

21

TWENTY ONE

DAY PRAYER CHALLENGE



INTRODUCTION

I'm not going to lie, there are days in which I am just not feeling God move in my life. I feel as if my prayers are just going up into the air and nothing is happening. I have talked to hundreds of students, just like you, who have struggled with the idea of prayer as well. What I have figured out is that a lot of times our prayers are so scattered and unfocused that it makes it hard to really focus on what God is speaking into our lives. There is one thing I do know, in the silence God is speaking, in the stillness God is moving, and that God is here with us even if we don't feel like it at the time.

I don't know if this is true or not, but I always hear about how it takes 21 straight days of doing some sort of activity for your body and mind to make it a habit. Meaning, that if we were to do something for that many days in a row, it will be easier for us to do that activity because our mind has now made it a normal part of the daily activity. This is where I got the idea of a 21 day prayer guide, thinking that if we were to have guided, specific, prayers for 21 days, prayer would then be a normal part of our daily lives.

My hope is that this guide will help direct prayers to God about 21 different topics and that after this challenge is completed, prayer would be a part of daily life because it then is a daily habit of ours. And it is always nice to have direction when praying because sometimes I feel like my mind wanders. Even when this challenge is done it is something that can be done over and over again so you have a cycle of things to pray for.

DAY 1: YOUR HEART

Chances are that if you are doing this challenge, you have not felt that your relationship with God is where it needs to be. Your heart might be hardened to what God wants to do in your life.

Today, pray for your heart to be softened and open to what God has to say for the next 21 days. Take some time and reflect on these passages about your heart.

EZEKIEL 11:19-20

"AND I SHALL GIVE THEM ONE HEART, AND SHALL PUT A NEW SPIRIT WITHIN THEM. AND I SHALL TAKE THE HEART OF STONE OUT OF THEIR FLESH AND GIVE THEM A HEART OF FLESH, THAT THEY MAY WALK IN MY STATUTES AND KEEP MY ORDINANCES, AND DO THEM. THEN THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE, AND I SHALL BE THEIR GOD."

This comes through self-examination and repentance of every way in us that is contrary to the way that God intends for us. When we stay daily in His word, and meditate on what it is saying to us, He begins His transforming work in us.

What you put into yourself - is what comes out of you.

MATTHEW 12:35

"GOOD PEOPLE BRING GOOD THINGS OUT OF THEIR HEARTS, BUT EVIL PEOPLE BRING EVIL THINGS OUT OF THEIR HEARTS."

ROMANS 12:1-2

"SO THEN, MY FRIENDS, BECAUSE OF GOD'S GREAT MERCY TO US I APPEAL TO YOU: OFFER YOURSELVES AS A LIVING SACRIFICE TO GOD, DEDICATED TO HIS SERVICE AND PLEASING TO HIM. THIS IS THE TRUE WORSHIP THAT YOU SHOULD OFFER. DO NOT CONFORM YOURSELVES TO THE STANDARDS OF THIS WORLD, BUT LET GOD TRANSFORM YOU INWARDLY BY A COMPLETE CHANGE OF YOUR MIND. THEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD---WHAT IS GOOD AND IS PLEASING TO HIM AND IS PERFECT."

Often, softening your heart involves breaking the resistant parts... so if there is pain, continue to hang tight to Jesus. You are asking for your heart to feel again. He will carry you through the pain.

Pray:

- For God to reveal what hardened your heart.
- For God to break your heart for what breaks His.
- For God to reveal himself and soften your heart in the next 21 days.

DAY 2: FAITH

We all have something we want to accomplish. We all have goals and are always told to dream big, but where is the line between just saying it and actually making it a reality?

I can't even begin to tell you how many times I have heard, "Just have faith" come out of someone's mouth. But sometimes it's harder than it sounds because of the situation we are going through at the time. I do believe that "having faith" is essential in our walk with Jesus, but having faith and showing that you have it are two completely different things. Anyone can say, "I have faith," but if we are not ready to prove that we do, what good is it anyway?

My friend Jarrid Wilson wrote, "Sometimes having faith means engaging in something so bold that you will end up looking stupid if Jesus doesn't come through. Ultimately, hearing the Word initiates faith; speaking the Word activates faith; doing the Word demonstrates faith."

Reflect on some of these passages:

2 CORINTHIANS 5:7

"WE LIVE BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT."

ROMANS 10:17

"CONSEQUENTLY, FAITH COMES FROM HEARING THE MESSAGE, AND THE MESSAGE IS HEARD THROUGH THE WORD OF CHRIST."

JAMES 2:17

"SO YOU SEE, FAITH BY ITSELF ISN'T ENOUGH. UNLESS IT PRODUCES GOOD DEEDS, IT IS DEAD AND USELESS."

OPEN UP YOUR BIBLE AND READ ALL OF HEBREWS 11:1-39

Pray:

- For your own faith. Ask God to reveal where your faith is at this point in your life.
- Ask God to reveal where in your life your faith needs to be seen in action and not just in talk.
- Ask where in your life you need to have complete faith in Jesus or you might look like a fool if Jesus doesn't come through.
- For the courage to do whatever that thing is.

DAY 3: HOPE

I don't know about you, but there are times in my life where I feel that whatever I am doing is just not enough. I feel like everything that I am doing is pointless, I question my meaning and I feel like I am just wandering this earth with no true purpose. People seem to be telling me that what I'm doing is "blah" and I should be doing "blah" instead. Have you ever felt like that sometimes? Completely hopeless?

While all of those things might feel very real to you, I'm here to tell you they are all lies. Every single one of them. The truth is, you have a purpose, a very significant one.

God is hope. God is the author of hope. His very name and His being is the definition of hope. God gives us comfort in our discomfort. He frees us from whatever bondage we feel like we are in. When we don't feel like getting up in the morning, He is the reason we can get up because Jesus is risen and He is the hope of the world. When our hope is in God, the world cannot crush our spirit.

Read and reflect on these verses on HOPE:

PSALM 119: 114

"YOU ARE MY HIDING PLACE AND MY SHIELD; I HOPE IN YOUR WORD."

PSALM 31: 24

"BE STRONG AND LET YOUR HEART TAKE COURAGE, ALL YOU WHO WAIT FOR AND HOPE FOR AND EXPECT THE LORD!"

LAMENTATIONS 3: 24

"THE LORD IS MY PORTION OR SHARE, SAYS MY LIVING BEING (MY INNER SELF); THEREFORE WILL I HOPE IN HIM AND WAIT EXPECTANTLY FOR HIM."

PROVERBS 13: 12

"HOPE DEFERRED MAKES THE HEART SICK, BUT WHEN THE DESIRE IS FULFILLED, IT IS A TREE OF LIFE."

Pray:

- For thankfulness that God gives us purpose.
- For God to reveal His purpose for you.
- For the ability to not listen to other's opinions of you and only to God's.
- For God to give you the hope that the Scriptures claim.
- For you to fulfill God's purpose for your life.

DAY 4: LOVE

Love is one of those words we throw around quite loosely isn't it? You love hot dogs and you love your parents and you love God. The reality of this word is that God has called us to live our entire lives based upon this word. We are called to love our Lord, our God with all of our hearts but also to love our neighbors. How can we love people who are hard to love? They drive you crazy, and they don't listen. Jesus loved those who killed Him, so we can love our neighbors.

We have pretty much all seen this passage at some point.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8

"LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND. IT DOES NOT ENVY, IT DOES NOT BOAST, IT IS NOT PROUD. IT DOES NOT DISHONOR OTHERS, IT IS NOT SELF-SEEKING, IT IS NOT EASILY ANGERED, IT KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS. LOVE DOES NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL BUT REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH. IT ALWAYS PROTECTS, ALWAYS TRUSTS, ALWAYS HOPES, AND ALWAYS PERSEVERES. LOVE NEVER FAILS."

Now, we are not perfect. We do everything in our power to do these things in love but we are imperfect people who worship a perfect God. We will mess up. If this is what love is, we need to be all these things.

Now read this passage below and place YOUR NAME in the blanks while you read it:

_____ is patient, _____ is kind. _____ does not envy, _____ does not boast, _____ is not proud. _____ does not dishonor others, _____ is not self-seeking, _____ is not easily angered, _____ keeps no record of wrongs. _____ does not delight in evil but _____ rejoices with the truth. _____ always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. _____ never fails.

I know when I put my name in there; it does not really describe me perfectly. I'm not any of those things. No one is except God. When we put our names in, it does not match at all but when we place "God" in the blanks, it becomes extremely true. Go back and say "God" in each of the blanks.

Isn't that amazing? All of that to say, us by ourselves are not perfect in love, but God is. We cannot love others the way He loves us until we recognize we need Him in our lives. We are not those things above, but God is all of those things above.

1 JOHN 4:19

"WE LOVE EACH OTHER BECAUSE HE LOVED US FIRST."

DAY 4: LOVE

Have you ever really thought about this? Have you ever really reflected on God's love for you? Can we really live and love the way God loves us? These are some real questions we need to think about and pray about.

Pray:

- For God to give you the heart to love others as He loves you.
- For you to feel the love that God has for you.
- That you can allow God to show you how to do both of these things to show your love for Him.

DAY 5: SEEING GOD'S GLORY

The glory of God is the beauty of His spirit. It is not a “normal” beauty or a material beauty, but it is the beauty that comes from His character, from all that He is. James 1:10 calls on a rich man to “glory in his humiliation,” indicating a glory that does not mean riches, power or material beauty. This glory can crown man or fill the earth. It is seen within man through his character and how he acts, but it is not of them; it is of God. The glory of man is the beauty of man’s spirit, which is not perfect and eventually passes away, it is not of God. But the glory of God, which is placed in all His attributes together, never passes away. It is eternal.

This is the mistake many people continue to make: trusting in earthly things, earthly relationships, their own powers or talents or beauty, or the goodness they see in others. But when these things fade and fail as they will inevitably do (being only temporary forms of glory), we get hurt. What we all need to realize is that God’s glory is constant, and as we journey through life we will see it form here and there, in this person or that forest, or in a story of love or heroism, fiction or non-fiction, or our own personal lives. But it all goes back to God in the end and the only way to God is through His Son, Jesus Christ. We will find the very source of all beauty in Him, in heaven, if we are in Christ and nothing will be lost to us. All those things that faded in life we will find again in Him.

JOHN 1:14

“AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US, AND WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY, GLORY AS OF THE ONLY SON FROM THE FATHER, FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH.”

PSALM 8: 1

“O LORD, OUR LORD, HOW EXCELLENT (MAJESTIC AND GLORIOUS) IS YOUR NAME IN ALL THE EARTH! YOU HAVE SET YOUR GLORY ON [OR ABOVE] THE HEAVENS.”

2 PETER 1: 3

“FOR HIS DIVINE POWER HAS BESTOWED UPON US ALL THINGS THAT [ARE REQUISITE AND SUITED] TO LIFE AND GODLINESS, THROUGH THE [FULL, PERSONAL] KNOWLEDGE OF HIM WHO CALLED US BY AND TO HIS OWN GLORY AND EXCELLENCE (VIRTUE)”

Ask yourself:

- What in your life have you put all you had into temporary glory of earthly things? (i.e. friends, adults, relationships, talents, beauty, etc.)
- Have they lasted? Have they always delivered?
- Why or why not?

DAY 5: SEEING GOD'S GLORY

Pray:

- For God to reveal His glory in your life.
- For strength to not be tempted to follow temporary glory of things that will not last.
- That your eyes only look to Him in hope to see Jesus' glory for what He has done for us on the cross.

DAY 6: OBEDIENCE

OBEY! When I hear that word at first, I cringe a little bit. Do what you tell me to do? Come on. But this word is essential to our faith as Christians. This word is more than just do what your parents tell you to do, it is more than a list of commands, it's even more than a popular clothing brand, it is a word which describes the essence of the Christian faith.

Obedience is defined as "dutifully complying with the commands, orders, or instructions of one in authority." Even looking at this definition from the dictionary, we can see how this word fits right into the biblical definition God lays out for us. "Dutifully" means we are responsible to obey God just as Jesus fulfilled His duty of dying on the cross for us. "Commands, orders, or instructions" refer to the Bible and all of the teachings God has laid out for us in this amazing book. "One authority" is God Himself, whose authority overrides anything else in this world. For the Christian, obedience means complying with everything God has commanded because it is our duty to do so.

There is a difference in straight up obeying and the spirit of obedience. If your parents gave you a list of things to obey and do and you just get it done because you have to do it, your relationship with your parents would seem like a burden because they just tell you to do certain things and if you don't obey you will be in trouble. If you were obedient to them because you love and respect them and trust they know what is best for you then your relationship with them would be much closer because you obey them because you WANT to. It's the same with God. If you were to look at obedience like a list of things to get done because you HAVE to do them, of course you are going to resist it and think it is a burden. When you have the mindset of love and respect for God, and have the spirit of obedience, you obey because you WANT to, out of love for Him.

Because of Jesus, all of the Old Testament laws and rules were fulfilled. Jesus calls all of us to a new law to abide to. A law He summed up in two commandments. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:36-40) We are not going to do this perfectly. We are imperfect people. If we love God, we will obey Him to the best of our ability and have the desire to do so, so that our lives will be evidence of that desire. When we love God and obey Him we naturally have love for one another. Obedience is commanded by God, it is a must, but not only because it glorifies Him, but because His commands are best for us to follow. Obedience brings joy,

DAY 6: OBEDIENCE

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

"HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE. YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT. AND THESE WORDS THAT I COMMAND YOU TODAY SHALL BE ON YOUR HEART. YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY, AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE. YOU SHALL BIND THEM AS A SIGN ON YOUR HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE AS FRONTLETS BETWEEN YOUR EYES. YOU SHALL WRITE THEM ON THE DOORPOSTS OF YOUR HOUSE AND ON YOUR GATES."

JOHN 15:14

"IF YOU LOVE ME, YOU WILL KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS." (JESUS SPEAKING)

GALATIANS 5:13-14

"FOR YOU WERE CALLED TO FREEDOM, BROTHERS. ONLY DO NOT USE YOUR FREEDOM AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FLESH, BUT THROUGH LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER. FOR THE WHOLE LAW IS FULFILLED IN ONE WORD: YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

JOHN 14:23-24

"JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, 'IF ANYONE LOVES ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORD; AND MY FATHER WILL LOVE HIM, AND WE WILL COME TO HIM, AND MAKE OUR ABODE WITH HIM. 'HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE ME DOES NOT KEEP MY WORDS; AND THE WORD WHICH YOU HEAR IS NOT MINE, BUT THE FATHER'S WHO SENT ME.'"

Ask yourself:

- Am I obeying God? What has He prompted me to do that I have not yet done?
- What are things in my life that I have not listened to God about?
- Have I even been open to what God has to say about my life?

Pray:

- That God will give you the spirit of obedience.
- That you will serve and obey Him because you want to out of love.
- That others will see love pouring out of you because of your obedience to Him.
- For God to reveal anything in your life that He has called for you to do but you have not been obedient with.
- That you do those things He commanded for you to do.

DAY 7: TRUST

"Trust me." It has to be one of the scariest things that someone can ever say to you. It goes without saying that we cannot trust someone that we do not know. It goes against everything inside us. What we need to figure out is that there is a secret to learning to trust God. We have to get to know Him. When someone says to us, "Trust me," we have one of two natural reactions. We either say, "Ok, I'll trust you," or we say, "Why should I?" When we are talking about God, trusting Him naturally follows when we understand why we should trust Him.

Unlike men, God never lies and never fails to come through on His promises He makes to His children. Unlike men, God has the power to bring to plan, pass, and know the purposes of why we are in the situation we are in. God's plans are perfect, holy, and righteous. If we are constantly seeking Him in prayer and reading through Scripture, we will see that He is worthy of our trust and our trust is best held in Him. The more and more we look back in our lives and see how faithful He has been, and has proven Himself to be trustworthy in our lives and the lives of others, our trust will grow in Him day by day.

To know God is to trust God.

ISAIAH 14:24

"THE LORD OF HOSTS HAS SWORN: 'AS I HAVE PLANNED, SO SHALL IT BE, AND AS I HAVE PURPOSED, SO SHALL IT STAND,'"

ROMANS 8:28

"AND WE KNOW THAT FOR THOSE WHO LOVE GOD ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD, FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE."

EPHESIANS 2:8-10

"FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH. AND THIS IS NOT YOUR OWN DOING; IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, NOT A RESULT OF WORKS, SO THAT NO ONE MAY BOAST. FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PREPARED BEFOREHAND, THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM."

PSALM 100:5

"FOR THE LORD IS GOOD; HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER, AND HIS FAITHFULNESS IS TO ALL GENERATIONS."

DAY 7: TRUST

Ask yourself:

- Am I really trusting God with my life?
- What is holding me back from allowing me to 100% trust in Him?

Pray:

- For trust in God to know that His plans are better than your plans.
- For the determination to know Him more because to know Him is to trust Him.
- For you to trust Him with your life.
- Against whatever is holding you back from fully trusting God, to be revealed and dealt with.

DAY 8: FAMILY & FRIENDS

When it comes to my friends and family, there are no other people on this planet that I would rather spend a majority of my time with. Now we all know no family or friend groups are perfect, they all have their shortcomings and annoyances, but for the most part they are people you love and respect. Also, if you are anything like me, you have friends and family that do not know how much God loves them and they do not know Jesus the way you do.

One of the greatest things you can do for your friends and family is pray for them. Pastor Rick Warren gives 4 ways in which we can pray for our family and friends:

1. Pray for an opportunity to talk about Jesus (Colossians 4:3). Ask God to give you an opportunity to tell others about Christ and to invite them to your small group.
2. Pray for God to prepare hearts. Any time you see someone going through a storm in life, you can know God is softening a heart. God never wastes a storm.
3. Pray for God to burden your heart. Ask God to make your heart tender towards a specific person or group of people.
4. Pray that God's Word will simply take off. Pray that the words of Jesus "will simply take off and race through the country to a groundswell of response" (2 Thessalonians 3:1 MSG), just as they did among the early Christians.

It is important to know that God loves your family more than you do. He is a good God. We need to remember to pray these things in faith. Faith energizes us; it allows us to be close to God continuously. We have to remember to be patient and allow God to work. Change could happen tomorrow or it could take twenty years but we need to allow God to work.

Take time, right now, to go over the 4 ways to pray for friends and family. Remember to pray with a humble and repentant heart. Pray that God would move today in the lives of your friends and family.

DAY 9: SHARING YOUR FAITH

Probably one of the most important things we can do as Christians, but also one of the scariest things, is sharing our faith with our friends and family. You have prayed for them, you live out what you learn from reading the Bible, you are being real with them and there will be opportunities which come up to speak to them about Jesus. It is up to you to take them. If you ask God to make you bolder, does He automatically make you bold? Or does He give you opportunities to be bolder? When you ask God to give you more patience, does He automatically give you patience? Or does He give you opportunities to be more patient? You have to pray for the opportunities which come up while living your life in a real and authentic way. God will present opportunities for you to speak to those around you to share your faith with in a real, authentic, natural way.

MARK 16:15

"AND HE SAID TO THEM, 'GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE CREATION.'"

EPHESIANS 5:1-6:24

"THEREFORE BE IMITATORS OF GOD, AS BELOVED CHILDREN. AND WALK IN LOVE, AS CHRIST LOVED US AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR FRAGRANT OFFERING, A SACRIFICE TO US AND TO GOD. BUT SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND ALL IMPURITY OR COVETOUSNESS MUST NOT EVEN BE NAMED AMONG YOU, AS IS PROPER AMONG SAINTS. LET THERE BE NO FILTHINESS NOR FOOLISH TALK NOR CRUDE JOKING, WHICH ARE OUT OF PLACE, BUT INSTEAD LET THERE BE THANKSGIVING. FOR YOU MAY BE SURE OF THIS, THAT EVERYONE WHO IS SEXUALLY IMMORAL OR IMPURE, OR WHO IS COVETOUS (THAT IS, AN IDOLATER), HAS NO INHERITANCE IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND GOD."

Pray:

- For the people you know who are not close to God.
- That you live out the life God has called you to by showing love, mercy, grace, etc.
- That you live authentically and real. That your life would be different from those around you and people will see God by how you act.
- That God gives you opportunities to share Him with friends and family around you.

DAY 10: LIVING SACRIFICE

In Romans 12:1, Paul says, “I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.” The dictionary defines sacrifice as “anything consecrated and offered to God.”

So what does this look like? Romans 12:2 says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” We are a living sacrifice by not being “in” the world. In 1 John 2:15-16, it defines the world to be the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. All the world has to offer can be reduced to these three things. The lust of the flesh includes everything that appeals to our appetites and involves excessive desires for food, drink, sex, and anything else that satisfies physical needs. Lust of the eyes mostly involves materialism, coveting whatever we see that we don’t have and envying those who have what we want. The pride of life is defined by any ambition for that which puffs us up and puts us on the throne of our own lives. How do we practically not be of the world? We do this by “renewing our minds,” and how we do this is through the study of God’s Word. The Word of God is the only power in this world that can completely transform us from worldliness to true spirituality. The result is that we will be “able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2b). It is the will of God for every believer to be a living sacrifice for Jesus Christ.

ROMANS 10:17 (ESV)

“SO FAITH COMES FROM HEARING, AND HEARING THROUGH THE WORD OF CHRIST.”

REVELATION 1:3 (ESV)

“BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO READS ALOUD THE WORDS OF THIS PROPHECY, AND BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HEAR, AND WHO KEEP WHAT IS WRITTEN IN IT, FOR THE TIME IS NEAR.”

ACTS 17:11 (ESV)

“NOW THESE JEWS WERE NOBLER THAN THOSE IN THESSALONICA; THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL EAGERNESS, EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY TO SEE IF THESE THINGS WERE SO.”

DAY 10: LIVING SACRIFICE

PSALM 119:9-11

"HOW CAN A YOUNG MAN KEEP HIS WAY PURE? BY GUARDING IT ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD. WITH MY WHOLE HEART I SEEK YOU; LET ME NOT WANDER FROM YOUR COMMANDMENTS! I HAVE STORED UP YOUR WORD IN MY HEART, THAT I MIGHT NOT SIN AGAINST YOU."

PSALM 1:2-3

"BUT HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD, AND ON HIS LAW HE MEDITATES DAY AND NIGHT. HE IS LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY STREAMS OF WATER THAT YIELDS ITS FRUIT IN ITS SEASON, AND ITS LEAF DOES NOT WITHER. IN ALL THAT HE DOES, HE PROSPERS."

Think about:

- Am I "of the world" in how the Bible describes it?
- How so? In what areas of your life do you fall into the lusts of the flesh, the eyes, or pride of life?
- How often are you reading God's Word? Is it as much as you should be?

Pray:

- For God to reveal the parts of you that are lost in "the world" as described in the Bible.
- For God to help you to be determined to read His Word.
- For God to use Scripture to transform your mind.
- That God speaks to you in ways that He never has by reading the Bible.
- That you can be the living sacrifice, offering all of yourself to, and for, God.

DAY 11: CHANGE

If we are honest, no one really likes change. It can be some of the most stressful times of our lives. Even when change is wanted, it is within our human nature to naturally resist it. When we do something over and over, it becomes part of our daily habit and we become so used to it that if anything knocks it out of balance, we freak out a little bit. This is why change takes so much effort and why we want to resist it.

Everyone knows that change is going to happen: it's normal and it's inevitable. We face changes when we grow up and mature. Our bodies change, our likes and dislikes change, our friends change, and the way we interact with the world around us changes. We also know that when you become a Christian, change is desirable. It is actually God's plan for us when we come to know who He is. We die to our old selves and Christ makes us new. We want to become more like Jesus; we want to change. 2 Corinthians 4:16 says, "Inwardly we are being renewed day by day." When we submit to God, we change to become more like Christ.

So what about the change that we do not want? Parents lost their job? Friends moving away? Church leaders stepping down? We don't want the hurtful changes. Romans 8:28 says that God is working all things for the good of those who love Him, that He is working everything according to His purpose and we know His purpose is always good. So we have to trust that even the changes that are undesirable are working for our benefit down the line. It may be that an illness will bring us closer to God or draw the family closer together. It may be because God is calling you to a new season of life.

Adjusting to change seems to be less painful than resisting. Growth requires change. When we are experiencing change in our lives, let's look at it as a season of growth. When our human side of resisting starts, let us try to remember that God has NEVER changed, and will NEVER change and He is up to something good.

Try to do some of these things to help with change:

- Talk to God about the change you are experiencing. Be honest.
- Listen to His response to your questions.
- Express thankfulness of what you have in your life.

He does not change, but He is there in the middle of the change with you.

DAY 11: CHANGE

Pray:

- For the change that is happening right now in your life.
- That God helps you through the change, good or bad.
- To thank God for never changing, that He is the only constant in your life.
- For God to change you to be more like Jesus.

Notes:

DAY 12: OVERCOMING FEAR

There are two types of fear. One is good and is encouraged and the other is a fear that is to be overcome. The first one is the fear of the Lord. This doesn't mean to be afraid of God; rather it is being in awe of God realizing all of His power and glory. It is having respect for His wrath and anger. This type of fear is total acknowledgment of all that God is, which comes through knowing and studying Him and His attributes.

This is not the fear I want to talk about. The other type of fear is "the spirit of fear." This type of fear is mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:7 which says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." It is a spirit of fearfulness and timidity that does not come from God.

I'm not going to lie; there are times when I'm afraid. I don't care how old you are, when you are by yourself and you hear weird noises at home you freak out a little bit. There are things in our lives that scare us, whether it's a conversation we have to have, something we need to overcome, or a sin we need to deal with and confess, the "spirit of fear" takes over and it's in this time we need to trust God completely. No one is perfect and God knows this. I believe this is why He intentionally put encouraging verses about overcoming fear throughout the entire Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, God tell us to "fear not."

God tells us not to be afraid of being too weak. God tells us not to be afraid of being alone. God tells us not to be afraid of not being heard by Him. God tells us not to be afraid of lacking physical necessities. We do all of these at times if we are honest about it. Trusting in God is refusal to give into fear. It is us turning to God in the darkest of times and trusting Him to make things right.

Once we have learned to put our trust in God we will be able to overcome anything that stands in our way that we once were fearful of.

1 JOHN 4:18

"THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE, BUT PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR. FOR FEAR HAS TO DO WITH PUNISHMENT, AND WHOEVER FEARS HAS NOT BEEN PERFECTED IN LOVE."

ISAIAH 41:10

"FEAR NOT, FOR I AM WITH YOU; BE NOT DISMAYED, FOR I AM YOUR GOD; I WILL STRENGTHEN YOU, I WILL HELP YOU, I WILL UPHOLD YOU WITH MY RIGHTEOUS RIGHT HAND."

DAY 12: OVERCOMING FEAR

PSALM 56:11

"IN GOD I TRUST; I SHALL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME?"

PSALM 5:11

"BUT LET ALL WHO TAKE REFUGE IN YOU REJOICE; LET THEM EVER SING FOR JOY, AND SPREAD YOUR PROTECTION OVER THEM, THAT THOSE WHO LOVE YOUR NAME MAY EXULT IN YOU."

ROMANS 8:31-32

"WHAT, THEN, SHALL WE SAY IN RESPONSE TO THESE THINGS? IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US? HE WHO DID NOT SPARE HIS OWN SON, BUT GAVE HIM UP FOR US ALL—HOW WILL HE NOT ALSO, ALONG WITH HIM, GRACIOUSLY GIVE US ALL THINGS?"

Pray:

- For God to give you a healthy fear of Him acknowledging all His power.
- For you to acknowledge His power, and that he will take away that "spirit of fear" inside you.
- For whatever you are afraid of, to give it to God and place all your trust in Him.
- That God's spirit will come near to you and overtake any fear of what you need to do or what you are facing.

Notes:

DAY 13: COMPASSION

When I hear the word compassion it's not something that I usually think about on a daily basis or consider how to pray about it in my life. I know it's a good thing to have and to show to people but I don't go out of my way to think about it. Maybe that is just me.

When we talk about compassion there is no way that you cannot talk about Jesus because the very nature of His being is that of compassion. The Hebrew and the Greek words translated into English literally mean "to have mercy, to feel sympathy and to have pity." We know that according to the Bible, God is "a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness" (Psalms 85:15).

Jesus showed all of God's compassion while he was on the earth. When his friends were weeping about Lazarus' death, he wept alongside them. Jesus was moved with compassion for the suffering of others, so He healed the large crowd that came to Him, as well as individuals who came to Him. When He saw how the large crowds were like sheep without a shepherd He had compassion on them and taught them. While the priest and the Pharisees neglected the "common" people, Jesus had compassion on them and spent time with them.

Jesus was all about caring for people. In Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was and He said it is to love God with all our heart, mind and strength but He added that the second commandment, "is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" The Pharisee asked Him which single command of God is the greatest, but Jesus provided two, stating not only what we are to do, but also how to do it. To love our neighbor as yourself is the natural result of our loving devotion toward God. The Bible is clear that compassion is an attribute of God and for God's people as well.

ROMANS 12:15

"REJOICE WITH THOSE WHO REJOICE, AND WEEP WITH THOSE WHO WEEP."

PROVERBS 19:17

"HE WHO IS GRACIOUS TO A POOR MAN LENDS TO THE LORD, AND HE WILL REPAY HIM FOR HIS GOOD DEED."

DAY 13: COMPASSION

1 CORINTHIANS 12:25-26

"THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO DIVISION IN THE BODY, BUT THAT THE MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE SAME CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER. AND IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL THE MEMBERS SUFFER WITH IT; IF ONE MEMBER IS HONORED, ALL THE MEMBERS REJOICE WITH IT."

PSALMS 35:13-14

"BUT AS FOR ME, WHEN THEY WERE SICK, MY CLOTHING WAS SACKCLOTH; I HUMBLD MY SOUL WITH FASTING; AND MY PRAYER KEPT RETURNING TO MY BOSOM. I WENT ABOUT AS THOUGH IT WERE MY FRIEND OR BROTHER; I BOWED DOWN MOURNING, AS ONE WHO SORROWS FOR A MOTHER."

PSALM 111:4

"HE HAS MADE HIS WONDERS TO BE REMEMBERED; THE LORD IS GRACIOUS AND COMPASSIONATE."

Pray:

- And ask God where in your life you need to have more compassion.
- For God to reveal whom in your life do you need to have more compassion for? (i.e. people at school, your family, friends, strangers, etc.)
- This prayer of compassion of St. Francis, and make this your pray for your day.

THE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

"LORD, MAKE ME A CHANNEL OF YOUR PEACE AND WISDOM WHERE THERE IS HATRED, I CAN BRING LOVE WHERE THERE IS WRONG, I CAN BRING THE SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS WHERE THERE IS DISCORD, I CAN BRING HARMONY WHERE THERE IS ERROR, I CAN BRING TRUTH WHERE THERE IS DOUBT, I CAN BRING FAITH WHERE THERE IS DESPAIR, I CAN BRING HOPE WHERE THERE ARE SHADOWS, I CAN BRING LIGHT WHERE THERE IS SADNESS, I CAN BRING JOY LORD, GRANT THAT I MAY SEEK TO COMFORT, RATHER THAN TO BE COMFORTED TO UNDERSTAND RATHER THAN TO BE UNDERSTOOD TO LOVE RATHER THAN TO BE LOVED FOR IT IS BY GIVING ONESELF, THAT ONE FINDS IT IS BY FORGIVING, THAT ONE IS FORGIVEN IT IS BY DYING THAT ONE AWAKENS TO ETERNAL LIFE AMEN"

DAY 14: EMPATHY

I always get empathy confused with some other very similar words: sympathy and compassion. They are all in the same family but there are important differences. I believe empathy is something we all need to work on when it comes to showing others about Jesus.

Empathy is not found in the Bible, but the Bible describes situations in which empathy is a direct reaction of God's character to us. Empathy means, "the capability to share another's emotions and feelings." It is different than sympathy, but a characteristic of compassion. Sympathy is feeling the same feelings with someone because you too, have shared the same circumstances as the other person so you know exactly how they are feeling. Empathy is feeling those same feelings for that person but you have not gone through it yourself, but you feel their pain so much that it moves you to have compassion.

Jesus shows empathy in how he acts towards people all throughout His ministry on earth. It says He, "went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:35-36). Jesus' greatest empathy was for their spiritual weariness, a condition He came to rectify.

Girls sometimes seem to have more empathy than guys (sorry guys, that is the truth). Girls can see another girl crying, and they will start to cry with them and be there for them. Guys see another guy crying and their first thought is, "Wuss." A guy sees a girl crying, and he walks the other way because a crying girl is the scariest thing. But when we "rejoice with those rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15), we show empathy towards others like Jesus showed to us. The walls are torn down between people and you can show that person the love of Christ by loving on them in a time of need. As we humble ourselves before others, we can care for them . . . just as He cares for us.

DAY 14: EMPATHY

JOB 2:11,13

"REALIZING THAT JOB HAD BEEN OVERCOME BY CALAMITY AND HIS GRIEF WAS TOO GREAT FOR WORDS, HIS FRIENDS THOUGHTFULLY KEPT HIM COMPANY SEVERAL DAYS WITHOUT ENGAGING IN CONVERSATION. NOW WHEN JOB'S THREE FRIENDS HEARD OF ALL THIS EVIL THAT WAS COME UPON HIM, THEY MADE AN APPOINTMENT TOGETHER TO COME TO MOURN WITH HIM AND TO COMFORT HIM. SO THEY SAT DOWN WITH HIM UPON THE GROUND SEVEN DAYS AND SEVEN NIGHTS, AND NONE SPOKE A WORD UNTO HIM: FOR THEY SAW THAT HIS GRIEF WAS VERY GREAT."

PHILIPPIANS 2:2-4

"THEN MAKE MY JOY COMPLETE BY BEING LIKE-MINDED, HAVING THE SAME LOVE, BEING ONE IN SPIRIT AND OF ONE MIND. DO NOTHING OUT OF SELFISH AMBITION OR VAIN CONCEIT. RATHER, IN HUMILITY VALUE OTHERS ABOVE YOURSELVES, NOT LOOKING TO YOUR OWN INTERESTS BUT EACH OF YOU TO THE INTERESTS OF THE OTHERS."

1 CORINTHIANS 12:25-26

"SO THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO DIVISION IN THE BODY, BUT THAT ITS PARTS SHOULD HAVE EQUAL CONCERN FOR EACH OTHER. IF ONE PART SUFFERS, EVERY PART SUFFERS WITH IT; IF ONE PART IS HONORED, EVERY PART REJOICES WITH IT."

Pray:

- That if you struggle with empathy, that God opens your heart to it. That He can help you notice when others are hurting around you.
- That God gives you the courage to approach anyone hurting, and you feel their pain when they are in pain.
- That God opens your eyes to the people around you, even if they are trying to hide it. That God helps you notice it more, to be ultra sensitive to it, so you can react.
- Pray God gives you compassion like we talked about yesterday to react on and show them God's love.

DAY 15: WORSHIP

Worship is something that, if you have been around the church for any length of time, you have heard of. Our minds usually immediately go straight to music. Music is a form of one type of worship, but it is much, much more than just singing to God. Worship is a lifestyle, a way to live that brings glory to God in everything we say and do. The act of worship is to show our respect and to honor God as our Father. Worship is a time in which we pay reverence and show deep, sincere love and a healthy fear to the One who has made us.

When we worship, it gives us God-like qualities; we become more like Him in how we act. When we live out worship as a lifestyle we develop His traits such as kindness, love, forgiveness and tenderness. True worship is not just in a church or in open praise (although both of these things are great because the Bible explains how we need to do both). True worship is the acknowledgement of God and all of His power and glory in everything we do. The highest form of praise and worship to God is our obedience to Him and His Word. To do this we need to know God and know what He says. Worship is to glorify and exalt God and to do this we need to know God and know what He says.

PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11

"THEREFORE GOD HAS HIGHLY EXALTED HIM [JESUS] AND BESTOWED ON HIM THE NAME THAT IS ABOVE EVERY NAME, SO THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH AND UNDER THE EARTH, AND EVERY TONGUE CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER."

REVELATION 4:11

"WORTHY ARE YOU, OUR LORD AND GOD, TO RECEIVE GLORY AND HONOR AND POWER, FOR YOU CREATED ALL THINGS, AND BY YOUR WILL THEY EXISTED AND WERE CREATED."

ROMANS 12:1-2

"I APPEAL TO YOU THEREFORE, BROTHERS, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, TO PRESENT YOUR BODIES AS A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY AND ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR SPIRITUAL WORSHIP. DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND, THAT BY TESTING YOU MAY DISCERN WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD, WHAT IS GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT."

DAY 15: WORSHIP

Pray:

- For God to help show you areas of your life in which you are not worshipping Him.
- That He helps you deal with and take care of those areas in your life.
- That you can live out, in all areas of your life, a life of worship to God.
- That everything you say or do, glorifies Him, and Him only.

Notes:

DAY 16: KINDNESS

I think it's sad to see that there are so many mean people that we come across on a daily basis. Even at school, people are not nice and seem to be angry with everyone. Being kind is something we do not really think of all of the time, we seem to think you just are or you are not. Kindness is actually a fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and is a huge characteristic of Jesus.

The Greek word for kindness literally means "tender concern, and uprightness." It is kindness of the heart and kindness of act. Kindness is the attribute of God that allowed us to be saved through Jesus Christ. He showed us kindness by not putting us to death like we deserved because of our sin, but instead sent Jesus to die for us instead. It is God's kindness that makes Him want to protect us, and care for us. It's because God is kind to us that we need to be kind to others.

When we are kind to others in a world where kindness is taken for granted, someone who is kind really sticks out to people. Have you ever come across a kind person and thought, "Wow, I wish more people were like that."

There is something different about them?" This is what kindness does. You stick out. Unfortunately, many Christians are not known as kind people. But if we are to be more like Jesus in our word and actions, we can't help but be kind and hope that people will not be able to help but respond to it.

When we exhibit the kindness of God, we are tender, benevolent, and useful to others. Everything we do, every action, every word that comes out of our mouth, will have the flavor of grace in it. This is how people around you can see God in you. They will point at you and say, "Wow. There is something different about that person."

PROVERBS 17:17

"A FRIEND LOVES AT ALL TIMES, AND A BROTHER IS BORN FOR ADVERSITY."

EPHESIANS 4:32

"BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, AS GOD IN CHRIST FORGAVE YOU."

1 PETER 4:8

"ABOVE ALL, KEEP LOVING ONE ANOTHER EARNESTLY, SINCE LOVE COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SINS."

DAY 16: KINDNESS

LUKE 6:27-31

"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MISTREAT YOU. IF SOMEONE STRIKES YOU ON ONE CHEEK, TURN TO HIM THE OTHER ALSO. IF SOMEONE TAKES YOUR CLOAK, DO NOT STOP HIM FROM TAKING YOUR TUNIC. GIVE TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU, AND IF ANYONE TAKES WHAT BELONGS TO YOU, DO NOT DEMAND IT BACK. DO TO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU."

Pray:

- For you to be filled with the spirit of kindness.
- That you can be the example of kindness and Jesus to the people you are surrounded by every single day.
- That everything you do has the flavor of grace in it and that you stand out from others because of it.
- That because of your kindness, others will know the kindness of God.

DAY 17: EVANGELISM

This one is a little bit longer. I'm sorry, but I have a big heart for this and this is one of the most important things we can do as believers.

I don't know about you, but when I think of the word "evangelism" I think about the people who stand out on the street corner on a box yelling at people about Jesus and hell as they walk by. Thank you but no thank you. That's not my style, and probably not yours either. When we think of ourselves evangelizing to our friends, people at our school, or even our families in some cases, we automatically get sweaty palms just thinking about it. Why? Let's just be honest, we feel weird talking to them about our faith. Why? Because talking about our faith is deemed as "weird" to people who do not know about Christianity. So how do we evangelize to our friends without being that "weird" kid? Hopefully we can help unpack how to do this and you can share the Gospel with the people you are around on a daily basis.

First off, as followers of Christ, we are expected to share the news about Jesus' life and resurrection. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Now, this doesn't mean as soon as you meet someone new you start to just blurt out facts about Jesus and ask if they are ready to be a Christian now. Unless you love the sight of people running away from you, I wouldn't do that. As Christians, we are responsible to share with others about Jesus in our relationships with them. There are some great ways in which we can "explain Jesus" to others without just blurting it out like a freshman asking a girl to a dance. But, rather, living in a way that will eventually end up with you explaining who Jesus is and the good news that He brings.

Pray for them- The most important thing we can do is pray for them. Pray that God would change their hearts and open their eyes (2 Corinthians 4:4) to the truth of the gospel. Pray that God would convince them of His love for them and their need for salvation through Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Pray for wisdom as to how you can minister to them (James 1:5). In addition to praying, we must also live godly Christian lives in front of them, so they can see the change God has made in our own lives (1 Peter 3:1-2). As Saint Francis of Assisi once said, "Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

DAY 17: EVANGELISM

Live it first- If we are studying the Bible, we know that living a Christ-like life looks different compared to how the rest of the world lives. The next time you study the Bible, try to see how you can apply what you are reading to your life first. Not only will your own life be changed as a result of studying scripture, but when it comes time to share what you have learned to others, it will mean way more to you and how it applies to your life and people will see your passion. When your friends see how the Bible has changed your life they will be more inclined to change their life based on the lifestyle you live.

You basically share Jesus through your lifestyle. This form of evangelism focuses on building relationships with one person at a time. Through friendship, opportunities arise to share the gospel.

BE REAL- One of the most effective ways to minister to people around you is just to be real. One of the top reasons why people are so turned off to Christianity is because people are too fake. It is really hard to be fake with people who see your ups and downs, successes and failures, who hear how you talk in your best and worst times, and who you see every single day for 8 hours at school. Be authentic in the way you talk and live, not just at church or at school. When you mess up and use bad language, call yourself out on it in front of everyone. That will do more ministering to the people around you because they will wonder why you don't want to speak like that. Saying, "Just be like Jesus" is not realistic. Jesus was perfect. Us followers of Jesus are not perfect at all. When non-believers see that you are just like them and mess up, but see how you handle the mess up physically, verbally, and mentally, they will take note of that far more than anything else you can do.

So long as lifestyle evangelism does not replace the verbal sharing of the gospel, it is a legitimate ministry tool. Lifestyle evangelism can be a wonderful way to show faith in action in a world that needs to see what true Christianity looks like.

SPEAK IT- Now, like I said in the beginning, the end all in evangelizing to the people around you is eventually speaking to them about the Good News of Jesus. You have prayed for them, you live out what you learn from reading the Bible, and are being real. There will be opportunities which come up to speak to them about Jesus; it is up to you to take them.

DAY 17: EVANGELISM

You have to pray for opportunities which come up while living your life in a real and authentic way, and that God will bring opportunities for you to speak to those around you and share your faith in a real, authentic, natural way.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:4

"THE GOD OF THIS AGE HAS BLINDED THE MINDS OF UNBELIEVERS, SO THAT THEY CANNOT SEE THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL THAT DISPLAYS THE GLORY OF CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD."

JOHN 3:16

"FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE."

1 PETER 3:1-2

"WIVES, IN THE SAME WAY SUBMIT YOURSELVES TO YOUR OWN HUSBANDS SO THAT, IF ANY OF THEM DO NOT BELIEVE THE WORD, THEY MAY BE WON OVER WITHOUT WORDS BY THE BEHAVIOR OF THEIR WIVES, WHEN THEY SEE THE PURITY AND REVERENCE OF YOUR LIVES."

1 JOHN 1:5-7

"THIS IS THE MESSAGE WE HAVE HEARD FROM HIM AND DECLARE TO YOU: GOD IS LIGHT; IN HIM THERE IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL. IF WE CLAIM TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM AND YET WALK IN THE DARKNESS, WE LIE AND DO NOT LIVE OUT THE TRUTH. BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT, AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS, HIS SON, PURIFIES US FROM ALL SIN."

We all know people in our lives that are far from Christ. Go ahead and picture them right now in your head.

Pray:

- That you start to have a heart to pray for those around you who don't know Jesus.
- That you are able to live out what the bible says first, as a way to show others that you are a follower of Jesus.
- That you can be real. Pray that your walls can be broken down and you can be approachable by non-believers.
- For the opportunities to be able to tell them about Jesus, and then actually do it.

DAY 18: SURRENDER

It's no hidden idea; we live in a very fast paced world do we not? I'm pretty sure that even as a student, you are busier than I am. You have school, homework, sports, band, family, friends, tutoring, church, small group, etc. and it is really easy to get caught up in the daily grind and lose sight of our true purpose in life- worshipping our Creator. For each of us, this looks different on a daily basis. Everybody has their own way each day in which they connect with God in order to keep Him at the front of their mind.

There is something that we all need to do in order to be focused on God in our lives daily: surrender to Jesus Christ, to God. Surrender your life: needs, worries, pains, joys, praises and surrendering the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual battles. When someone surrenders his or her life, it's all about trust (if you need to, go back and read the day on trust again). It is trusting that God has your best interests at heart. Surrender takes all of the focus off of you, and puts it on Christ. Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Church writes, "Surrender is not the best way to live; it is the only way to live. Nothing else works. All other approaches lead to frustration, disappointment and self-destruction." I personally can think of no better way to stay focused as a believer than to completely surrender my life to my Lord and Savior.

ROMANS 12:1

"AND SO, DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, I PLEAD WITH YOU TO GIVE YOUR BODIES TO GOD. LET THEM BE A LIVING AND HOLY SACRIFICE—THE KIND HE WILL ACCEPT. WHEN YOU THINK OF WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR YOU, IS THIS TOO MUCH TO ASK?"

LUKE 9:23

"THEN HE SAID TO THE CROWD, 'IF ANY OF YOU WANTS TO BE MY FOLLOWER, YOU MUST PUT ASIDE YOUR SELFISH AMBITION, SHOULDER YOUR CROSS DAILY, AND FOLLOW ME. IF YOU TRY TO KEEP YOUR LIFE FOR YOURSELF, YOU WILL LOSE IT. BUT IF YOU GIVE UP YOUR LIFE FOR ME, YOU WILL FIND TRUE LIFE.'"

ROMANS 6:13

"DO NOT LET ANY PART OF YOUR BODY BECOME A TOOL OF WICKEDNESS, TO BE USED FOR SINNING. INSTEAD, GIVE YOURSELVES COMPLETELY TO GOD SINCE YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN NEW LIFE. AND USE YOUR WHOLE BODY AS A TOOL TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD."

DAY 18: SURRENDER

Pray:

- That everything else around you ceases in this moment. Pray that God is your only focus point.
- That you and God can connect everyday and that He helps you make this a priority in your day.
- That you have the ability to surrender it all to Him. Surrender your life: needs, worries, pains, joys, praises.
- Surrender the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.
- That you trust Him with everything. You take all of your worries off of you, and you place it on Him.

DAY 19: SERVING

Serving, both God and people, is a huge part of the Christian life. When I was in high school and all the way through college, I was a server at a restaurant. I loved it. I would be so nice to the customers and get them whatever they wanted because as a server, the better you were, the more money you got in tips. It was great. But this type of serving was fueled by the wrong purpose. I just did it because I wanted more money. When it comes to serving God and serving people the way He called us to, it should be with a genuine heart for God and for people. Jesus Himself served God and He served people on a daily basis while he was here on this earth.

Every gift that we have, every talent, passion, and desire, is a gift from God that He gave to us for two reasons and two reasons only: to serve others and to bring praise to God. Serving is not about us receiving attention or glory; it's for Him to receive glory. In 1 Peter, he tells us that believers should realize that we are speaking and serving directly on God's behalf to other people, and He gives us the ability and strength to do so. When we take the focus off of ourselves and point it to God, that difference in our lives causes people to examine the life-changing nature of a relationship with Jesus Christ. It validates our faith in front of others. This will also show other in which you serve, what God you serve, and you might be the only visible representation of Jesus they will ever see by how you serve them.

1 PETER 4:10-11

"EACH ONE SHOULD USE WHATEVER GIFT HE HAS RECEIVED TO SERVE OTHERS, FAITHFULLY ADMINISTERING GOD'S GRACE IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS. IF ANYONE SPEAKS, HE SHOULD DO IT AS ONE SPEAKING THE VERY WORDS OF GOD. IF ANYONE SERVES, HE SHOULD DO IT WITH THE STRENGTH GOD PROVIDES, SO THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE PRAISED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. TO HIM BE THE GLORY AND THE POWER FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN."

ROMANS 12:1-2

"THEREFORE, I URGE YOU, BROTHERS, IN VIEW OF GOD'S MERCY, TO OFFER YOUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES, HOLY AND PLEASING TO GOD—THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL ACT OF WORSHIP. DO NOT CONFORM ANY LONGER TO THE PATTERN OF THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. THEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO TEST AND APPROVE WHAT GOD'S WILL IS—HIS GOOD, PLEASING AND PERFECT WILL."

Pray:

- For God to show you how you can use your gifts to serve Him by serving others.
- That your body, your talents, your mind, your life, can be used to serve both God and others to show other people Jesus.

DAY 20: SELF-CONTROL

Self-control is a tricky thing. I have a hard time with self-control when it comes to Taco Bell. I can't help it. It tastes so good but it's so bad for you. Self-control when it comes to our lives is something in which we need to keep in mind if we want our Christian walk to be stronger.

Self-control is the ability to control oneself. It has to do with moderation, constraint, and the ability to say "no" to our fleshly desires. I believe that one of the proofs that God is working in our lives is the ability to control our own thoughts, words, and actions. It is not that we are weak or that we need to be aware of this but it is because we are under the influence of sin. One definition of sin is "filling a legitimate need through illegitimate means." Without the Holy Spirit we won't be able to determine and choose the best way to meet our needs. Even if we know what is best, and we know what we need to do, without self-control we can fall into that sin more and more. If we don't show self-control in our actions, we will continually, on a daily basis, fall back into the things that pull us further and further away from God.

The great thing is that self-control naturally leads to perseverance and the ability to abstain from instant gratification of the world. Self-control is a gift that frees us. It frees us to have a healthy body, in the security of good stewardship, from a guilty conscience and it restricts us from falling into our foolish desires. If we were to have self-control we will be able to love and live as we were meant to.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

"FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU, BOTH TO WILL AND TO WORK FOR HIS GOOD PLEASURE."

ROMANS 6:6

"WE KNOW THAT OUR OLD SELF WAS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM IN ORDER THAT THE BODY OF SIN MIGHT BE BROUGHT TO NOTHING, SO THAT WE WOULD NO LONGER BE ENSLAVED TO SIN."

GALATIANS 5:1

"FOR FREEDOM CHRIST HAS SET US FREE; STAND FIRM THEREFORE, AND DO NOT SUBMIT AGAIN TO A YOKE OF SLAVERY."

ROMANS 7:21-25

"SO I FIND IT TO BE A LAW THAT WHEN I WANT TO DO RIGHT, EVIL LIES CLOSE AT HAND. FOR I DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD, IN MY INNER BEING, BUT I SEE IN MY MEMBERS ANOTHER LAW WAGING WAR AGAINST THE LAW OF MY MIND AND

DAY 20: SELF-CONTROL

MAKING ME CAPTIVE TO THE LAW OF SIN THAT DWELLS IN MY MEMBERS. WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM! WHO WILL DELIVER ME FROM THIS BODY OF DEATH? THANKS BE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD! SO THEN, I MYSELF SERVE THE LAW OF GOD WITH MY MIND, BUT WITH MY FLESH I SERVE THE LAW OF SIN."

2 PETER 1:6

"AND KNOWLEDGE WITH SELF-CONTROL, AND SELF-CONTROL WITH STEADFASTNESS, AND STEADFASTNESS WITH GODLINESS."

Pray:

- That God reveals area in your life where you need more self-control.
- That you can learn to take control of your desires.
- That God helps you live and love the way that we were meant to from the beginning.
- God fills you with His Holy Spirit because without it, you won't be able to determine what to withhold from.

DAY 21: POWER OF PRAYER

Prayer is powerful. It is the communication tool to the God of the universe. How cool is that? Here are some things to consider when thinking and praying:

God can do all things; there is nothing impossible for Him.

-LUKE 1:37- "FOR NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD."

God invites His people to pray to Him. Prayer to God should be consistent, and be made in faith, and be within the will of God, and for the glory of God.

-LUKE 18:1 (CONSISTENT)- "AND HE TOLD THEM A PARABLE TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY AND NOT LOSE HEART."

-PHILIPPIANS 4:6 (THANKSGIVING)- "DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING, BUT IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD."

-JAMES 1:5 (FAITH) -"IF ANY OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, LET HIM ASK GOD, WHO GIVES GENEROUSLY TO ALL WITHOUT REPROACH, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN HIM."

-MATTHEW 6:10 (WITHIN GOD'S WILL)- "YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."

-JOHN 14:13-14 (GOD'S GLORY)- "WHATEVER YOU ASK IN MY NAME, THIS I WILL DO, THAT THE FATHER MAY BE GLORIFIED IN THE SON. IF YOU ASK ME ANYTHING IN MY NAME, I WILL DO IT."

-JAMES 5:16 (HEART RIGHT WITH GOD)- "THEREFORE, CONFESS YOUR SINS TO ONE ANOTHER AND PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER, THAT YOU MAY BE HEALED. THE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS PERSON HAS GREAT POWER AS IT IS WORKING."

God hears the prayers of His children. He instructs us to pray, and He promises to listen when we do pray.

-PSALM 18:6- "IN MY DISTRESS I CALLED UPON THE LORD; TO MY GOD I CRIED FOR HELP. FROM HIS TEMPLE HE HEARD MY VOICE, AND MY CRY TO HIM REACHED HIS EARS."

