with a head of gold, chest of silver, belly of bronze, legs of iron and feet of iron and clay. Then a stone cut without hands smashes it. Daniel explains it: four empires, then "the God of the heavens will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed." That stone is Christ and His kingdom.

1 John 5 ends the letter with assurance.

You can know. Not hope so. Not guess. Know.

How? It is simple. Do you have the Son? Have you trusted Jesus Christ? Then you have eternal life. It does not depend on how you feel today. It depends on God's testimony.

Many believers live with doubt about their salvation. John wrote so that you would not have to.

Think about it: Do you know that you have eternal life?

Pray

Father, thank You for the gift of eternal life in Your Son. I have the Son, so I have life. Thank You that I can know it for sure.

Go deeper: the free 1, 2, 3 John and Jude study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 341

Even If Not

Today's reading: Daniel 3; 2 John

> *If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of the burning fire, and from your hand, O king, He will deliver **us**. And if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not serving your god, and we will not pay homage to the image of gold which you have set up."*
>
> Daniel 3:17-18 (SLB)

Daniel 3 tells of the golden statue. Nebuchadnezzar orders everyone to bow. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego refuse. The king gives them one more chance and threatens the furnace.

"And if not." That is the bravest phrase in the chapter. They trusted that God could save them. But even if He did not, they still would not bow.

Faith is not believing God will always do what we want. Faith is trusting Him and obeying Him either way.

So they went into the furnace, heated seven times hotter. And the king looked in and said, "Look, I see four men loosed, walking in the midst of the fire, and there is no harm on them." God did not keep them out of the fire. He met them in it.

Today we also read 2 John, a short letter to "***the*** elect lady and to her children." John says, "And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments." He also warns against welcoming false teachers who deny that Jesus came in the flesh.

Think about it: Is your faith in God depending on getting the outcome you want?

Pray

Father, You are able to deliver me. But even if You do not, I will not bow to anything but You. Walk with me in the fire.

Go deeper: the free Daniel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 342

Weighed in the Scales

Today's reading: Daniel 4-5; 3 John

> *And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to the heavens, and my knowledge returned to me; and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and glorified Him who lives forever, for His dominion **is** an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom **is** with generation and generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth **are** counted as nothing, and He does according to His will with the army of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth; and there is no one who can strike on His hand and say to Him, "What have You done?"*
>
> Daniel 4:34-35 (SLB)

Daniel 4 is Nebuchadnezzar's own testimony. He was proud of the great Babylon he built. God struck him with madness, and he lived like an animal for seven years, eating grass in the field. Then he looked up.

The most powerful man in the world learned that God rules, and he does not. Pride brought him down. Humility lifted his eyes.

Daniel 5 tells of a later king, Belshazzar, who threw a party and drank from the cups taken from God's temple. A hand appeared and wrote on the wall. Daniel read it: "TEKEL, you have been weighed in the scales and have been found lacking." That night Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians.

Same lesson, different ending. One king humbled himself and was restored. The other mocked God and was destroyed.

We also read 3 John today. John writes, "I have no greater joy than these things, that I hear of my children walking in truth." Every parent and every teacher understands that.

Think about it: If you were weighed today, what would be found?

Pray

Most High God, Your kingdom lasts forever, and no one can stop Your hand. Humble me before pride brings me down. I praise You.

Go deeper: the free Daniel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 343

Three Times a Day

Today's reading: Daniel 6-7; Jude; Proverbs 24

> *And when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and **he had** windows opened in his upper room toward Jerusalem; and three times in the day he was kneeling on his knees and praying and giving thanks before his God, just as he had been doing from before this.*
>
> Daniel 6:10 (SLB)

Daniel 6 tells of the lions' den. Daniel is now an old man, probably in his eighties. Jealous officials trick King Darius into signing a law: for thirty days, pray to no one but the king.

Daniel did not hide. He did not change his habit. He did not make a show of it either. He just kept doing what he had always done.

That is the key: "just as he had been doing from before this." Daniel's faith in the crisis was built by years of daily prayer before the crisis.

The habits you build now are what will hold you up when the test comes. That is one reason we read every day.

Daniel was thrown to the lions, and God shut their mouths.

Daniel 7 is a vision of four beasts and the Ancient of Days. One like a son of man comes with the clouds and receives an everlasting kingdom. Jesus called Himself the Son of Man.

Jude closes with praise to the One "who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present ***you*** blameless before the presence of His glory with exultation."

Proverbs 24 says, "A righteous ***one*** will fall seven ***times*** and rise."

Think about it: What daily habit is building your faith for the next test?

Pray

Father, make me faithful like Daniel. Help me pray and give thanks every day, so my faith is ready when the test comes.

Go deeper: the free Daniel study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 344

The First and the Last

Today's reading: Daniel 8-9; Revelation 1

> *And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not fear; I am the First and the Last, and the Living **One**; and I was dead, and look, I am living to the ages of the ages. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*
>
> Revelation 1:17-18 (SLB)

Daniel 8 shows a ram and a goat, Persia and Greece. In Daniel 9 Daniel reads Jeremiah, sees the seventy years are almost over, and confesses his people's sin. Gabriel comes with the prophecy of seventy sevens: "Seventy sevens have been decreed on your people and on your holy city." It points to the exact time the Messiah would be "cut off," and to a final seven years still to come. I believe that last seven is the tribulation.

Today we begin Revelation. "Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him."

John was an old man exiled on the island of Patmos. Jesus appeared to him in glory, with eyes like fire and a voice like many waters. John fell down like a dead man.

The same Jesus John leaned on at the Last Supper was now too glorious to look at. But He still put His hand on John and said, "Do not fear."

He was dead, and now He is alive forever. And He holds the keys of death. Death does not get the final word over a believer. Jesus does.

Think about it: What fear do you need to hear Jesus speak to today?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You are the First and the Last. You were dead and are alive forever, and You hold the keys of death. I will not fear.

Go deeper: the free Revelation study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 345

Your First Love

Today's reading: Daniel 10-11; Revelation 2

> *But I have **this** against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I am coming to you quickly and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.*
>
> Revelation 2:4-5 (SLB)

Daniel 10 and 11 show the battle behind the scenes. An angel tells Daniel, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you gave your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard." He had been delayed by a spiritual battle. Then Daniel 11 lays out wars between kings, much of which came true in history, then turns to a final king still to come.

Revelation 2 begins letters to seven churches. Ephesus was a hard-working, sound church. They tested false teachers. They endured. But Jesus says this.

You can do all the right things and still lose your love for Jesus. Serving can replace loving. Duty can replace delight.

The cure has three steps. Remember where you fell from. Repent. Do the first works, the things you did when you first loved Him.

Then Jesus speaks to Smyrna, a suffering church: "Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Think about it: Have you left your first love? What were the "first works" you used to do?

Pray

Lord Jesus, forgive me where I have let duty replace love. I remember, I repent, and I come back to You with my whole heart.

Go deeper: the free Revelation study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 346

Kept from the Hour

Today's reading: Daniel 12; Hosea 1; Revelation 3; Proverbs 25

> *Because you kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing which is about to come upon the whole inhabited world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*
>
> Revelation 3:10 (SLB)

Daniel 12 says, "Many of those who sleep in the ground of dust will awake, these to everlasting life, and these to reproaches." Then we start Hosea, whom God told to marry a woman who would be unfaithful, as a picture of Israel.

Revelation 3 has letters to Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. To Philadelphia, a weak but faithful church, Jesus makes a promise.

"The hour of testing" is coming on the whole world. Jesus does not say He will keep the church through it. He says He will keep us "from" it. I believe that is the rapture, before the tribulation begins.

Laodicea was lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. They thought they were rich and needed nothing. Jesus says they were poor, blind and naked. Then He gives this invitation: "Look, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

Jesus was standing outside His own church, knocking. He still knocks today.

Proverbs 25 says, "The glory of God ***is*** to conceal a matter."

Think about it: Have you opened the door to Jesus, or kept Him outside?

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your promise to keep Your church from the hour of testing. I open the door. Come in and stay.

Go deeper: the free Revelation study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 347

Worthy Are You

Today's reading: Hosea 2-5; Revelation 4

> *"Worthy are You, Lord, to receive the glory and the honor and the power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they are and were created."*
>
> Revelation 4:11 (SLB)

Hosea 2 through 5 tell a painful story. Hosea's wife Gomer left him for other men and ended up for sale. Then God says, "Again, go, love a woman loved by a companion and committing adultery, like the love of the LORD ***for*** the sons of Israel." So Hosea bought her back. That is how God loves His unfaithful people. That is how He loves us.

Revelation 4 opens with a door in heaven and a voice saying, "Come up here." John is taken up and sees the throne of God. I believe this pictures the church caught up to heaven, because after chapter 3 the church is not mentioned on earth again until Jesus returns in chapter 19.

Around the throne are four living creatures who never stop saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and who is and who is coming." And the twenty-four elders throw their crowns before Him and say this.

God is worthy because He made everything. You exist because He willed it. That alone is reason enough to worship Him.

Worship is not just singing. It is giving God the honor He is due with your whole life.

Think about it: What crown do you need to lay at His feet?

Pray

Lord God Almighty, You are holy and worthy of all glory, honor and power. You created all things, and You created me. I worship You.

Go deeper: the free Revelation study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 348

The Lamb Who Was Slain

Today's reading: Hosea 6-9; Revelation 5

> *And they sing a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals; for You were slain, and You purchased us for God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and You have made us kings and priests to our God, and we will reign on the earth."*
>
> Revelation 5:9-10 (SLB)

Hosea 6 through 9 call Israel to return. "Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, and He will heal us." But their love was like a morning cloud that disappears. God says, "For steadfast love I desire, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." Jesus quoted that verse twice.

In Revelation 5 there is a scroll in God's hand, sealed with seven seals. No one is worthy to open it, and John weeps. Then an elder says the Lion of the tribe of Judah has overcome. John looks, and sees a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain.

The Lion is the Lamb. Jesus conquered by dying.

And look who is in heaven: people from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. The gospel is for the whole world. Heaven will be full of every color and language.

Then all of heaven joins in, millions of angels and every creature: "To the One sitting on the throne and to the Lamb ***be*** the blessing and the honor and the glory and the might to the ages of the ages."

Think about it: How does it change your worship to know heaven will be full of every nation?

Pray

Lamb of God, You are worthy. You were slain and bought me with Your blood. I join with heaven to praise You forever.

Go deeper: the free Revelation study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 349

Time to Seek the LORD

Today's reading: Hosea 10-13; Revelation 6; Proverbs 26

> *Sow for yourselves for righteousness; reap according to steadfast love; break up for yourselves fallow ground; and **it is** time to seek the LORD, until He comes and rains righteousness for you.*
>
> Hosea 10:12 (SLB)

Hosea 10 through 13 keep pleading. In chapter 11 God speaks like a father: "Out of Egypt I called My son." He taught Ephraim to walk and held him in His arms. "With cords of man I drew them, with ropes of love."

Then Hosea 10 says this.

We saw this in Jeremiah too. Fallow ground is hard, unplowed soil. You have to break it up before you can plant.

"It is time to seek the LORD." There is a time for it, and that time is now. Not after you get your life together. Now.

Revelation 6 begins the seven seals. A white horse, a red horse, a black horse and a pale horse ride out: false peace, war, famine and death. The tribulation has begun. I believe the church is already with the Lord by this point.

At the end of the chapter, people hide in caves and say to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from ***the*** face of the One sitting on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb."

Proverbs 26 says, "Like a dog that returns to its vomit, a fool repeats his folly."

Even after 36 years of marriage, years of Bible study and years of sobriety, routine can harden into habit. Writing and translating Scripture keeps me checking my own heart instead of coasting on yesterday's growth. Spiritual ground stays soft only when we keep bringing it back to the Lord.

Think about it: What hard ground in your life needs breaking up now?

Pray

LORD, it is time to seek You. Break up the hard ground in me. Rain Your righteousness on my life.

Go deeper: the free Hosea to Micah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 350

Tear Your Heart

Today's reading: Hosea 14; Joel 1-2; Revelation 7

> *"And even now," declares the LORD, "return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with wailing." And tear your heart and not your garments, and return to the LORD your God; for He **is** gracious and merciful, slow to anger and great in steadfast love, and relenting over the harm.*
>
> Joel 2:12-13 (SLB)

Hosea 14 ends the book with grace. "Return, Israel, to the LORD your God." God promises, "I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely."

Then we begin Joel. A plague of locusts has stripped the land bare. Joel says it is a warning of the coming day of the LORD.

In those days people tore their clothes to show grief. God says He wants more than a show. Tear your heart. Be broken on the inside.

And the reason to come back is God's character: gracious, merciful, slow to anger, great in steadfast love.

Then come two promises. "And I will repay to you the years which the swarming locust has eaten." And "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh." Peter said that began at Pentecost.

If you feel like years of your life were eaten by sin or loss, God can restore.

Revelation 7 shows 144,000 sealed from the tribes of Israel, and then "a great multitude which no one was able to number, out of every nation." The Lamb will lead them to living water, "and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Think about it: Is your repentance on the outside, or from the heart?

Pray

LORD, I return to You with my whole heart. You are gracious and merciful. Restore the years the locusts have eaten.

Go deeper: the free Hosea to Micah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 351

The Prayers of the Saints

Today's reading: Joel 3; Amos 1; Revelation 8

> *And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of **the** hand of the angel before God.*
>
> Revelation 8:4 (SLB)

Joel 3 describes the nations gathered for judgment in the valley of decision. "Beat your plowshares into swords." Then we start Amos, a shepherd and fig farmer God sent to preach to Israel. "The LORD will roar from Zion."

Revelation 8 opens the seventh seal. There is silence in heaven for about half an hour. Then an angel with a golden censer offers incense with the prayers of God's people.

Your prayers are not lost. They rise before God like incense. He keeps them. And in Revelation, the prayers of the saints are part of what brings God's justice on the earth.

Some of your prayers may have been prayed for years. Do not give up. They are before God.

Then the seven trumpets begin. Hail and fire, a burning mountain thrown into the sea, a star called Wormwood, and darkness. These judgments are worse than the seals, and each one is a warning calling people to repent.

Think about it: What long prayer do you need to keep praying?

Pray

Father, thank You that my prayers rise before You like incense. Help me keep praying and not give up. Your justice will come.

Go deeper: the free Revelation study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 352

Let Justice Roll

Today's reading: Amos 2-5; Revelation 9; Proverbs 27

> *And let justice roll like the waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing wadi.*
>
> Amos 5:24 (SLB)

Amos 2 through 5 are tough on Israel. They sold the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals. They lay on beds of ivory while the poor went hungry. God called the rich women "cows of the Bashan." And He warns, "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel."

Israel was very religious. They kept the feasts, brought offerings and sang songs. But God said He hated their festivals, because their lives did not match. Then He said this.

A wadi is a desert streambed that runs only when it rains. God wants justice that never dries up.

Worship on Sunday means nothing to God if we cheat people on Monday. He cares how we treat the poor, the worker and the weak.

Revelation 9 tells of the fifth and sixth trumpets: locusts from the pit and a huge army. And yet, "the rest of men, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent." Even with judgment all around, hearts stayed hard.

Proverbs 27 says, "Faithful ***are*** the wounds of one who loves."

Think about it: Does your life on Monday match your worship on Sunday?

Pray

LORD, I do not want empty worship. Let justice and righteousness flow from my life like a river that never runs dry.

Go deeper: the free Hosea to Micah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 353

A Famine of the Word

Today's reading: Amos 6-8; Revelation 10

> *Look, days **are** coming," declares the Lord GOD, "and I will send a famine in the land, not a famine for bread, and not a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the LORD.*
>
> Amos 8:11 (SLB)

Amos 6 through 8 warn those "at ease in Zion." God shows Amos visions of locusts, fire, a plumb line and a basket of summer fruit. When the priest Amaziah tells him to go home, Amos says, "I ***am*** not a prophet, and I ***am*** not a son of a prophet; but I ***am*** a herdsman and a tender of sycamores." God called him anyway.

Then God warns of a different kind of famine.

Israel had heard God's Word for years and ignored it. So God said a day would come when they would look for it and not find it.

We have more Bibles than any people in history. In the United States most homes have several. And yet many people are starving for the Word, because the Bibles sit on the shelf.

Do not take it for granted. You have been reading it every day this year. Keep going.

Revelation 10 shows a mighty angel with a little scroll. John eats it, and it is sweet in his mouth and bitter in his stomach. God's Word is sweet, but sometimes it carries a hard message.

Think about it: How would you feel if you could never read the Bible again?

Pray

LORD, thank You for Your Word. Do not let me take it for granted. Keep me hungry for it every day.

Go deeper: the free Hosea to Micah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 354

Running from God

Today's reading: Amos 9; Obadiah; Jonah 1; Revelation 11

> *And Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from before the LORD; and he went down **to** Joppa, and he found a ship going **to** Tarshish; and he paid its fare, and he went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from before the LORD.*
>
> Jonah 1:3 (SLB)

Amos 9 ends with hope. God will raise up the fallen booth of David. Obadiah condemns Edom for gloating when Jerusalem fell. "As you have done, it will be done to you."

Then we start Jonah. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, Israel's brutal enemy, and preach. Jonah went the other way.

Notice the word "down." Jonah went down to Joppa, down into the ship, and later down into the sea. Running from God is always a downward path.

Nineveh was east. Tarshish was as far west as you could sail. Jonah did not just say no. He tried to get as far away as he could.

But you cannot outrun God. A storm came. The sailors threw Jonah overboard, "and the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah."

Revelation 11 tells of two witnesses who preach in Jerusalem during the tribulation. Then the seventh trumpet sounds: "The kingdoms of the world have become ***those*** of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign to the ages of the ages."

Think about it: Is there something God has asked you to do that you are running from?

Pray

LORD, forgive me for the times I have run from You. Turn me around. Wherever You send me, I will go.

Go deeper: the free Hosea to Micah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 355

Salvation Belongs to the LORD

Today's reading: Jonah 2-4; Micah 1-2; Revelation 12; Proverbs 28

> *And I, with a voice of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to You; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation **belongs** to the LORD."*
>
> Jonah 2:9 (SLB)

Jonah 2 is Jonah's prayer from inside the fish. He went as low as a man can go, and there he prayed.

That is the whole message of the Bible in four words. We do not save ourselves. God does.

In Jonah 3 Jonah finally preaches, and the whole city of Nineveh repents, from the king down. God spares them. And Jonah is angry! In chapter 4 he says, "I knew that You ***are*** a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in steadfast love." Jonah wanted mercy for himself but not for his enemies.

God's last question to Jonah is left hanging. Should He not have compassion on that great city? The book ends there, and we have to answer it.

Micah 1 and 2 begin another prophet's warnings to Samaria and Jerusalem.

Revelation 12 shows the dragon making war against the woman and her child. Then, "they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life until death."

Think about it: Is there someone you secretly do not want God to show mercy to?

Pray

LORD, salvation belongs to You. Thank You for Your mercy to me. Give me a heart that wants mercy for others too, even my enemies.

Go deeper: the free Hosea to Micah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 356

What the LORD Requires

Today's reading: Micah 3-6; Revelation 13

> *He has told you, O man, what **is** good; and what does the LORD require from you but to do justice, and to love steadfast love, and to walk humbly with your God?*
>
> Micah 6:8 (SLB)

Micah 3 through 6 condemn Israel's corrupt leaders, but also give great promises. Micah 4 says the nations will beat their swords into plowshares. Micah 5 names the town where the Messiah would be born: "And you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, ***too*** little to be among the clans of Judah, from you for Me ***One*** will go out to be ruler over Israel; and His goings out ***are*** from of old." Jesus existed before Bethlehem.

In Micah 6 God takes Israel to court. The people ask what would please God. Thousands of rams? Rivers of oil? Their firstborn? God answers.

This is not a way to earn salvation. It is what a life with God looks like. Do what is right. Love mercy and kindness. Walk humbly with God, every day.

Revelation 13 describes the beast from the sea and the false prophet. The world will worship the beast and take his mark. But the names of believers are written "in the book of life of the Lamb slain from ***the*** foundation of ***the*** world."

Think about it: Which of the three do you need to work on most?

Pray

LORD, You have shown me what is good. Help me do justice, love steadfast love and walk humbly with You today.

Go deeper: the free Hosea to Micah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 357

Who Is a God Like You?

Today's reading: Micah 7; Nahum 1-2; Revelation 14; Proverbs 29

> *Who **is** a God like You, forgiving iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not hold on to His anger forever, for He delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; He will subdue our iniquities; and You will cast all their sins into the depths of **the** sea.*
>
> Micah 7:18-19 (SLB)

Micah 7 starts with sorrow over a corrupt land. Then Micah says, "And I, I will watch for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation." And the book ends with this.

The name Micah means "Who is like the LORD?" The book ends by asking that question and answering it. No one forgives like He does.

He does not hold onto His anger forever. He delights in steadfast love. And He throws our sins into the depths of the sea. Some have said He then puts up a sign that says "No Fishing." Do not go back and drag them up.

Nahum 1 and 2 announce the fall of Nineveh about a hundred years after Jonah. "The LORD ***is*** good, a stronghold in a day of trouble; and He knows those who take refuge in Him."

Revelation 14 shows the Lamb on Mount Zion. Then, "Blessed ***are*** the dead who die in ***the*** Lord from now on." Believers who die rest from their labors.

Proverbs 29 says, "The trembling of man sets a snare, and he who trusts in the LORD will be set on high."

Think about it: What sin do you keep fishing back up that God has already thrown into the sea?

Pray

LORD, there is no God like You. Thank You for pardoning my sin and throwing it into the depths of the sea. I will not drag it back up.

Go deeper: the free Hosea to Micah study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 358

The Righteous Will Live

Today's reading: Nahum 3; Habakkuk 1-2; Revelation 15

> *Look, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him; and the righteous will live by his faithfulness.*
>
> Habakkuk 2:4 (SLB)

Nahum 3 finishes the fall of Nineveh. Then we start Habakkuk. Habakkuk does something unusual. He argues with God. "How long, O LORD, have I cried for help, and You do not hear?" God answers that He is raising up Babylon to judge Judah. Habakkuk is even more troubled. How can God use a nation worse than His own people?

Then Habakkuk climbs his watchtower to wait for God's answer. And God says this.

The proud man trusts himself. The righteous man lives by faith, trusting God even when he does not understand. Paul quotes this verse in Romans and Galatians. It became the verse that lit the fire of the Reformation.

God also promises, "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover over ***the*** sea."

It is all right to bring your questions to God, like Habakkuk did. Then wait for His answer, and trust Him while you wait.

Revelation 15 shows those who overcame the beast singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. "Great and marvelous ***are*** Your works, Lord God Almighty!"

Think about it: What question are you bringing to God right now?

Pray

LORD, I do not always understand what You are doing. But I will live by faith and trust You. Fill the earth with Your glory.

Go deeper: the free Nahum to Malachi study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 359

I Will Exult in the LORD

Today's reading: Habakkuk 3; Zephaniah 1-2; Revelation 16

> *Though the fig tree does not bud, and there is no produce on the vines, the yield of the olive fails, and the fields do not make food, the flock is cut off from the fold, and there are no cattle in the stalls, and I, I will exult in the LORD; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.*
>
> Habakkuk 3:17-18 (SLB)

Habakkuk 3 is a prayer song. Habakkuk remembers God's mighty acts in the past. Then, knowing hard times are coming, he says this.

Habakkuk lived in a farming world. No figs, no grapes, no olives, no crops, no sheep, no cattle. That is total loss.

Then comes the turn: "and I, I will exult in the LORD." That is the turning point. His joy did not depend on what he had. It depended on Who he had.

I have learned that joy and happiness are not the same thing. Happiness depends on what happens. Joy depends on God. You can lose everything and still rejoice in Him.

The book that started with "How long?" ends with joy in the LORD. That is what happens when you take your questions to God and wait for Him.

Zephaniah 1 and 2 warn that the great day of the LORD is near. "Seek the LORD, all the humble of the land."

Revelation 16 pours out the seven bowls of God's wrath. Still, people "did not repent to give Him glory."

Think about it: What would it look like for you to rejoice in God even if you lost everything?

Pray

LORD, even if the fig tree does not bloom and everything fails, I will rejoice in You. You are the God of my salvation and my strength.

Go deeper: the free Nahum to Malachi study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 360

He Will Rejoice Over You

Today's reading: Zephaniah 3; Haggai 1-2; Revelation 17

> *The LORD your God **is** in your midst, a warrior **who** will save. He will rejoice over you with joy; He will be silent in His love; He will be glad over you with a shout of joy."*
>
> Zephaniah 3:17 (SLB)

Zephaniah 3 ends a book of judgment with one of the sweetest verses in the Bible.

We know we are supposed to rejoice in God. But here, God rejoices over us. He sings over His people with joy.

Picture a father holding his newborn, so full of love he is quiet, then so glad he sings. That is how God feels about His children.

Haggai 1 and 2 speak to the Jews who came back from exile. They had stopped building the temple and were fixing up their own houses. God says, "Set your heart on your ways. You have sown much and brought in little." When we put God last, nothing satisfies. When the people started building again, God said, "I ***am*** with you."

Revelation 17 shows the great prostitute riding the beast, a picture of false religion. Then this promise: "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings."

Think about it: How does it feel to know God rejoices over you?

Pray

LORD, You are in my midst, a mighty One who saves. Thank You that You rejoice over me with gladness and sing over me. I rest in Your love.

Go deeper: the free Nahum to Malachi study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 361

Filthy Garments Removed

Today's reading: Zechariah 1-3; Revelation 18; Proverbs 30

> *And Joshua was clothed **with** filthy garments, and **he was** standing before the angel. And he answered and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and **I will** clothe you **with** festal robes."*
>
> Zechariah 3:3-4 (SLB)

Zechariah 1 through 3 are visions given to encourage the returned exiles. Horsemen among the myrtle trees. Horns and craftsmen. A man with a measuring line. God says He will be a wall of fire around Jerusalem.

Then Zechariah sees Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, with Satan at his right hand to accuse him.

Satan was right. Joshua's clothes were filthy. But the LORD rebuked Satan, took away the filthy clothes, and dressed Joshua in clean robes.

That is what Jesus does for us. The devil is correct when he says we are sinners. But Jesus takes our sin and clothes us in His righteousness. The accuser loses.

Then God speaks of "My servant the Branch." That is Jesus again.

Revelation 18 tells of the fall of Babylon the great, the world's system of greed and pleasure. "Come out of her, My people, so that you may not share in her sins."

Proverbs 30 says, "Every word of God ***is*** refined; He ***is*** a shield to those who take refuge in Him."

Think about it: What accusation do you need to hear Jesus answer?

Pray

Lord, I stood in filthy garments, and You took them off and clothed me in clean robes. Thank You. When the accuser speaks, I will point to You.

Go deeper: the free Nahum to Malachi study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 362

King of Kings

Today's reading: Zechariah 4-7; Revelation 19

> *And I saw heaven opened, and look, a white horse, and the One sitting on it **is** called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. And His eyes **are** like a flame of fire, and on His head **are** many diadems, having a name written which no one knows except He Himself, and clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God.*
>
> Revelation 19:11-13 (SLB)

Zechariah 4 through 7 continue the visions. To Zerubbabel, the governor rebuilding the temple, God says, "'Not by strength and not by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of armies." And, "For who has despised the day of small things?" Small beginnings matter to God.

Revelation 19 opens with heaven shouting "Hallelujah!" The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride, the church, is ready. Then heaven opens.

This is the second coming. Not in the air for His church, but to the earth with His church. The armies of heaven follow Him on white horses, and we will be with Him.

The first time Jesus came, He rode a donkey. This time He rides a white horse. The first time He wore a crown of thorns. This time He wears many crowns.

"And He has on the robe and on His thigh a name written: 'King of kings and Lord of lords.'" The beast and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire. The war is over before it starts.

Think about it: Are you ready to ride with Him when He comes?

Pray

Lord Jesus, Faithful and True, King of kings and Lord of lords. I cannot wait for the day You come in power. Find me ready.

Go deeper: the free Revelation study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 363

Your King Comes

Today's reading: Zechariah 8-10; Revelation 20

> *Rejoice exceedingly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Look, your King comes to you; He **is** righteous and saved, lowly and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, a son of female donkeys.*
>
> Zechariah 9:9 (SLB)

Zechariah 8 promises that Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth. Old men and women will sit in the streets again, and children will play there. Ten men from every nation will grab a Jew by his robe and say, "Let us go with you, for we have heard ***that*** God ***is*** with you."

Then Zechariah 9 says this, about five hundred years before Palm Sunday.

Jesus fulfilled this to the letter when He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. A king usually rode a war horse. Jesus came humble, bringing peace.

Revelation 20 tells what happens after He returns. Satan is bound for a thousand years, and Christ reigns on the earth. Those who were faithful "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." I believe that is a real kingdom on this earth.

After that comes the great white throne. "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened;" Everyone whose name is not in the book of life is thrown into the lake of fire.

That is why the gospel matters so much. Make sure your name is written in that book.

Think about it: Is your name written in the Lamb's book of life?

Pray

Lord Jesus, You came humbly the first time, and You will come to reign. Thank You that my name is written in Your book of life.

Go deeper: the free Nahum to Malachi study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 364

All Things New

Today's reading: Zechariah 11-14; Revelation 21; Proverbs 31

> *And I heard a loud voice out of heaven, saying, "Look, the tabernacle of God **is** with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them, their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death will not be any longer, nor mourning nor crying nor pain will be any longer, because the first things passed away." And the One sitting on the throne said, "Look, I make all things new." And He says to me, "Write, because these words are true and faithful."*
>
> Revelation 21:3-5 (SLB)

Zechariah 11 through 14 look to the end. "They will look to Me, ***to Him*** whom they have pierced; and they will mourn over Him." One day Israel will recognize Jesus. Then, "And His feet will stand on that day on the Mount of Olives." That is where He ascended, and that is where He will return. "And the LORD will be King over all the earth."

Proverbs 31 ends the book of Proverbs with the woman of strength. "A woman ***who*** fears the LORD, she will be praised."

Then Revelation 21 shows the new heaven and the new earth, and the new Jerusalem coming down from God.

This is where the whole story has been going. The garden of Eden was lost in Genesis. Now God makes everything new.

No more tears. No more death. No more mourning, crying or pain. Every hospital room, every graveside and every broken heart will be gone.

And best of all, "God Himself will be with them." That is what heaven is. Not just streets of gold, though they are there. It is being with God forever.

Think about it: What are you most looking forward to in the new creation?

Pray

Father, thank You that one day You will wipe away every tear and make all things new. Most of all, thank You that I will be with You forever.

Go deeper: the free Revelation study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

DAY 365

Come, Lord Jesus

Today's reading: Malachi 1-4; Revelation 22

> *The One who testifies these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Yes, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ **be** with you all. Amen.*
>
> Revelation 22:20-21 (SLB)

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. God says, "For I ***am*** the LORD; I have not changed." He calls His people to bring the whole tithe and see if He will not open the windows of heaven. And He promises, "And for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise, and healing ***is*** in its wings." Then four hundred years of silence, until John the Baptist.

Revelation 22 shows the river of the water of life and the tree of life. The curse is gone. "And they will see His face."

Then Jesus says three times in this chapter, "I am coming quickly." "And let the one who thirsts come; and the one who wishes, let him take the water of life freely."

And the whole Bible ends with this.

You did it. You have read the whole Bible. From "In the beginning" to "Come, Lord Jesus." I am proud of you.

But do not stop here. Turn back to Day 1 and start again. You will see things you missed the first time. The Word never runs dry.

And keep watching. He is coming.

Think about it: What has God taught you most this year?

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You for walking with me through Your whole Word this year. Keep me in it. And yes, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Go deeper: the free Revelation study at trinfinityenterprises.com.

The One-Year Reading Plan Checklist

Check off each day as you finish it. A dash means that part of the plan has no reading that day. The plan is balanced by verse count, so every day takes about the same amount of time, roughly fifteen to twenty minutes of reading.

Day	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalm or Proverb	Done
1	Genesis 1-2	Matthew 1	Psalm 1	☐
2	Genesis 3-4	Matthew 2	Psalm 2	☐
3	Genesis 5-6	Matthew 3	Psalm 3	☐
4	Genesis 7-8	Matthew 4	Psalm 4	☐
5	Genesis 9-10	-	Psalm 5	☐
6	Genesis 11-12	Matthew 5	Psalm 6	☐
7	Genesis 13-15	-	-	☐
8	Genesis 16-17	Matthew 6	Psalm 7	☐
9	Genesis 18-19	Matthew 7	Psalm 8	☐
10	Genesis 20-21	Matthew 8	-	☐
11	Genesis 22-23	-	Psalm 9	☐
12	Genesis 24	Matthew 9	-	☐
13	Genesis 25	-	Psalm 10	☐
14	Genesis 26-27	Matthew 10	Psalm 11	☐
15	Genesis 28	-	Psalm 12	☐
16	Genesis 29-30	Matthew 11	Psalm 13	☐
17	Genesis 31	Matthew 12	Psalms 14-15	☐
18	Genesis 32-33	-	Psalm 16	☐
19	Genesis 34-35	-	-	☐
20	Genesis 36	Matthew 13	Psalm 17	☐
21	Genesis 37-38	-	-	☐
22	Genesis 39-40	Matthew 14	-	☐
23	Genesis 41	-	Psalm 18	☐
24	Genesis 42	Matthew 15	-	☐
25	Genesis 43-44	Matthew 16	-	☐
26	Genesis 45-46	-	-	☐
27	Genesis 47	Matthew 17	Psalm 19	☐
28	Genesis 48-49	Matthew 18	Psalm 20	☐
29	Genesis 50; Exodus 1-2	-	Psalm 21	☐
30	Exodus 3-4	Matthew 19	-	☐
31	Exodus 5-6	Matthew 20	-	☐
32	Exodus 7-8	-	Psalm 22	☐
33	Exodus 9	Matthew 21	-	☐
34	Exodus 10-11	-	Psalm 23	☐
35	Exodus 12-13	Matthew 22	Psalm 24	☐
36	Exodus 14-15	-	-	☐
37	Exodus 16-17	Matthew 23	Psalm 25	☐
38	Exodus 18-19	-	Psalm 26	☐
39	Exodus 20-21	Matthew 24	-	☐
40	Exodus 22-23	-	Psalm 27	☐
41	Exodus 24-25	Matthew 25	Psalm 28	☐
42	Exodus 26	-	Psalm 29	☐
43	Exodus 27-28	-	-	☐
44	Exodus 29	Matthew 26	Psalm 30	☐
45	Exodus 30-31	-	-	☐
46	Exodus 32-33	-	Psalm 31	☐
47	Exodus 34	Matthew 27	-	☐
48	Exodus 35-36	-	Psalm 32	☐
49	Exodus 37-38	Matthew 28	Psalm 33	☐
50	Exodus 39	-	-	☐

Day	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalm or Proverb	Done
51	Exodus 40; Leviticus 1	Mark 1	-	☐
52	Leviticus 2-4	Mark 2	Psalm 34	☐
53	Leviticus 5-6	-	-	☐
54	Leviticus 7	Mark 3	Psalm 35	☐
55	Leviticus 8-9	-	-	☐
56	Leviticus 10-11	Mark 4	-	☐
57	Leviticus 12-13	Mark 5	Psalm 36	☐
58	Leviticus 14	-	-	☐
59	Leviticus 15	-	Psalm 37	☐
60	Leviticus 16-17	Mark 6	-	☐
61	Leviticus 18-19	-	-	☐
62	Leviticus 20-21	Mark 7	-	☐
63	Leviticus 22	-	Psalm 38	☐
64	Leviticus 23-24	Mark 8	-	☐
65	Leviticus 25	-	Psalm 39	☐
66	Leviticus 26	Mark 9	Psalm 40	☐
67	Leviticus 27	-	-	☐
68	Numbers 1-2	Mark 10	Psalm 41	☐
69	Numbers 3	-	Psalm 42	☐
70	Numbers 4	Mark 11	Psalm 43	☐
71	Numbers 5-6	-	-	☐
72	Numbers 7	Mark 12	Psalm 44	☐
73	Numbers 8	-	-	☐
74	Numbers 9-10	Mark 13	Psalm 45	☐
75	Numbers 11	-	-	☐
76	Numbers 12-13	Mark 14	Psalm 46	☐
77	Numbers 14	-	Psalm 47	☐
78	Numbers 15-16	-	Psalm 48	☐
79	Numbers 17-18	Mark 15	-	☐
80	Numbers 19-20	Mark 16	Psalm 49	☐
81	Numbers 21	-	-	☐
82	Numbers 22-23	-	-	☐
83	Numbers 24-25	Luke 1	Psalm 50	☐
84	Numbers 26	-	-	☐
85	Numbers 27-28	-	Psalm 51	☐
86	Numbers 29-30	Luke 2	Psalm 52	☐
87	Numbers 31	-	Psalm 53	☐
88	Numbers 32	Luke 3	Psalm 54	☐
89	Numbers 33	-	-	☐
90	Numbers 34-35	Luke 4	Psalm 55	☐
91	Numbers 36; Deuteronomy 1	Luke 5	-	☐
92	Deuteronomy 2	-	Psalm 56	☐
93	Deuteronomy 3-4	Luke 6	Psalm 57	☐
94	Deuteronomy 5	-	Psalm 58	☐
95	Deuteronomy 6-7	-	-	☐
96	Deuteronomy 8-10	Luke 7	Psalm 59	☐
97	Deuteronomy 11	-	-	☐
98	Deuteronomy 12-14	Luke 8	Psalm 60	☐
99	Deuteronomy 15-16	-	Psalm 61	☐
100	Deuteronomy 17-18	-	Psalm 62	☐
101	Deuteronomy 19-21	Luke 9	Psalm 63	☐
102	Deuteronomy 22-23	-	Psalm 64	☐
103	Deuteronomy 24-26	Luke 10	-	☐
104	Deuteronomy 27	-	Psalm 65	☐
105	Deuteronomy 28	Luke 11	Psalm 66	☐
106	Deuteronomy 29-30	-	-	☐
107	Deuteronomy 31-32	-	Psalm 67	☐
108	Deuteronomy 33-34	Luke 12	-	☐
109	Joshua 1-3	-	Psalm 68	☐
110	Joshua 4-5	Luke 13	-	☐

Day	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalm or Proverb	Done
111	Joshua 6-7	-	-	☐
112	Joshua 8-9	Luke 14	-	☐
113	Joshua 10-11	Luke 15	Psalm 69	☐
114	Joshua 12-13	-	-	☐
115	Joshua 14	Luke 16	Psalm 70	☐
116	Joshua 15-16	Luke 17	-	☐
117	Joshua 17-18	-	Psalm 71	☐
118	Joshua 19-20	Luke 18	-	☐
119	Joshua 21-22	-	Psalm 72	☐
120	Joshua 23-24	Luke 19	-	☐
121	Judges 1	-	-	☐
122	Judges 2-3	Luke 20	Psalm 73	☐
123	Judges 4-5	-	-	☐
124	Judges 6-7	Luke 21	-	☐
125	Judges 8	-	Psalm 74	☐
126	Judges 9-10	-	-	☐
127	Judges 11-12	Luke 22	Psalm 75	☐
128	Judges 13-14	-	Psalm 76	☐
129	Judges 15-16	-	-	☐
130	Judges 17-19	Luke 23	Psalm 77	☐
131	Judges 20	-	-	☐
132	Judges 21; Ruth 1	Luke 24	-	☐
133	Ruth 2-4	-	-	☐
134	1 Samuel 1	-	Psalm 78	☐
135	1 Samuel 2-4	John 1	-	☐
136	1 Samuel 5-7	John 2	-	☐
137	1 Samuel 8-9	-	-	☐
138	1 Samuel 10-12	John 3	-	☐
139	1 Samuel 13	-	Psalm 79	☐
140	1 Samuel 14-15	John 4	-	☐
141	1 Samuel 16	-	Psalm 80	☐
142	1 Samuel 17	John 5	-	☐
143	1 Samuel 18-19	-	Psalm 81	☐
144	1 Samuel 20-21	-	Psalm 82	☐
145	1 Samuel 22-24	John 6	-	☐
146	1 Samuel 25	-	Psalm 83	☐
147	1 Samuel 26-28	-	Psalm 84	☐
148	1 Samuel 29-30	John 7	-	☐
149	1 Samuel 31; 2 Samuel 1-2	-	Psalm 85	☐
150	2 Samuel 3	John 8	Psalm 86	☐
151	2 Samuel 4-6	-	-	☐
152	2 Samuel 7-8	-	Psalm 87	☐
153	2 Samuel 9-11	John 9	Psalm 88	☐
154	2 Samuel 12-13	-	-	☐
155	2 Samuel 14	John 10	-	☐
156	2 Samuel 15-16	-	-	☐
157	2 Samuel 17-18	John 11	Psalm 89	☐
158	2 Samuel 19	-	-	☐
159	2 Samuel 20-21	John 12	-	☐
160	2 Samuel 22	-	-	☐
161	2 Samuel 23-24	John 13	Psalm 90	☐
162	1 Kings 1	-	Psalm 91	☐
163	1 Kings 2	John 14	-	☐
164	1 Kings 3-4	John 15	Psalm 92	☐
165	1 Kings 5-6	-	Psalm 93	☐
166	1 Kings 7	John 16	-	☐
167	1 Kings 8	John 17	Psalm 94	☐
168	1 Kings 9-10	John 18	Psalm 95	☐
169	1 Kings 11	-	-	☐
170	1 Kings 12-13	John 19	Psalm 96	☐

Day	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalm or Proverb	Done
171	1 Kings 14	-	Psalm 97	☐
172	1 Kings 15-16	John 20	Psalm 98	☐
173	1 Kings 17-18	John 21	Psalm 99	☐
174	1 Kings 19	Acts 1	Psalm 100	☐
175	1 Kings 20-21	-	Psalm 101	☐
176	1 Kings 22	Acts 2	-	☐
177	2 Kings 1-2	-	Psalm 102	☐
178	2 Kings 3-4	Acts 3	-	☐
179	2 Kings 5-6	Acts 4	Psalm 103	☐
180	2 Kings 7-8	-	-	☐
181	2 Kings 9	Acts 5	-	☐
182	2 Kings 10-11	Acts 6	Psalm 104	☐
183	2 Kings 12-14	-	-	☐
184	2 Kings 15	Acts 7	-	☐
185	2 Kings 16-17	-	-	☐
186	2 Kings 18	Acts 8	-	☐
187	2 Kings 19-20	-	Psalm 105	☐
188	2 Kings 21-22	Acts 9	-	☐
189	2 Kings 23-24	-	-	☐
190	2 Kings 25; 1 Chronicles 1	Acts 10	-	☐
191	1 Chronicles 2	-	Psalm 106	☐
192	1 Chronicles 3	Acts 11	-	☐
193	1 Chronicles 4-5	Acts 12	-	☐
194	1 Chronicles 6	-	-	☐
195	1 Chronicles 7	Acts 13	-	☐
196	1 Chronicles 8	-	Psalm 107	☐
197	1 Chronicles 9-10	Acts 14	-	☐
198	1 Chronicles 11	-	-	☐
199	1 Chronicles 12-13	Acts 15	Psalm 108	☐
200	1 Chronicles 14-15	Acts 16	-	☐
201	1 Chronicles 16-17	-	-	☐
202	1 Chronicles 18-20	Acts 17	Psalm 109	☐
203	1 Chronicles 21-22	-	-	☐
204	1 Chronicles 23-24	Acts 18	Psalm 110	☐
205	1 Chronicles 25-26	Acts 19	Psalm 111	☐
206	1 Chronicles 27-28	-	Psalm 112	☐
207	1 Chronicles 29; 2 Chronicles 1	Acts 20	Psalms 113-114	☐
208	2 Chronicles 2-4	-	-	☐
209	2 Chronicles 5-6	Acts 21	Psalm 115	☐
210	2 Chronicles 7-8	Acts 22	-	☐
211	2 Chronicles 9-11	-	Psalm 116	☐
212	2 Chronicles 12-13	Acts 23	Psalm 117	☐
213	2 Chronicles 14-17	Acts 24	Psalm 118	☐
214	2 Chronicles 18-19	-	-	☐
215	2 Chronicles 20-21	Acts 25	-	☐
216	2 Chronicles 22-24	Acts 26	-	☐
217	2 Chronicles 25-26	-	-	☐
218	2 Chronicles 27-28	Acts 27	-	☐
219	2 Chronicles 29-30	Acts 28	-	☐
220	2 Chronicles 31-32	-	-	☐
221	2 Chronicles 33-34	Romans 1	-	☐
222	2 Chronicles 35-36; Ezra 1	Romans 2	-	☐
223	Ezra 2	-	-	☐
224	Ezra 3-4	Romans 3	Psalm 119	☐
225	Ezra 5-6	Romans 4	-	☐
226	Ezra 7-8	Romans 5	-	☐
227	Ezra 9-10	Romans 6	-	☐
228	Nehemiah 1-3	Romans 7	-	☐
229	Nehemiah 4-5	Romans 8	-	☐
230	Nehemiah 6	-	-	☐

Day	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalm or Proverb	Done
231	Nehemiah 7-8	Romans 9	-	☐
232	Nehemiah 9	Romans 10	-	☐
233	Nehemiah 10-11	Romans 11	-	☐
234	Nehemiah 12	Romans 12	Psalm 120	☐
235	Nehemiah 13; Esther 1	Romans 13	Psalm 121	☐
236	Esther 2-4	Romans 14	Psalms 122-123	☐
237	Esther 5-8	Romans 15	Psalm 124	☐
238	Esther 9-10; Job 1	Romans 16	Psalm 125	☐
239	Job 2-4	1 Corinthians 1	Psalms 126-127	☐
240	Job 5-6	1 Corinthians 2	Psalm 128	☐
241	Job 7-8	1 Corinthians 3	Psalm 129	☐
242	Job 9-10	1 Corinthians 4	Psalms 130-131	☐
243	Job 11-12	1 Corinthians 5	-	☐
244	Job 13-14	1 Corinthians 6	Psalm 132	☐
245	Job 15-17	1 Corinthians 7	Psalms 133-134	☐
246	Job 18-19	1 Corinthians 8	-	☐
247	Job 20-21	1 Corinthians 9	Psalm 135	☐
248	Job 22-23	1 Corinthians 10	-	☐
249	Job 24-26	1 Corinthians 11	Psalm 136	☐
250	Job 27-28	1 Corinthians 12	-	☐
251	Job 29-30	1 Corinthians 13	Psalm 137	☐
252	Job 31-32	1 Corinthians 14	Psalm 138	☐
253	Job 33-34	1 Corinthians 15	-	☐
254	Job 35-36	1 Corinthians 16	Psalm 139	☐
255	Job 37	2 Corinthians 1	-	☐
256	Job 38-39	2 Corinthians 2	Psalm 140	☐
257	Job 40-41	2 Corinthians 3	Psalm 141	☐
258	Job 42; Ecclesiastes 1-2	2 Corinthians 4	Psalm 142	☐
259	Ecclesiastes 3-4	2 Corinthians 5	Psalm 143	☐
260	Ecclesiastes 5-7	2 Corinthians 6	-	☐
261	Ecclesiastes 8-10	2 Corinthians 7	Psalm 144	☐
262	Ecclesiastes 11-12; Song of Songs 1-2	2 Corinthians 8	-	☐
263	Song of Songs 3-5	2 Corinthians 9	Psalm 145	☐
264	Song of Songs 6-8; Isaiah 1	2 Corinthians 10	Psalm 146	☐
265	Isaiah 2-3	2 Corinthians 11	-	☐
266	Isaiah 4-6	2 Corinthians 12	Psalm 147	☐
267	Isaiah 7-8	2 Corinthians 13	-	☐
268	Isaiah 9-10	Galatians 1	Psalm 148	☐
269	Isaiah 11-14	Galatians 2	Psalm 149	☐
270	Isaiah 15-17	Galatians 3	Psalm 150	☐
271	Isaiah 18-21	Galatians 4	-	☐
272	Isaiah 22-24	Galatians 5	Proverbs 1	☐
273	Isaiah 25-27	Galatians 6	-	☐
274	Isaiah 28-29	Ephesians 1	Proverbs 2	☐
275	Isaiah 30-32	Ephesians 2	-	☐
276	Isaiah 33-34	Ephesians 3	-	☐
277	Isaiah 35-37	Ephesians 4	Proverbs 3	☐
278	Isaiah 38-39	Ephesians 5	-	☐
279	Isaiah 40-41	Ephesians 6	-	☐
280	Isaiah 42-43	Philippians 1	-	☐
281	Isaiah 44-46	Philippians 2	Proverbs 4	☐
282	Isaiah 47-48	Philippians 3	-	☐
283	Isaiah 49-51	Philippians 4	Proverbs 5	☐
284	Isaiah 52-55	Colossians 1	-	☐
285	Isaiah 56-59	Colossians 2	-	☐
286	Isaiah 60-62	Colossians 3	Proverbs 6	☐
287	Isaiah 63-65	Colossians 4	-	☐
288	Isaiah 66; Jeremiah 1	1 Thessalonians 1	-	☐
289	Jeremiah 2-3	1 Thessalonians 2	-	☐
290	Jeremiah 4-5	1 Thessalonians 3	Proverbs 7	☐

Day	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalm or Proverb	Done
291	Jeremiah 6-7	1 Thessalonians 4	-	☐
292	Jeremiah 8-9	1 Thessalonians 5	-	☐
293	Jeremiah 10-11	2 Thessalonians 1	Proverbs 8	☐
294	Jeremiah 12-13	2 Thessalonians 2	-	☐
295	Jeremiah 14-16	2 Thessalonians 3	-	☐
296	Jeremiah 17-18	1 Timothy 1	Proverbs 9	☐
297	Jeremiah 19-21	1 Timothy 2	-	☐
298	Jeremiah 22-23	1 Timothy 3	Proverbs 10	☐
299	Jeremiah 24-25	1 Timothy 4	-	☐
300	Jeremiah 26-27	1 Timothy 5	-	☐
301	Jeremiah 28-29	1 Timothy 6	-	☐
302	Jeremiah 30-31	2 Timothy 1	Proverbs 11	☐
303	Jeremiah 32	2 Timothy 2	-	☐
304	Jeremiah 33-35	2 Timothy 3	-	☐
305	Jeremiah 36-37	2 Timothy 4	Proverbs 12	☐
306	Jeremiah 38-39	Titus 1	-	☐
307	Jeremiah 40-42	Titus 2	Proverbs 13	☐
308	Jeremiah 43-45	Titus 3	-	☐
309	Jeremiah 46-48	Philemon	-	☐
310	Jeremiah 49	Hebrews 1	-	☐
311	Jeremiah 50	Hebrews 2	Proverbs 14	☐
312	Jeremiah 51	Hebrews 3	-	☐
313	Jeremiah 52; Lamentations 1	Hebrews 4	-	☐
314	Lamentations 2	Hebrews 5	Proverbs 15	☐
315	Lamentations 3-4	Hebrews 6	-	☐
316	Lamentations 5; Ezekiel 1	Hebrews 7	-	☐
317	Ezekiel 2-4	Hebrews 8	-	☐
318	Ezekiel 5-7	Hebrews 9	Proverbs 16	☐
319	Ezekiel 8-10	Hebrews 10	-	☐
320	Ezekiel 11-12	Hebrews 11	-	☐
321	Ezekiel 13-15	Hebrews 12	Proverbs 17	☐
322	Ezekiel 16	Hebrews 13	-	☐
323	Ezekiel 17-18	James 1	Proverbs 18	☐
324	Ezekiel 19-20	James 2	-	☐
325	Ezekiel 21	James 3	-	☐
326	Ezekiel 22-23	James 4	Proverbs 19	☐
327	Ezekiel 24	James 5	-	☐
328	Ezekiel 25-27	1 Peter 1	-	☐
329	Ezekiel 28-29	1 Peter 2	Proverbs 20	☐
330	Ezekiel 30-31	1 Peter 3	-	☐
331	Ezekiel 32-33	1 Peter 4	-	☐
332	Ezekiel 34-35	1 Peter 5	-	☐
333	Ezekiel 36	2 Peter 1	Proverbs 21	☐
334	Ezekiel 37-39	2 Peter 2	-	☐
335	Ezekiel 40	2 Peter 3	-	☐
336	Ezekiel 41-42	1 John 1	Proverbs 22	☐
337	Ezekiel 43-44	1 John 2	-	☐
338	Ezekiel 45-46	1 John 3	-	☐
339	Ezekiel 47-48	1 John 4	Proverbs 23	☐
340	Daniel 1-2	1 John 5	-	☐
341	Daniel 3	2 John	-	☐
342	Daniel 4-5	3 John	-	☐
343	Daniel 6-7	Jude	Proverbs 24	☐
344	Daniel 8-9	Revelation 1	-	☐
345	Daniel 10-11	Revelation 2	-	☐
346	Daniel 12; Hosea 1	Revelation 3	Proverbs 25	☐
347	Hosea 2-5	Revelation 4	-	☐
348	Hosea 6-9	Revelation 5	-	☐
349	Hosea 10-13	Revelation 6	Proverbs 26	☐
350	Hosea 14; Joel 1-2	Revelation 7	-	☐

Day	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalm or Proverb	Done
351	Joel 3; Amos 1	Revelation 8	-	☐
352	Amos 2-5	Revelation 9	Proverbs 27	☐
353	Amos 6-8	Revelation 10	-	☐
354	Amos 9; Obadiah; Jonah 1	Revelation 11	-	☐
355	Jonah 2-4; Micah 1-2	Revelation 12	Proverbs 28	☐
356	Micah 3-6	Revelation 13	-	☐
357	Micah 7; Nahum 1-2	Revelation 14	Proverbs 29	☐
358	Nahum 3; Habakkuk 1-2	Revelation 15	-	☐
359	Habakkuk 3; Zephaniah 1-2	Revelation 16	-	☐
360	Zephaniah 3; Haggai 1-2	Revelation 17	-	☐
361	Zechariah 1-3	Revelation 18	Proverbs 30	☐
362	Zechariah 4-7	Revelation 19	-	☐
363	Zechariah 8-10	Revelation 20	-	☐
364	Zechariah 11-14	Revelation 21	Proverbs 31	☐
365	Malachi 1-4	Revelation 22	-	☐

If You Have Never Trusted Christ

If you have read this far and you are not sure where you stand with God, I want to make it as plain as I can. The Bible says we have all sinned, and sin separates us from a holy God. We cannot fix that by being good enough, going to church enough, or trying harder. But God did what we could not do. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, who lived a sinless life, died on the cross in our place, and rose from the dead on the third day.

> *that if you confess with your mouth Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him out of **the** dead, you will be saved; for with **the** heart it is believed for righteousness, and with **the** mouth it is confessed for salvation.* (Romans 10:9-10)

Salvation is a gift. You receive it by turning from your sin and putting your trust in Jesus Christ alone. You can pray something like this: “Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I turn from my sin and trust You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving me and giving me eternal life.”

If you prayed that and meant it, tell someone, find a church that teaches the Bible, and keep reading. A good next step is my free book The Road Home at trinfinityenterprises.com.

About This Book

A Year in the Word takes you through the whole Bible in one year, one page a day. Each day pairs the readings from the One-Year Bible Reading Plan with a key passage from the Steadfast Literal Bible, a short thought on what it means and how to live it, and a prayer. It is written for new believers who have never read the Bible through and for longtime believers who want a steady daily habit. The readings follow the same plan as the free One-Year Bible Reading Plan chart, and the pages point you to the free verse-by-verse studies when you want to go deeper. Every book in the series is free to read and download at trinfinityenterprises.com.