



# Lent Devotional

40 DAYS OF HEALING



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## INTRODUCTION

**W**elcome to the first day of your healing journey! If you are reading this Lent Devotional, it is because you desire to be closer to Christ. You recognize areas in your life where you need to improve, and you are willing to do the work to be better. Our goal this year is to embark on a holistic journey of healing and wholeness. So over the next 40 days, we will make a commitment to be intentional about daily communion and devotional time during this season we call *Lent*.

What is Lent? The English word *Lent* is a shortened form of Old English Len(c)ten, which means “spring.” In early Christianity, the term was used to refer to the fortieth day before Easter. Many Christians celebrate Lent for different reasons. Traditionally, this religious observance covered a period of 7 weeks before Easter Sunday, beginning on Ash Wednesday every year (March 1) and continuing for 40 days until Easter Sunday (April 16). Much like the Sabbath day God instituted in Genesis, if you commit to this journey, you are committing to scripture meditation, worship, and prayer every day of the week except Sunday. This will result in 40 days of concentrated devotional time with the Lord (Monday-Saturday), and “six Sundays

off”—you’ll be in worship anyway...so it works out pretty good! It will be challenging—especially if this is your first time committing to something like this—but the reward will far outweigh the challenge.

What is the purpose of Lent? Lent prepares the believer to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ through prayer, repentance, atonement, and self-denial. At Kingdom Church, our aim this year is to become more like Jesus. Thus, in the following pages, we have provided a practical guide to assist you in your devotional time. Each day includes a scriptural focus and a daily devotional. If you are so inclined, consider purchasing a writing journal to chronicle your daily thoughts or to personalize your prayers. Think about something you can give up during this time that will help you to remain focused on Christ. Some people give up television watching, social media surfing, food on certain days during certain times, guilty pleasures like shopping or junk food—whatever you deem appropriate, let it go for a season. Whatever poses as a real challenge to let go of, let it go for a season. It is our prayer that you will experience exponential healing and wholeness in Jesus, and that this 40-day “wilderness experience” will set you on a trajectory toward purpose in 2017. Most of all, we pray you will be reminded of the sacrifice Christ made for us, and be compelled to reinvent yourself this year.

## DAY 1: HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

*Scripture and Reflection: Be imitators of God, therefore as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:1-2 NIV)*

There's an old adage that says, "Home is where the heart is," which essentially means that your home is where love and care exists. If you've ever taken a long trip or spent some significant time away from home, you know the comforting feeling you get when you enter into your space. It's a feeling of familiarity and safety. You're in your own space where you belong. As people, we all need a safe place. A safe place is an environment with people who know how to love us unconditionally. This kind of environment is critical to our upbringing and development as children. It lays the foundation for how we give and receive love. Many of us were blessed enough to grow up in a "safe place created by people who know God's love" (Boggs). However, for many others, this may not be the case. Some of us grew up in an environment that lacked love, affection, affirmation, safety, encouragement, and overall joy. When this happens to us as children we can develop what Denise Boggs refers to as a Stony Heart. "A



person with a stony heart is locked up and cannot receive love even when those around them are trying to give it. The wall that was built for self-protection is now blocking out love from God and others” (Boggs). A stony heart that blocks out God not only blocks out his love, but it also blocks out God’s ability to plant seeds of purpose that he has for our lives.

The greatest example of love that we are given is Jesus Christ. Jesus is love. Jesus made the ultimate demonstration of love by dying for us, that our sins would be forgiven. The love that Jesus is calling us to have for one another is agape love. “Agape is an unselfish, unconditional, unconquerable benevolence” (Daniels). It is a dedication to honoring one another as human beings, and showing appreciation for one another. It is the type of love that Jesus has for us. To give and receive this kind of love, we must not be afraid of opening ourselves to receiving love in all its forms. “Without the proper amount of love, we are emotionally stunted and immature. But, as you find a loving environment where love flows, your life will become a beautiful garden: the love of God flowing into your life will cause your life to blossom” (Boggs). Only God’s love can heal us completely, for it is unconditional. Through our acceptance of Christ as our Lord and Savior, we guarantee ourselves security under God’s covering over our lives. Look to Jesus for guidance and instruction on how to show the kind of love that gives God ultimate glory. Are there stones in your heart? Do you

have walls that push others out, including God? Pray today that God will remove these stones of hurt, and bring you to a safe place where love can flow and your purpose can be achieved.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I submit my life to You for the good of your Kingdom. Fill me with Your love, grace, and mercy to pursue Your peace. Help me to be strong and courageous to stand on the word of God. Use me for the army of God. Help me to demonstrate agape love to my fellow brother and sisters. For your word states that “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40). Lord we ask that you continue to help us do your will through the example of your love In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen*



## DAY 2: YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE

*Scripture and Reflection: Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: "Here am I". (Isaiah 58:9 NIV)*

**H**as someone from your past ever said bad or untrue things about you? Did you believe the negative words they said? Have you spoken those words out loud? As a child I remember using the phrase “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me”, to deflect from negative words. The reality is however, these words are theoretical stones, and as much as they don’t hurt physically they do cause emotional damage. We can begin to internalize the negative and believe them to be true. The bible tells us that a person will speak what they believe of themselves (Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 12:34). This type of hurt can have long-term impact on one’s life. It can affect how you treat others, and more importantly how you treat yourself. You can become so shut down, that you shut out from the world and become isolated. “Isolation occurs when you build a wall of self-protection around your heart and cut yourself off from relationships” (Boggs). Being alone and isolated may seem like the easy way out, because you might think

to yourself: if I'm alone, then no one can hurt me, right? Wrong. In actuality, it only creates bigger problems. Isolation leaves us lonely, disconnects us from friends and family, and most importantly, it alienates us from the life of God. God created relationships. We see this in the very beginning of creation with Adam and Eve. He created the church, where we can enjoy fellowship with one another and worship him as a collective community. God wants us to enjoy the connected and fruitful life he promised us. We cannot allow pain and isolation to take that away from us.

If you recognize that you have stones in your heart from negative words that were spoken over your life, then it's time to change your vernacular. Start speaking positively over your life. Believe what God believes about you, God's opinion is the only one that counts. You cannot overcome a stony heart on your own, it must be healed through relationships. Surround yourself with positive people that speak life into you and also believe what God believes about you. Isolation is not a solution. Today, ask God to help you to see and appreciate the gift of others. Ask him to open your heart to receive love from others who express love to us unconditionally. Don't go through your journey of healing alone. God is listening. Call out to him, ask for help, and he will answer.

*Prayer: May the grace of God set you free from pain, and may He who is called us into His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, remind you that after you have suffered a little while, you will be strengthened in the end. God, shield me from isolation. Bring positive people into my life that will demonstrate the same unconditional love that you have for me. Remove the stones from my heart that block me from receiving this love. To God be the glory, honor, and praise. 1 Peter 5:10-11. In Jesus' name. Amen*



## DAY 3: FEELINGS, NOTHING MORE THAN FEELINGS

*Scripture and Reflection: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV)*

According to Dr. Henry Cloud, “Feelings have gotten a bad rap in the Christian world. They have been called everything from unimportant to fleshly” (Boggs). It’s almost as if it’s expected that because you believe in God, and he is the creator of all that is good that everything with us should be “all good”. This is actually the furthest thing from the truth. In the Bible, we have countless examples of moments when feelings that were improperly managed motivated certain behaviors. Moses got angry and killed an Egyptian, Joseph’s brothers were jealous and threw him in a pit, Job’s wife got angry and cursed God, and even Jesus himself displayed anger and destroyed a temple. The point is... feelings do exist. They are motivating factors in how we should respond to each and every situation in our lives; good, bad, or indifferent. “Feelings should neither be ignored nor placed in charge” (Boggs). The bible instructs us to be aware and take ownership of our feelings. Our feelings can motivate



us to do the good that the Lord requires us to do. You can feel generous towards someone and bless them with a gift, or feel compassion towards others and donate your time to a homeless shelter. How we manage our feelings will dictate how we can best serve God and his Kingdom. .

Our feelings are our responsibility. We are held accountable by God to recognize and properly manage them. They are an indicator of what's going on in our hearts. The Bible says that our heart "is the wellspring of life" (Proverbs 4:23). If you are hungry, your stomach may growl. If you are sleepy, you may yawn. Our emotional feelings work the same way. The way you feel will also give you an indication of the state of your relationships. Your feelings are an indicator of how things are going. If you feel emotions of safety, love and joy in your relationship, then you know you're maintaining it successfully. Contrarily, if you feel anger, resentment, or bitterness in your relationship then you know there is a problem that needs to be addressed. Look to God for help when it's not clear about what may or may not be driving particular feelings. God wants us to be good stewards of our hearts and our emotions. When you are feeling pain, take it to the Lord in prayer. Have a conversation with God. Speak to him as you would a trusted friend or confidant. He wants to help. He wants to take away the things that burden us, and grant us peace.

*Prayer: Behold, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in good Health, just as your soul prospers.-John 3-1:2 Lord, please help me to recognize and be accountable to how I feel. Help me to see the consequences of all of my feelings and actions so that I can ensure they align to your word. I thank you that the word of the living God is medicine to my heart, mind, and soul. It heals me internally from hurt, shame, and life's catastrophes and the blood of Jesus washes away all of my sins. In Jesus' name. Amen*



## DAY 4: I'VE GOT NEEDS

*Scripture and Reflection: Your Father knows what you need before you as him. (Matthew 6:8 NIV)*

There are some essential items that everyone needs for survival, the bare necessities: food, water, air, sleep, and shelter. Our bodies cannot survive without these items. We need these things to sustain physically. However, if we delve deeper, we have to recognize that there are also a list of needs for emotional survival as well. Things such as acceptance, appreciation, affirmation, encouragement, respect, security, support, attention, comfort and many others. These emotional needs are in us all, and should ideally be cultivated within our homes during childhood. This is, sadly, not always the case though. Our parents may have done the very best job they could, but the truth is, there may have been some things lacking for us that left us with “unmet needs”. “When we have emotional needs that have never been adequately met, and when we have not learned how God has provided for these needs to be met, we will suffer from neediness. Our unmet needs are exalted and all our energy and thoughts are focused on getting these needs met” (Boggs). Having this type of disposition can

breed insecurity and too much pride. Your insecurities and constant need for attention may actually cause people to run away from you, instead of drawing closer...the very opposite of what you're trying to achieve. It's important to recognize the unmet needs we experienced as a child, begin to heal from them, and be strong enough to openly communicate to those with whom we are in relationship. Denying your emotional and unmet needs sets us up to be self-reliant and self-sufficient. This is a form of pride. Too much pride sets us up for a fall, and entraps us into sin. This is what the enemy uses to lure us to getting our needs met in all of the wrong places. Don't live in this state of denial. Take time to commune with God, and ask him to assist you in identifying if you have any unmet needs and the best way to have them met.

God hasn't forgotten about you and he doesn't want you to worry about anything. He wants us to always seek after him first. He is our provider in every aspect of our lives. Everything we need, he gives us (Matthew 6:25-34). He gives us what we need, even when we don't realize that we need it. Stop leaning on your own understanding and have faith in God. Meditate on his Word and follow his commandments. Not only does God give us the ability to make wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18), but he will also reward those who diligently seek after him (Hebrews 11:6). Instead of worrying, cast your cares on him. He will exchange all your pain for his glorious rest, peace and joy that surpasses all understanding. Trust in God!

*Prayer: Thank You Father that Your promises are true. Help me to be obedient to Your will and word. I shall sow seeds of love into the Kingdom with my time, service, and generosity. All Praise belongs to You. Amen*



## DAY 5: GETTING FREE FROM BONDAGE

*Scripture and Reflection: A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.  
(Proverbs 15:13 KJV)*

**B**elieve it or not, there are many people whom you see every day that have or are struggling with the same pain. The devil wants you to believe you are alone, but you aren't. Take one step at a time. Today, choose to throw off the stone of fear, discouragement, feeling unwanted, anger, low self-esteem, depression or whatever stone of hurt or negativity you have built around your heart.

Get alone with God and ask him for a healing strategy. There is not a one-strategy-fits-all to heal from your pain. The right strategy is the one that will lead you to the life you desire. If we take for example the lame man at Bethesda that was born an invalid, and had been laying at the pool for thirty-eight years. He laid at the pool for an overextended period of time and did not receive the healing he was expecting. His strategy was not working. He was doing the same thing over and over again, yet expecting a different result. Albert Einstein defines this behaviour as insanity. But then Jesus steps in. Jesus saw the man



lying there and asked, “Do you want to be made whole?” When the Lord stepped in, he offered the best solution. He activated the man’s faith, and the result changed his life forever. The strategy God may guide you to, is to get counselling, or he may encourage you to open yourself to a person/friend who has experienced and overcame your same pain.

Remember, Christ died to free us from all types of bondages. Don’t let his death be in vain. Cast these cares on him, because he cares for you. Stop hiding yourself, because there are others feeling just like you. It’s time that you start living the way God wants you to live.

*Prayer: Jesus, I bring every need to You. I appreciate Your Son Jesus for interceding and giving us the victory. Father I pray that you grant me the wisdom to hear your voice, to understand and accept the strategies that you have assigned to me to break free from the things that hold me in bondage. I believe I am in your perfect timing and will for my life. I believe that your word will not return void. I decree and declare that You are Lord and Savior. In Jesus’ name. Amen*

## DAY 6: ANGER: AN ENEMY OF THE HEART

*Scripture and Reflection: Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.  
(Revelation. 3:20 NIV)*

**F**or as long as we live on this earth it is inevitable, we will be hurt by those we are in relationship with. Oftentimes, the closer the relationship, the deeper the wound. And the longer the pain, the harder it is to forgive. Holding onto unforgiveness breeds anger. If we could just erase the thoughts from our heads and then maybe, just maybe, we can let go of anger and the healing process could begin. Maybe it's been five, ten, fifteen, or even twenty long years and we keep rewinding and replaying the tapes of could-a, would-a and should-a. Our hearts are still heavy and burdened by guilt, shame and/or anger. By holding onto anger, we are allowing the enemy prime real estate into our soul and he is taking up valuable space in our hearts and minds. God wants to use this space. But, Satan has laid the foundation of our cemented hearts, convincing us that way too many years have gone by to make a difference now. "Guilt says, 'I owe

you.’ Anger, on the other hand, says, ‘You owe me’ (Andy Stanley). These feelings of anger and guilt keep the focus on us, and less on God.

We can’t fall for the tricks of the enemy. God wants the seat on the throne of our hearts. Once anger takes residency in our hearts God cannot come in. So, today let’s try our best to cast all of our cares and burdens upon God. Let’s bring every thought of anger into captivity under the subjection of Christ and let’s forgive, so that we too may be forgiven. But more important than that, Christ stands knocking at the door of our guilt, shame and anger and all we have to do is open it!

*Prayer: Father, I commit these situations on the altar. Thank you that You are by my side. Please help me to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. Help me to avoid anger from taking up space in my heart, rather let me release that emotion in order to let you take residency there. I believe You for the victory. I trust in You. In Jesus’ name. Amen*

## DAY 7: IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD

*Scripture and Reflection: Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139.23-24 NIV)*

Just imagine if we could all read each other's minds. Scary right? I bet we would be much more careful about what we allowed to slip through the cracks of our thoughts. We would probably keep our minds under 'lock and key.' It's possible we would likely only want to be around people whom we have good thoughts about. Well, mind-reading is not possible. But, you have to wonder, if it were possible would we be more concerned about other people knowing our thoughts or God?

The bible says in Psa. 139:4 "*Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord.*" In other words, before we speak God already knows what we are about to say. Take Sarah for example, it happened to her and God had to "call her on the carpet" and make her accountable for her actions. (Gen. 18:12-15).

In his book, *Enemies of the Heart*, Andy Stanley says, "It is when our hearts are stirred that we become most aware of what they contain". God is sovereign. He

knows all and sees all. The thoughts in our mind come directly from our heart and these thoughts manifest our future. Our prayer today should be *Psa. 139:23-24*, where we ask God to search our hearts and lead us away from offensives. Truthfully, it is not just when we are angry or wronged that our thoughts can become offensive. Negative thoughts can pop in and out of our minds all day, totally unprovoked. It is when this occurs that we look to the word for strength and discernment. These thoughts are a distraction, and keep us away from focusing on all of the good that God has in store for our lives. As we pray, let's ask God to give us a fresh mind and a clean heart so that our Lord doesn't have to "call us on the carpet" and reveal the hidden thoughts of our hearts.

*Prayer: Holy Father, we need Your wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to act wisely in every situation we may encounter. I trust in You. Holy Spirit, direct me to stand on Kingdom principles. Guide me to practice these Holy principles in my life. I worship You in Your Holy name. Amen*

## DAY 8: EXCUSES, EXCUSES

*Scripture and Reflection: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; but in all of your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path.  
(Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV)*

““**T**his is just how I am”, “I’ve been doing it this way for as long as I can remember”, “and I really don’t see what the problem is.” As individuals we use these excuses frequently. Frankly, after a while these explanations for our shortcomings can start to wear thin. Besides, everyone knows what we are really trying to say. We hear these statements often from people who are unwilling to take self-inventory. The easy answer is not always the simplest answer. But the truth is, some of us do not want our lives simplified or fixed. Maybe we believe that a built-in excuse is better than no excuse at all. “The problem is that good excuses rarely collect dust. We use them and use them and use them. You’ve got to decide to discard your crutches”(Stanley). Using this type of reasoning enables us from fulfilling the true purpose that God has set for our lives. Poor excuses leaves us weak and stagnant, but God wants to make us strong and flourishing.

Life happens! One day you may wake up and be confronted with an important life-changing decision. You may feel the weight of the world on your shoulders. That's when you realize, the excuses you have made are no longer useful. It becomes apparent that you never learned how to put your trust in God. Sometimes a path can be set before us without warning or preparation. It is during these times that it is necessary to practice trusting and leaning on God, and allowing Him to direct our paths. Sometimes we have to throw down our crutches of self-reliance, distrust, fear and uncertainty and learn to lean on Jesus. He bore the weight of the world's sins for our freedom. He wants to replace the crutches that we have been leaning on for far too long and begin to direct our paths. All we have to do is let him.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I seek after You to obtain Your will. I plead for the guidance and direction into the paths of righteousness. Direct me into Your faithfulness to pursue the purpose that You called me to do. In Jesus' name. Amen*

## DAY 9: A CHANGE OF HEART

*Scripture and Reflection: Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10 NIV)*

**Y**ou know, today I thought to myself, “I need a heart transplant.” Have you ever felt that way? This heart of mine has been through some trying and troubling times. It has experienced a lot of aches and pains, break-ups and let downs. This heart has taken many bumps and bruises along the way. Even on a good day, there is sometimes no escaping it. The bad that I’ve done to myself and others or the bad that I have allowed others to do to me has put much wear and tear on my heart. Bitterness, jealousy, low self-esteem, distrust and anger, you name it, my heart is loaded. I have been really rough on my heart and I think a transplant is just what I need. I think I know just the doctor to see.

True life-change starts in the heart. Jesus, the great physician, can give us that change. “The most powerful agent of growth and transformation is something much more basic than any technique: a change of heart” (Welwood). If you desire a heart change, all you have to do is ask Jesus to “Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit



within me.” As long as you are sincere, your heart can be changed and converted. There are no scalpels involved, no sutures, no drugs to take and no bleeding. Jesus did all of the bleeding for us. He took all of the cuts, slashes, and the daggers too. One of the hardest parts of change is removing some of the people, places and things that prevent true transformation. This will hurt a little, but in time you will heal. Jesus can replace and restore all that has been lost. So decide today, to give God your entire heart. Let him give you the transplant you need. P.S. It’s FREE!

*Prayer: Jesus we Praise you for the healing of our body and soul. And may the God of peace Himself make you Holy in every way; and may your spirit and soul and body be free from all sin at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.-I Thessalonians 5:23. In Jesus’ name. Amen*

## DAY 10: DON'T SPEAK ABOUT IT, BE ABOUT IT

*Scripture and Reflection: In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. (James 2:17-18 NIV)*

**I**t seems like every child goes through that "I know everything" phase, where you can't give them any direction because they believe they have all the answers. They have answers to questions that we haven't even asked. They've got everything figured out, dotted all the I's and crossed all the T's. So, what else is there to tell them? If you ask them, 'Nothing'. However, as adults with maturity and experience we know that the true testament of knowledge is not in what you say, but in what you do. You can see the measure of a person's life not in what they say, but in the fruits of their labour. This was a lesson the Lord taught me that I conveyed to my own children. When confronted with their "know it all attitude," I would say things like "Show me don't tell me" or "Actions speak louder than words". This is the same lesson that some of us have to allow the Lord to impart into us.

Faith is not in the knowing; it is in the doing. This is not always an easy task. “It’s much easier to behave your way into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new of behaving” (Stanley). Faith is not a word to be tossed ‘to and fro’ without the evidence to back it up. Being in a relationship with God empowers us to believe in his word, and see it as truth. James 1:22 says, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” As believers and citizens of the Kingdom, we must be willing to work our faith and allow God to guide our paths, so that ultimately He can get the glory.

*Prayer: Father, teach me to live the life that you purposed for me. I will surrender to You by walking in the fruit of the Spirit of God; love, joy, peace, a quiet mind, kind acts, well-doing, faith, gentle behavior, and control over desires. Allow me to love the way you loved me. - Galatians 5: 22-23 In Jesus' name. Amen*

## DAY 11: WHY YOU MAD?

*Scripture and Reflection: Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1: 2-4 ESV)*

**A**nger consumes the mind and causes feelings of resentment, exasperation, and strong annoyance. “The root of anger is the perception that something has been taken. Something is owed you, and now a debtor relationship has been established” (Stanley). Anger is a secondary emotion. First you feel cheated, then you get angry. First you were lied to, then you get angry. First you feel abandoned, then you get angry. You hold onto the emotion and lash out at those closest to you. At times the person you are angry with has gone on with their life and has no concern for your anger. And those closest to you become the punching bag or scapegoat for the pain you carry in your heart. This happens because you have not addressed the initial feeling that caused you to become angry in the first place. You not only become angry but carry bitterness in your heart as well. The vicious cycle of emotions continue, unless they are addressed.

Nevertheless, there is good news! In this scripture we learn that everything, good and bad, should be counted as Joy. The testing of your faith, the trials, the tribulations, the squeezing and shaping, the developing, will produce steadfastness that is fixed and unchanging. We are told to let steadfastness have its full effect to become complete. Don't hang onto the anger. Know that you are being groomed for greater things. You can persevere. God will work it out for our Good and His Glory.

*Prayer: Father, I need Your help to realize that You are my hope. I search and seek after Your loving kindness. I cry out for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thank You that I can trust in You. I will allow your praises to flow from my mouth daily. All praises to You, Jesus. Amen*

## DAY 12: GREED

*Scripture and Reflection: He said to them watch out, be on your guard against all kinds of greed. Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions. (Luke 12:15 NIV)*

Jesus came so we might have abundant life. His goal for us is to live in purpose and to reach our greatest potential. So, why do we hold onto people, places, and things as if life comes from them? Sometimes, we cling so tightly to people that they become idols for us. Our focus becomes fixed on them. Our lives revolve around them. We feel like we need these people to fill the place of need that we have. The reality is they can't! Our monetary possessions, our family, or our jobs can't take the place of Our Lord and Savior! As citizens of the Kingdom of God, our goal is to live a God-first lifestyle. This means giving God the first of all that we have, including our time and our resources. We cannot serve two masters. In order for God to be glorified, we have to put him above everything else...especially in our heart.

Clinging onto our earthy possessions is evidence of a heart that doesn't fully believe in God's promises. We need to have more faith in our hearts. We need to trust and believe that God will deliver on his promises for our lives.

The provisions and resources that God provides us with are gifts for us to live on and for us to use to serve him. How do we serve him? We do this by putting God first, helping others, and being good stewards of our resources. These are gifts used for our ultimate purpose, and our submission to his will gives God the ultimate glory.

*Prayer: God, I am grateful for all You have done for me. I worship, hunger, and thirst after You. I will search, seek, and surrender to Your Kingdom principles first. I dedicate my life to You. Amen.*

## DAY 13: IT'S ALL IN THE HEART

*Scripture and Reflection: A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. (Matthew 12:35 NKJV)*

**O**ur heart is like an internal filing cabinet. It is where we store everything we have ever dealt with. All of our involvements, the things we've loved, dismissed, and learned from...are all recorded in there. Our experiences in life dictate the kind of condition our heart is in. "Every arena of life intersects with what's going on in our hearts. Everything passes through on its way to wherever it's going." (Stanley). So you might ask, how does one get a good heart? Or, how can I tell what condition my heart is in? This scripture tells us plainly that if good is stored in our hearts, then good will come out of it. The good that we are to store in our hearts is the word of God. His promises for our lives are outlined in his word and gives us instructions on how to take the best care of our "treasures". This is why Solomon tells us to guard our hearts.

So, in turn, what do we do with our negative experiences? We ask God for healing. We don't want these



factors to result in unfavorable outcomes. We don't want them to create walls to keep us from loving ourselves and others. Jesus' call to us, is to love others as he has loved us. In other words, by treating others the way Jesus treats us, we are, in turn, loving him. Are there things that you need to address so that your heart can bring forth good things? Jesus came to help us address issues and heal us from the stones that are in our hearts. When we are healed, we can fully live out God's purpose for our lives.

*Prayer: Lord, I pray today for help with being a good steward of my heart. Help me to strengthen my internal filter. Help me to determine what should stay and what I should let go of. Help me to determine what should stay and of what I should let go. Thank you for caring about me enough to show me the way to a clean heart, in order to serve you. Amen.*

## DAY 14: WHAT GOD HAS FOR ME WILL BE FOR ME

*Scripture and Reflection: ...whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, I will not tolerate (Psalm 101:5 NIV)*

**W**e live in a virtual world. From Facebook to Instagram to Twitter, our lives are on constant display. Everyone seems to be obsessed with the need to reveal so many intimate details about their lives. If you're not careful, you will start envying the "good that God is doing in other's lives," and begin to feel left out. You may ask yourself, why am I not getting married? When will I be able to buy a house? Why can't I go on vacation? But what we fail to realize is that the things we see are only the highlight reels of people's lives. We see what people want us to see. Having these feelings of discontent for ourselves and coveting after the blessings of others can breed jealousy, and "jealousy says God owes me" (Stanley). When when we feel this way, it implies God cannot or will not supply all our needs. But the truth is, the people we are jealous of cannot provide the things that we are looking for either. Only God can, according to His will. Learn to admit when jealousy has started to

take residence in your heart. The blessings of others do not dictate the blessings God has for you. Just because you cannot see it now, does not mean it will not happen. This is where our faith steps in and steps up.

*Prayer: Jehovah, I commit these situations into Your hands. Help me to have a humble spirit of a servant and serve You with my life. I surrender every emotion I've ever had to you. Please reconcile the irreconcilable within me. In the name of Jesus. Amen*

## DAY 15: A JEALOUS HEART IS A JOYLESS HEART

*Scripture and Reflection: This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength (Nehemiah 8:10).*

A jealous heart is a joy robber. When jealousy creeps in, it shifts your focus away from what you do have and deludes you into thinking others have what you don't. Jealousy also robs you of the journey. Maybe your friend was born into wealth. But if you weren't born into wealth, that only means you don't need it to become all that God has destined you to be. Oftentimes, we covet in others what we don't need to accomplish God's plan. God knows all about you. Whatever he left out when he made you, He doesn't need to complete you. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Don't give jealousy another opportunity to rob your joy.

Jealousy tells the true nature of our deepest heartfelt feelings. You can't afford this kind of setback because these are feelings we may not always verbalize but we feel them deep in the heart. Jealousy keeps us from loving one another. But if we get love, then we get joy. And if we get joy, then we get strength. What if I told you that the enemy

wants to make you jealous to rob your joy?

Today ask the Lord to show you what you need to see, so that you can unlock the promises he has for your life. Strengthen your faith, focus on the joy of the Lord, and receive His strength.

*Prayer: Father, I am convinced that sometimes I am distracted by other people's lives. Guard my eyes and my heart so that I only desire what you desire for me. Grant me the joy of the Lord, which is the prize of my salvation. I believe that all that I need to be who you need me to be, is already within me. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## DAY 16: BECOMING YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

*Scripture and Reflection: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17 KJV)*

**A**s we go along on this journey called life, we will at one point or another ask ourselves this question: Who am I? We are all trying to discover who we are and become our most authentic self. How do we begin this journey of self-awareness? Is it possible to live authentically in this world? Where do we begin? In his book, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Peter Scazzero says ‘awareness of yourself and your relationship with God are intricately related. In fact, the challenge to shed our “old false” self in order to live authentically in our “new true” self-strikes at the very core of true spirituality’. (Emotionally, 65)

Our Heavenly Father gave us the perfect model, Jesus. If we examine His life and His ways we begin to understand His character and personality. Jesus lived a full and authentic life—self-assured in God’s love for Him. He experienced a range of emotions and life experiences. However, He never forgot His primary purpose which was

to do the will of the Father. In the same manner, our union with Christ has awakened us into a new life, a new way of living. Our new person wants to live like Jesus, secure in our Father's love for us. Practically, there are four steps that Peter Scazzero recommends we do to help us on our journey toward knowing ourselves and knowing God (Emotionally, 85-90):

1. Pay attention to your internal silence and solitude. It is there we often hear God like Elijah did, 'And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.' (1 Kings 19:12)
2. Find trusted companions. Our culture proclaims "I can do it on my own" as a badge of honor. But we are One Body, the church, and we must move together in rhythm in response to Jesus as mature adults using our gifts to fulfill our purpose.
3. Move out of your comfort zone. If nothing changes, nothing changes. 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.' (Romans 12:2a)
4. Pray for courage. Gideon was fearful of his earthly father and he was afraid of what God asked him to do. Gideon chose to pray to God for a sign that gave him courage to deliver Israel to Jehovah. (Judges 6-8)

***Prayer:** Lord thank you for giving me the gift of life. Your word states “before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart” (Jeremiah 1:5). Help me to tap into the person you have ordained me to be. Lead me in the direction of my purpose. Father, order my steps in your word and help me to love the authentic me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*





## DAY 17: BREAKING THE POWER OF THE PAST

*Scripture and Reflection:* “The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.” (Numbers 14:18 NIV)

**W**e read this scripture and wonder ‘am I being punished for something my grandfather did’? But to understand this scripture a little more, let’s examine the life of Joseph from Genesis. Joseph was Jacob’s favorite son. He had visions from God, he was hated by his brothers, sold into slavery, accused of rape, made a governor, and when a great famine came over the land, he was able to save his whole family and be reunited with them.

In the end, everything worked out for Joseph and his brothers. But sometimes, we think to ourselves, ‘my situation is different, I can never move forward, I can never let go, my story is too painful’. But I want you to know that God can break any curse and heal you from any pain. The Old Testament frequently speaks about sins abounding from the third and fourth generation. And if we

examine Joseph's history we see that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had patterns of lying, favoritism, family separation between brothers, and poor intimacy in marriage. All of these patterns impacted the next generation, including Joseph's. But Joseph broke the pattern and moved forward in the midst of his past. How did Joseph move forward? Author Peter Scazzero offers four lessons from Joseph's life (Emotionally, 112-114):

1. Joseph repeatedly affirmed the sovereignty of God 'It is not you who sent me here, but God' (Genesis 45:8).
2. Joseph grieved openly and wept for the pain over the loss of his family.
3. Joseph rewrote his future according to God's purpose for his life.
4. Joseph conditioned himself daily to be a blessing – even to his enemies.

If Joseph can do it, so can you. So can I. With God, we can move on from our past, if we examine it, grieve for it, hold onto Him, and walk with Him into our future.

*Prayer: Father God, I pray today that you help me to see the purpose and the future that you have planned for me. With your help, I want to release any hurt and anger that may come from my past. Lord, help me to move on and forgive any transgressions that may have been done to me or against me. Help me to look toward my future. Thank you for your mercy that covers me, and your grace that sustains me. I ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ your son, Amen.*

## DAY 18: JOURNEY THROUGH THE WALL

*Scripture and Reflection:* “And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”  
(Genesis 22:2 KJV)

God called Abraham to leave his homeland at the age of 75 and follow him. God promised to make Abraham the father of many nations and give him lots of descendants and Abraham obeyed. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac. How can Isaac die and God still fulfill his promise to Abraham? God can't lie, can he?

As Christians we will all face trials and tests that are beyond our control. These are radical, life-changing events that seem irrational, even cruel. In his book, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Peter Scazzero talks about the ‘The Wall’, what the ancients called ‘the dark night of the soul’. He suggests that our life in Christ moves in seasons and that in those seasons The Wall appears when a crisis happens—it could be a divorce, the death of a child, the loss of a job, or a deep betrayal.

How do we get through The Wall? Scazzero asks us to consider four dynamics (Emotionally, 124-132):

1. Brokenness. Measured by how “offendable” we are. A broken person is not easily offended.
2. The Unknown God. Measured by our ability to let go of the need for answers and explanations.
3. Waiting on the Lord. Measured by our willingness to patiently move at God’s pace.
4. Detachment from the World. Measured by removing things, people, behavior, and activities that are more important than our relationship to Christ.

The dark night of the soul comes to all of us; it is part of our human condition. But God has given us direction through His Word and His people to prepare us and sustain us through these trying times and strengthen us as witnesses for His glory.

*Prayer: Lord we pray today for the faith to take you at your word. You are sovereign over all, and your word never comes up void. Help us to increase our faith, in order to break down the walls that surround our hearts and minds. No longer do we want to stay in the “dark night of our souls”. Your son Jesus is the truth, the way, and the life. Help us to come out of our dark places and walk into the bright future that you have ordained for us to live in the fullness of your glory. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

## DAY 19: ENLARGE YOUR SOUL THROUGH GRIEF AND LOSS

*Scripture and Reflection: “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” (John 12:24 NIV)*

**H**ave you ever prayed for a dream and worked toward that dream only to have it vanish? Has a family member or beloved friend died and left you alone? Has your spouse or loved one ever betrayed you? These losses are normal. The circumstances and details may differ, but loss and grief are part of the limits that God placed on us as human beings. There are some common ways most people have learned to seemingly protect themselves from grief and loss. Some of these include, blaming ourselves, others or God; becoming hostile; living in denial; self-medicating with alcohol, drugs, food, shopping; or minimizing the pain to make it appear less serious.

One of the greatest examples of loss and grief we see in the Bible is the story of Job. Job was the ‘greatest man amongst all the people in the East’ (Job 1:3). He was a Godly man. He was faithful and had an abundance of family

and friends. Suddenly, in one day Job lost everything—his wealth, his family, and his health. Through the story of Job we see him model biblical grieving through feelings and actions; contrary to our natural tendency to protect ourselves. God gave us a full range of feelings and emotions that we see expressed throughout this example. The pain and the loss we go through is not in vain. There are strategies that we learn in the process:

1. Pay Attention. To yourself and God. Job lamented, he screamed, he cursed the day he was born, he questioned God, he got angry, he sobbed, he prayed, he wondered why this happened to him, he confronted his grief directly.
2. Wait For the Confusing In-Between. Job waited for God. He had to listen to his “well-meaning” friends accuse him of sinning and blaming him for his grief. Job knew God, but he had to endure these accusations along with his grief.
3. Embrace the Gift of Your Limits. Our body, mind, spiritual understanding, wealth, talent, and time are all limited. This is the gift of humility.
4. Let the Old Birth the New. There is finality. We can’t get it back...but we must let a new birth take place.

***Prayer:** Lord we pray and ask that you comfort us in our times of grief. We have all suffered much loss and ask that you heal the broken places and spaces of our hearts. Father only you can repair and restore the love, joy, and peace that the enemy has tried to steal from us. What the enemy planned for our evil; Lord, we pray that you turn it around for our good. Cover us Lord with your precious blood that heals all of our wounds. Help us to see the lesson in every loss, and trust in your will for our life. In your son Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*





## DAY 20: PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF PEOPLE

*Scripture and Reflection:* “‘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 22:37-40 NIV)

**O**ur culture places an emphasis on individuality and uniqueness. Be yourself, do your thing, it is okay as long as it doesn't hurt others...but is it really okay? If we live this way can we fulfil the Great Commandments?

Author Peter Scazzero discusses new skills emotionally mature adults can learn to love their neighbors well. One of those skills, practicing the presence of people, brings Matthew 22:39 within reach for those of us who struggle with getting out of self (179). He shares theologian Martin Buber's work *I and Thou*, whose premise states that most of us have an *I-It* relationship with others. We are the center of our world and other people are a means to an end—we objectify them. We don't consciously do it, but because of our self-centered nature—our tendency is

to minimize or diminish people who don't agree with us, think like us, or do what we want.

In the *I-Thou* relationship we see people as God sees us and them...made in His image; so all of us are equally unique and valuable. We are different and we are the same. Our relationship is sacred because we are sacred in God's sight. We learn to love each other with our differences as unique people with one core trait that is the same—we are all made in God's image. It is this image, this connection that allows God to come in and fill the space of our differences with His presence, which is love (181-183). His love allows us to have a genuine relationship without judgment or fear. We don't have to change one another or agree with one another on all things or anything, but we can fellowship together.

*Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father we pray that we seek your kingdom and righteousness first and foremost before anything. As it says in your word, doing so grants us the true desires of our hearts that are aligned with your will. Let us not be lovers of self, money or be arrogant and boastful. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. By putting our own needs aside to help others, we illustrate the message of your life. You died for all, so that we who live might no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died and rose again for us. Lord we thank you for the opportunity to model your will, so that in the end you may be glorified. In Christ Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## DAY 21: THE UNBALANCED DIET

*Scripture and Reflection: You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. (Psalm 63:1-3 NIV)*

**T**he health and wellness industry has a multibillion dollar revenue. Drove of people want to look their best and are willing to do whatever is necessary to get quick effortless results. However, to the contrary of diet fads any doctor will tell you in order to achieve your best health you'll need a balanced exercise and diet plan. Similarly, for centuries Christians have focused predominantly on one area while neglecting another. We have concentrated on, and centered ourselves around spiritual disciplines that make us moral. But often, we have ignored a component of our lives that Peter Scazzero suggests, is equally important. He suggests that, Emotional Health and Spiritual Maturity are inseparable. It is not possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature. At what point in our journey did we consciously or unconsciously decide to hone in on one

and ignore the other?

In Psalm 63, David describes an earnest desire to seek after God. He prescribes for the reader a thirsting passion to commune with God. Throughout the entire passage he lists a hunger to be in God's presence that we all should want and strive for. But he doesn't stop there. He goes on to explain that his WHOLE being longs for God. Not just the spiritual side. David implies through this passage, that longing after God spiritually alone is partially quenching. However David acknowledges there is a quenching of the whole being that is insatiable yet needs to be continuously and relentlessly sought after. This week, as we evaluate our emotional healing, let's be honest with ourselves and others regarding our emotions of anger, sadness, and fear. Ask God for courage and seek ways to manage this journey.

*Prayer: To the Glory of God, I desire to be in Your presence. I pray for the peace that surpasses all of my understanding. May Your Kingdom come and Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. I thank you Father for the Scriptures that show us the right way to express our emotions. I ask you to heal me from the inside-out.  
In Jesus' name. Amen*

## DAY 22: HOW DO YOU FEEL?

*Scripture and Reflection: Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" (John 11:32-36 NKJV)*

**A**cquaintances often ask each other "how are you feeling?" Without thought, most of us hurriedly answer "fine." While this is a typical example of a normal occurrence, it is also how many people respond to their emotions. A quick, I'm fine, instead of uncovering the necessary layers that reveal the truth.

Growing up, can you remember crying and a parent asking you, "do you want me to give you something to cry about? If not then stop crying!" How about telling your own child who is scared of the dark or the imaginary monster in the closet that there is nothing to be afraid of. Behaviors such as these, and many others, tend to teach that the feelings we experience are illegitimate and unwarranted. Someone, somewhere told us that feeling was

a bad thing. As a result, we ignore what irritates us, pay no attention to our pain and abandonment, and disregard disappointment. Our most earnest efforts to hide or mask less than desirable feelings often become apparent through our actions. The consequence of this is that we become casualties to our own emotional immaturity. The journey of genuine transformation to emotional health begins with a commitment to allow yourself to feel.

Jesus in John 11 was implored by Mary and Martha to visit and ultimately heal his friend and their sick brother Lazarus. By the time Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had already died and had been dead for 4 days. Mary and Martha were grieving the loss of their brother. When Jesus saw Mary's grief, he groaned. When he saw his deceased friend, he wept. Jesus gave himself permission to feel. As you begin to embrace your individual journey towards emotional health, allow yourself to feel the genuine and authentic feelings that you are experiencing. It's ok to feel. There is no other way to achieve true emotional health and spiritual maturity. So let's gauge again, How do you feel?

*Prayer: I am thankful and grateful for the blessings You provided. Thank You for Your love and mercy. I am grateful that my life is in Your hands. No matter what I feel, I won't dismiss my feelings in the name of faith. Rather I will let my feelings properly inform my faith. Thank You Jesus. Amen*

## DAY 23: DON'T WAVE YOUR WHITE FLAG

*Scripture and Reflection: By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. (Hebrews 11:24-27 NKJV)*

**H**ave you ever felt haunted by your past? Have you ever buried memories, painful family involvements, and past occurrences in an attempt to avoid them for fear of uncovering the truth? Even the worst and most excruciating experiences become part of our identity. The more we know and the more we uncover the truth about those experiences, the more freedom we have to make decisions about how we want to live our lives. Traditionally in battle, a symbol of surrender is a wave of the white flag. If you want to capture emotional health, there are no more white flags to wave as it pertains to overcoming the fear of your past.



Moses' life was full of pain and failures. No doubt, Moses had his share of heartache. Due to a declaration by Pharaoh to kill all first born male children, his mother abandoned him and sent him up a river. After being raised in Pharaoh's house, wealthy and privileged, Moses killed a man, and lost everything. He spent forty years in inconspicuousness in the desert. However, Hebrews 11:27 says by faith Moses endured seeing Him who is invisible, Moses made a cognizant decision not to wave his white flag and give in to the fear of his past. Yet he focused on the Invisible One, accepting his invitation to bless many. Today, conquer your fears of the past, and see the invisible God who wants to invite you to be a blessing to others.

*Prayer: God, we pray today that you help us to release any fear or worry that has stricken our hearts. Your word states that you "hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Let us go boldly towards the challenges we face knowing that you are our rod and our staff and will keep us safe. With you by our side, and for us, who can be against us? Today we draw closer to you Lord, in an effort to win the battles that lie ahead and walk with the strength and courage that you have bestowed upon us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## DAY 24: A BROKEN STOP LIGHT

*Scripture and Reflection:* Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”  
(1 Kings 19:11-13 NKJV)

**T**ake a moment to imagine a stoplight. Green light means it’s time for the driver of the car to press the gas pedal and go, while yellow signifies for the driver to cautiously slow down, as the light converts to red and makes a complete stop. This particular imaginative light however is broken, it goes from green, to yellow, and instead of changing to red, goes back to green. This pattern continues, and the cars never stop. Can you envision the chaos and confusion that this breakdown must cause? The cars never stop, only slow down temporarily until the light returns to green and then the driver picks up speed and continues driving. Unfortunately this is not just a creative

exercise filled with traffic hiccups, this has unintentionally become the reality of many of our lives. This malfunction in traffic patterns is a picturesque portrait of what our lives have become. In a twenty-four hour day, we unremittingly, go all day without stopping. We wake up, get the kids ready for school, go to work, come home, cook, watch the game or reality tv, go to bed only to start the same pattern over the next day. At some point throughout the day, the yellow light appears, and we the driver, slow down the car of life, just enough to regain acceleration to keep going upon the green light. Our life reflects the chaotic traffic patterns we fantasized about when the stoplight was broken.

In I Kings 19:11 God gave Elijah the instructions to go out and stand on the mountain and wait for the presence of the Lord. Interestingly enough, God did not appear in the wind. Neither was God visible in the earthquake or fire like he was for Moses. God revealed himself to Elijah in a gentle whisper. The silence after the chaos for Elijah, and for all of us, is full of the presence of God. Today, force your car to stop at the proverbial red light, that we might center ourselves and hear the still small voice of God.

***Prayer:** Lord today I thank you for all of the many blessings you have granted me in my life. Father God, I know that life can get hectic and we are always on the go. However, I pray today that I will make a committed effort to put you first above all things. Open my eyes to see the value in spending alone time with you Father, and silence my mind from all the noise of the world to hear your voice. For it is in this time with you that our relationship strengthens, I can give you praise, and I can hear the directions that you have for my life that lead me closer to my purpose. These things I ask in your son's name Jesus Christ. Amen.*



## DAY 25: ARE YOU WILLING?

*Scripture and Reflection: Now John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.” But Jesus said to him, “Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side. “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” (Luke 9: 49 – 55 NKJV)*

**H**ave you ever taken time to watch a toddler? In their most pure and innocent form, they are willing to help complete any and every task. Toddlers jump at the opportunity to help sweep the floor, change the clothes from the washer to the dryer, fix the hole in the wall, and so much more. It provides for the toddler a sense of belonging and achievement that is satisfying and fulfilling. Their willingness is persistent and consistent. Most often than not they will not take no for an answer.

We often forget that the people chosen as disciples were neither spiritually nor emotionally mature. The bible does not mention anywhere that any of the twelve were bible scholars before Jesus called them. Like us, they all had lots to learn. Peter had a cussing problem, Andrew was quiet and shy. James and John were called the sons of thunder because they were aggressive, intolerant, and ambitious. Thomas was cynical and mildly depressive. Philip was skeptical, Matthew was a tax collector that abused people. Judas was a thief and betrayed Jesus. Simon was a terrorist and Philip was skeptical. They all however, had one thing in common. They were willing. Flaws and all, what is one step you can take today to place yourself in the hands of Jesus to mold you into a spiritually and an emotionally mature follower of Him?

*Prayer: Father, today I pray and ask you to show me the will for my life? Use me father however you see fit for the glory and advancement of your Kingdom. Lord your word says that you will never leave nor forsake us, so that I am trusting that wherever you tell me to go it is for my good and your glory. Today Lord, I am willing to go the distance for you, as you have done so many times for me before. Thank you for your love and for choosing me. In your son Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

## DAY 26: GOT ANY PLANS?

*Scripture and Reflection: For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.  
(Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)*

In life we all want the best for ourselves and our families. Sometimes the plans we see for ourselves are God's preferences that he has placed inside of us. Other times they are our own. The vision for your life that God has shown you may at times lay dormant. Just because we are able to see the plans, does not mean we will experience them. Experience requires partnership, and until you align yourself with what God has intended for you to do the vision will not come to fruition. You may go through life doing many things that God had not intended and wonder why you are unhappy? You are not satisfied, always seeking how you can fill that insatiable appetite to have purpose. God will give you desires so that his will can be fulfilled in your life to bless others. The enemy will distort your purpose to cause you to believe that your plan is best. Any plan created outside of partnership with God will leave you empty and unfulfilled.



As stated in John 10:10, for the enemy comes but to steal, kill and destroy, but I came to give you life that you may have it more abundantly. When we pray and ask God for his will to be done in our lives, we sometimes fail to realize this is what he wants to do. Sometimes we believe that we're waiting on God, when in reality he is waiting on us. He wants us to desire what he desires and to bless those he wants us to bless. Have you ever prayed and asked God to use you in a way that would bring him glory? When he does, it is not always how you thought. Instead God will take the plans thought impossible to bring about glory and to place you in a situation that you never thought would happen. Pray and ask God for his plans for your life and his will to be done. Once you have asked him, you will begin to see differently and realize that His plan is best.

*Prayer: God, I thank you for being sovereign. I am grateful that you see my life at the beginning and end, simultaneously. This ability enables you to know what's best for me. My prayer is that my will and your will for my life will become so entwined that I won't be able to see when yours starts and mine ends. Cause my prayers to align with your desires for me. Give me your heart so that I may fulfill your purposes. I thank and praise you in advance for the glory my life will bring you. Amen!*

## DAY 27: HIDE AND SEEK

*Scripture and Reflection: Come to me, all you who are weary and 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.  
(Matthew 11:28- 29 NIV)*

**C**an you remember as a child playing the game hide and seek? Your goal was to find the best hiding place, so that no one would find you. However, sometimes you would hide yourself so well, and get into places where you couldn't escape. When it was time to reveal yourself, you realized you were locked into a place that was difficult to get out. It's possible you were in the dark, and could not see your way out. Fear may have overtaken you so much you became afraid. You fumble your way through and finally open the unlocked door. You're free!

This image is one we can clearly visualize in our heads. We know the space and we see the thing that we're entrapped in. However, in life there are walls we do not see. Emotional prisons we have locked ourselves into. Invisible prisons of pain, hurt, anger and unforgiveness. The doors that are locked often are too painful to open. We play hide

and seek with God because we don't want him to show us the deep hurt or pain that keeps us imprisoned. We have become masters of hiding and not wanting to be found. You smile while inside is darkness and hidden pain. The emotional or physical pain has kept us locked inside. But the truth of the matter is we cannot hide our hurt from the Lord. Psalms 69: 5 says "You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you".

In today's reading, Jesus bids us to come to him. He wants to give us rest from the pain and to be yoked with him. Jesus wants to unlock the door that is keeping us trapped inside. These invisible doors can't be seen by others; only God. God will show us what he wants to heal in our lives if we are open to receive the healing he has for us. Once God unlocks the door to your pain, your hurt and darkness, he will show you the way out and never to be locked behind the door again. Letting go of the pain, and revealing yourself to God brings healing. We no longer hide from ourselves or from God. No more hide and seek, but being found by the one who can heal. Ask God to open the door, so that you can find rest.

***Prayer:** God we come to you, as the warden of our souls, asking you to unlock our invisible cells and set us free from the chains of bitterness, anger and defeat that have imprisoned us long enough. Our prisons may have different names, but we believe you are the only one who can deliver us from these cells of bondage. We ask for healing from the debilitating pain that caused us to not only enter these prisons, but also caused us to remain imprisoned for as long as we have. Set us free from the emotional bondage that has caused us to hide from you and from those you have placed in our lives. Thank you for the REST that accompanies FREEDOM! Amen!*



## DAY 28: GREAT EXPECTATIONS

*Scripture and Reflection:* Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, look at us so the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.  
(Acts 3:2-6 NIV)

**H**ow often have you had expectations, only to receive something different than what was expected? In the story, the crippled man sat by the temple gate daily to beg for leftovers from others. His expectation was for everyone he asked to give to him money. What he did not expect was for Peter to give him something that would change his life. What he received that day exceeded his expectations. Is there an area in your life where you are begging for others to give whatever they can to help you? Maybe your expectation was to receive the promotion or to purchase the new home? You find yourself looking for tangible things to fill up the empty spaces in your heart. Instead of receiving what you're hoping for, you find

yourself wanting to be loved and not abandoned, hurt by your past and unable to move forward. In this mental state you remain trapped in a prison of relying on others for assistance. I'm sure this crippled man prayed that one day someone would be very generous and he would not have to beg anymore or that maybe someone would provide for him daily. Maybe he became weary in expecting his situation to change.

Are you like this crippled man, expecting very little because of your current situation? My question to you today is what are you expecting? Are you prepared to receive God's expected gift for you? God is ready to do something new in your life. No more the same meager fare that you expected from others. No longer will you receive the leftovers that others have given you. Ask yourself, are you ready to be made whole? God wants you to walk into the fullness that he has for you. He wants you to walk, out of the bondage that has held you at the gate. Today, trust God to do exceedingly and abundantly more than you could ask or imagine in your life.

*Prayer: Lord, as we pray for our release from invisible prisons, may our expectations of how that will look for us be found in you. Deliver us from the prison of relying on others for our assistance. May we rely on you as our source; realizing that the assistance of others is merely a conduit for the blessing. We trust you to take care of us in totality; our needs and when appropriate, our wants. Grant us the courage to walk through the gates of expectation and into the place of fulfillment! Amen!*

## DAY 29: IT'S TIME FOR A PRISON BREAK

*Scripture and Reflection: ...According to your faith be it unto you. (Matthew 9:29 NIV)*

**H**ow long have you been in prison? No, not that prison. That emotional space that has you feeling trapped. Well, there is good news. God wants to give you a prison break. However, for this to work, you need to do your part. What does that mean? Well, since the area most of us feel trapped in is more often than not an unaddressed, unattended to, or unhealed emotional issue, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to fix those areas because we cannot do it ourselves.

In Matthew 9:29, Jesus asked two blind men if they believed that he could heal them. Their reply? “Yes.” In response Jesus said, “According to your faith be it unto you” and he healed them. Now, I ask you, do you want the cycle to end? Do you want to be healed? If your answer is yes, then the response is the same, “According to your faith, be it unto you.” No matter what you are going through, “Be it unto you.” The Master has an impeccable track record of solving cold cases: the woman with the issue of blood- 12



years (Matthew 9:20). The blind man- from birth- (John 9). The lame man- 38 years. You \_\_\_\_\_ years. When faith meets opportunity, the cycle can be broken and recovery is possible. It's time for a Prison Break.

*Prayer: God I have been praying about (fill in the blank) for so many years and have not received the breakthrough I desire. But I believe that you are the God of 'cold cases' and this is the year I AM HEALED! I thank you for setting me free from the chains and the mindset that have imprisoned me. I am walking, no, I'm running out of this jail cell into the life you have promised; into my destiny! I praise you for FREEDOM!  
Amen!*

## DAY 30: FREEDOM IN CHRIST

*Scripture and Reflection: It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1 NIV)*

**T**he children of Israel had been in captivity for so long, that when they became free, they preferred bondage over blessings. They complained in the wilderness about eating the same food every day, and longed to go back to the place of imprisonment. Most of us judge these Israelites, but we don't know what it's like to be born into slavery. Slavery was their norm. Slavery was their custom. Their grandparents were enslaved. Their children were enslaved. All around them were reminders of slavery, until God used Moses to bring them out.

When Christ frees you, the first thing he will do is bring you out of familiar environments that remind you of your bondage. He will remove familiar friendships and toxic relationships so that you are not tempted to go back to Egypt on your way to Canaan. A major part of healing is learning to stand firm in the freedom God has already provided for you. Many of us waver between freedom on Sunday, and bondage on Monday. But Galatians encourages us to stand firm in what Christ has done, and

to never look back. Certain text messages should never be read again. Certain pictures should never be seen again. Certain memories should never be revisited again because your freedom costs Christ everything. With his blood, he purchased your salvation and your eternal liberty. Every day, make a conscious effort to submit to God, resist the devil, and hold fast to your freedom.

*Prayer: Father, thank you for freeing me from the chains of my past. Thank you for liberating me even when I thought I wanted to stay in the shame of bondage. Help me to walk in the freedom of Christ, and to never look back. I want to be healed from regret, remorse, and nostalgia. I trust that you will continue to wash me and make me new. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

## DAY 31: WHERE ARE YOU HURTING?

*Scripture and Reflection: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10 NIV)*

One of the ways that the enemy tries to stop us from achieving purpose is to inflict us with debilitating pain. Whether physical or emotional, the purpose of the pain is to arrest our actions and distract us from achieving purpose. Because he did not deal with the pain that resulted from his feelings of abandonment, Moses did not fulfill God's purpose for his life. He spent so much time trying to earn the acceptance of the Israelites, first by killing an Egyptian, then by making excuses for their ungrateful behavior in the desert, that he lost sight of his purpose and ended up disobeying God. Sure, he was successful in one respect because he led the children of Israel out of Egypt. However, his assignment was to lead them into the Promised Land and that, he did not accomplish.

When we do not allow God to address the invisible issues that have us imprisoned, we run the risk of missing out on purpose and the blessings that come with obedience. After all he did to get the children of Israel released from Egypt, Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land.

Don't think that because you are experiencing worldly success, you are walking in purpose. Take an inventory of your life and ask yourself, "Am I living in purpose"? "Am I doing what God created me to do"? If the answer is no, you need to make the changes necessary to walk in purpose.

When you walk in purpose, you can look forward to the kind of blessing referenced in 1 Corinthians 2:9 where we read, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him". Be healed so that you can fully experience what God has prepared for you.

*Prayer: Lord, our prayer today is that you release us from the prisons of pain. Life has left the residual effects of both physical and emotional pain. Our prayer is that we would be delivered from both. The ugly scene of Calvary reminds us that we have been healed by the lashes you took from a rigged whip. We stand on that promise today; believing you for our healing. We pray in confidence, knowing that while some pain was inflicted by others, there remains pain that was self-inflicted. Help us to forgive not only those who caused us pain, but help us to forgive our-selves so that we may walk in purpose; straight out of pain into destiny! Amen!*

## DAY 32: LETTING GO OF THE PAIN

*Scripture and Reflection: Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, “It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.”  
(Genesis 41:51 NIV)*

Unresolved pain has the potential to ruin your life. For years, Moses tried to hide the pain that came from his feelings of abandonment but it ended up costing him his destiny. Unlike Moses, Joseph was able to process his pain and reap the rewards. He went from a prisoner to the Second in Command in Egypt. Joseph acknowledged that God had redeemed him, when he named his sons: Manasseh, which means, “God has made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house” and Ephraim which means, “God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.” There are many lessons to be learned from the way both Moses and Joseph processed pain but the bottom line is this, address your pain before it destroys you.

To process pain successfully you must: Recognize it-acknowledge that it’s there. You can’t overcome what you keep ignoring. Ignoring your pain won’t make it disappear and just because the pain isn’t as hurtful as before, does

not mean it's not affecting you. Getting to the root of your hurt may be painful but sometimes you must go through pain one more time to be healed forever.

Take Responsibility for your healing. Your hurt may be someone else's fault but your healing is your responsibility. Don't wait for others to acknowledge their injury to you because sometimes they have no idea how much their actions have damaged you. Your healing is up to you.

Finally, you must Release – the person who hurt you because they do not have the resources to pay you back. Release them and allow the God of recompense to heal you. In Romans 12:19, we are reminded that the Lord will avenge us so we need to take revenge against someone who has hurt us. In Job 42:10, the Lord restores Job's fortunes after he has prayed for his friends who had not been supportive of Job as he went through his trials.

*Prayer: Lord, reveal to me any unprocessed pain that exists in my life. Give me the courage to RECOGNIZE the pain; take RESPONSIBILITY for my healing and RELEASE the people who hurt me. As I release those who have caused pain, please give me grace to release myself for the self-inflicted wounds I've caused over the years. I thank you for being a God who can do anything but fail. I place my pain in your hands today and thank you in advance for being HEALED! Amen!*

## DAY 33: OBEDIENCE TO GOD, GUARANTEES OUR PROTECTION

*Scripture and Reflection:* “Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things...”  
(Joshua 7:11 NIV)

**R**iding high on the victory of the battle of Jericho, Joshua deploys a small army to take the city of Ai. However, what should have been an easy win, turned into an embarrassing and deadly loss for the Israelite army. Imagine Joshua’s shock when the Lord told him that the loss was due to the actions of someone in the Israelite camp. A thorough investigation, revealed that Achan, of the tribe of Judah, had taken spoils that God had specifically stated were to be destroyed. Not only that, but Achan had also taken precious silver that was to be added to the treasury of the Lord.

Achan’s actions were wrong on several levels:

1. He put his desires in front of God.
2. He disobeyed God.
3. His actions brought destruction into the camp, which caused loss of life.



Our lessons from this story:

1. When we disobey God, we not only hurt ourselves, we hurt the people who are close to us.
2. God is a covenant God and when we honor his covenants, he guarantees our protection.
3. Our brokenness costs us dearly because broken people can't keep covenant.

Achan stole because somewhere deep inside he felt unfulfilled and tried to use things to make him feel whole. If you feel inadequate, remember Paul's words in Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus". Things will not fill the God-sized hole inside of you.

*Prayer: Jesus, we repent for the times we chose our plans over your plans for our lives. Thank you for the protection we find in obedience. We are grateful for your love that never fails; a love that never gives up on us even when we disobey. Today, we commit to seek out your will for our lives, because we realize that lasting fulfillment can only be found in you. The plans you have for us are good! We choose YOU this day and every day!  
Amen!*

## DAY 34: GOD'S ACTIONS ARE INTENTIONAL

*Scripture and Reflection:* Then the LORD said to Joshua, "March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days... On the seventh day, march around the city seven times..." (Joshua 6: 3-5 NIV)

**D**o you feel like you're walking in circles? Are you wondering: did God really tell me to do that? If you are following God-given instructions that make no sense to you, you are in good company. I imagine that's how Joshua felt when he was told to march around the city of Jericho instead of launching a military attack. And remember, Joshua was not marching by himself; he had a group of armed men and priests! Someone must have been wondering if Joshua had lost his mind. Of course, Joshua had not lost his mind and chances are you haven't either. The apostle Paul wrote in Corinthians that "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong." (1Corinthians 1:27)

Joshua's act of obedience, foolish as it may have looked, resulted in his success. The walls of Jericho fell and the children of Israel seized the city of Jericho. When

we obey God, the result is always in our favor. You see, it wasn't about the walls because God could have caused the walls to fall before Joshua made one trip around the city, it was about trust. Are you able to trust God when you're not sure where you are going? Are you able to trust God when his directions appear to be the opposite of what you expect? It's easy to trust God when what he says makes sense to you and follows your logic but can you trust him when you seem to be walking in circles? Remember this, you may be walking in circles but at least you are moving. You aren't stuck. God has a plan and his timing is intentional.

*Prayer: Thank you God for perfect timing. It may often seem that you're late or that you're a bit slow in answering our requests, but you're ALWAYS right on time. Your plans for us often escape our logic, but we choose to trust your decisions for our lives. We agree with the songwriter who wrote; "...I have no other choice, but to trust you...that's all I can do. I have no other choice but to believe." God, we trust you with our lives and you will bring us to purpose; on time. Amen!*

## DAY 35: ARE YOU BROKE OR BROKEN?

*Scripture and Reflection:* “So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.”  
(Acts 3:1-5 NIV)

**A**re you broke or broken? Why did Peter heal the man in Acts 3, instead of giving him the money he was begging for? Because the man’s issue wasn’t his lack of money, it was his lameness. This man’s lameness was impeding his ability to make a living. The same is true for some of us. Our issue is not that we are broke; our issue is that we are broken and our brokenness is negatively impacting our economics. Some of the issues impacting our economics could be our attitude, injustice, envy, low self-esteem, the need to impress, impulsiveness and the need to be accepted. Proverbs 10:9: “Better to be a nobody and yet a servant, than to pretend to be somebody and have no food.”

For us to break free from our financial prison, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to show us the issues that are making us lame. What issues are keeping us from being financially healthy? What would your prayer life look like if you didn’t have to pray about your finances? Know that recovery is possible and when your issues are fixed, you

won't have to pray about money. Our broke-ness (lack of money) is a symptom of our brokenness (unhealthy emotions) but since God is not just our 'need-meeter'—he is also our 'need-assessor'— we need to allow him to fix our issues. Just as the lame man's feet and ankles were strengthened when Peter pulled him to his feet, God wants to make the thing that is weakening our economics strong first. God wants to give us a prison break.

*Prayer: Jesus, we thank you for the privilege to search our hearts today to find out the 'real' reason behind our financial woes. Thank you for helping us to see beyond the economic 'broke-ness' to the spiritual 'brokenness.' And we trust that as we pray, you will reveal to us the areas in our lives that are "really broke." Amen!*

## DAY 36: DEBT FREE

*Scripture and Reflection: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12 NIV)*

Statistics show that over 80% of Americans are in debt. Wouldn't it be nice if all of your debt collectors called you up and said your debt was cancelled? Forgiveness works in much the same way. To forgive someone means to dissolve their account. It is to render the account as cancelled. The bible compares the act of forgiveness to releasing someone of a legal debt. Matthew 6:12 states “And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Boggs). Often times we hold onto offenses that others have made against us, we hold onto their debts in the filing cabinets of our minds and our hearts.

The inability to let go of the debt of others robs us of our peace, our joy, and our ability to love others the way God wants us to. When we forgive others it means that we are willing to let go of the debt that we feel they “owe” us. Is it normal to feel that you should be paid back? Yes! However forgiveness is not a suggestion from God, but rather a command. Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of

our sins. We must receive his blood as payment for the sins of others. On each one of those files that we have stored away in our souls we must write across them “debt paid in full with the blood of Jesus”. To forgive is to love. 2Peter 4:8 states “Love covers a multitude of sins”. “God’s love for us covered our sins, and now out of love for others we extend the same grace to them. Forgiveness and love both flowed when they pierced Jesus’ side. We need to let love and forgiveness flow from us as well in order to become more Christ-like”(Boggs). Let us pray today for the same type of forgiving power as Jesus Christ. Ask the Lord to open our hearts and let love and forgiveness flow. AS you have forgiven us Father, help us to forgive others as it is your will to do so.

*Prayer: Our Father we pray for the power of forgiveness. We look to you and your word for guidance and instruction. In your original instruction on how to pray, you incorporated the importance of forgiving our debtors, as you forgive ours. (Matthew 6:12) as you Lord Jesus are the ultimate debt, paid in full, for every living thing. We look towards you to help us forgive as you forgave us unconditionally with love and joy. Let us not only be joyful knowing you have forgiven us, but also in love for you forgive others. Let us not be like the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-35) and receive deserving punishment for not following your example. In Jesus Christ name we pray, Amen.*

## DAY 37: FORGIVEN BY FAITH

*Scripture and Reflection: Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (Romans 12:19 NIV)*

**F**orgiveness is an act of faith. By choosing to forgive others as God has forgiven us we are believing that in God's perfect timing he will bring recompenses to all we have lost. By forgiving those who have offended you, you are demonstrating that you take God at his word. Romans 12:19 says "Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge, I will repay' says the Lord." As believers we recognize that God is sovereign over all. His timing is perfect, and his grace is sufficient. Our offenders do not have the capacity to pay us back for the infractions they have caused. Therefore taking revenge not only leaves us still in a state of hurt, but it indicates that we do not trust God at his word.

Forgiveness is the only way for something that is hurting you to stop hurting you. "Forgiveness can literally turn a situation around. God has made a way of escape for those who are offended. Forgiveness is the only way to stop the progressive destruction of an offense" (Boggs).



The hurt that we experience at the hands of others can turn our hearts cold, make us angry and want to react. That type of response is sinful. The sinful response of an offended person can progress to be even greater than the original offense. We cannot let unforgiveness and a desire for recompense cause us to fall into sin. Pray today and declare that you take God at his word, that you believe he will avenge you for all those that have caused you offense. Pray and declare that you fully accept the blood of Jesus as payment for the sins of others, and extend grace to them as God has extended grace to us.

*Prayer: Our Father lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one (Matthew 6:13). We whole heartedly believe and trust in your living word. Your instruction to us are not to seek revenge on those who hurt us, but to let you avenge. We are told to feed our enemies when they are hungry. To give drink to them when they thirst. We know by using your word and trusting in you that your extended grace is found and available to us, and for this Lord we thank you. Amen.*

## DAY 38: FORGIVENESS BUT NOT RECONCILIATION

*Scripture and Reflection: If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.  
(Matthew 18: 15-17 NIV)*

**M**any of us have a hesitation to forgive others because we think that obliges us to reconcile with those that have offended us. You do not have to rebuild a relationship with everyone that you have forgiven. Forgiving others does not mean that we forget, it means that we cease to punish. Forgiveness doesn't mean you trust or condone, but that you release the person of the obligation. Forgiveness has to do with the past, reconciliations has to do with the future. "We do not open ourselves up to the other party until we have seen that they have truly owned their part of the problem" (Boggs). The scriptures teach us about keeping healthy boundaries with someone until they own what they have done and

are willing to “bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance” (Matt 3.8). The Bible is very clear about two principles of forgiveness; we always need to forgive to be reconciled with God, but we are not obligated to reconcile with the individual.

Forgiveness allows us to face what has happened and to begin incremental heart healing. You are accepting that you have been hurt, it is not denial or saying everything is okay. Forgiveness is empowering. It allows you to have boundaries because it sets you free from those who act carelessly with our feelings. Forgiveness brings wisdom. After you have forgiven someone you become more responsible: 1.) Because you have followed the will of God, and 2.) You have gained more wisdom from the experience. If you do not extend forgiveness to others, it’s possible to remain in destructive relationships. Today as you reflect on the differences between forgiveness and reconciliation ask God to give you the discernment to know when both forgiveness and reconciliation should be extended. Only one is optional.

*Prayer: Lord thank you for the gift of forgiveness. Thank you for empowering us with the ability to grant to others what you have granted to us. We pray God that as we forgive those who have offended us, that we are given the wisdom and discernment to know when reconciliation is applicable. Lord grant us the strength to walk away from relationships that are not aligned to our purpose, and to restore those that you want us to maintain. Heal us Lord, from any residual scarring that may be left on our hearts. In your name we pray, Amen.*

## DAY 39: FORGIVING ME

*Scripture and Reflection: In him we have redemption through this blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. (Ephesians 1: 7-8 NIV).*

When we think about the act of forgiveness the first things we often refer to are the offenses we've endured by the hand of others. But what about the offenses we've committed to ourselves? The job you shouldn't have quit, the ex-partner you shouldn't have taken back, or the hurtful words you said to your child in anger. Sometimes the hardest thing to forgive is not what someone did to us, but what we did to ourselves. We beat ourselves up mentally and cause ourselves emotional pain. "A natural wound that is not healed will build up infection and the same is true for an emotional wound. When the wounded area is touched, it triggers an over-reaction. The pain is the indicator that the wound has not been healed and is still infected. The need to medicate or find some way to cope with the pain will continue until healing occurs"(Boggs). Do not leave your wounds untreated, especially the self-inflicted ones.

Forgiveness is for your heart. It is the first step to stop something that hurts you to continually hurt you. We serve an all knowing God. He knew the offense you were going to commit before you did. He shed his blood for us, and has both forgiven and forgotten our sins. Micah 7:19 says “You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the sea”. So if God the father has forgiven us, why haven’t we forgiven ourselves? Don’t hold onto past offenses. You cannot let the circumstance of yesterday affect your possibilities of tomorrow. Remember the grace and mercy God has shown you. Rest assured in the forgiveness that God has extended to you. You have been forgiven, washed by the blood and made as white as snow. Pray today and ask God to heal that emotional wound that you inflicted on yourself, seek healing from the pain and receive your release.

*Prayer: Our Father we humbly come before your throne to ask you to forgive us of our sins. We bring our burdens to you. Knowing your grace is sufficient enough for us. You make us whole when we are weak. I seek healing from the pain and receive your release. In Jesus Christ name we pray. Amen.*

## DAY 40: FORGIVENESS IS THE GIFT YOU GIVE YOURSELF

*Scripture and Reflection: See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many (Hebrews 12:15 NIV).*

**W**e live in an imperfect world with imperfect people. It is an unfortunate reality that we will all have to deal with some form of pain at one time or another. We will often find ourselves victims of someone else's imperfections. With that in mind there will be many occasions where you find yourself practicing the spiritual discipline of forgiveness. It is important to remember that forgiveness is not intended to benefit your offender. Rather, forgiveness is the gift that you give to yourself. Forgiveness should not be motivated by the way we feel about our offenders but how we feel about ourselves and our future. There are only two parties needed for forgiveness: yourself and Jesus. "The person who owes you the debt does not have to be present to ask for your forgiveness. It is a work of grace in your heart" (Boggs).

Forgiving others not only pardons those that have hurt us, but it breaks down the walls that unforgiveness creates around our hearts. "We can take offense when we

have been wronged by the thoughtless actions of another. If we allow ourselves to stay in the offended state, then we build a prison around our heart”(Boggs). These walls not only keep out others but they also keep out God. Matthew 5:23 says “Therefore if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift”. We have to allow God’s word to take residency in our hearts. The Holy Spirit cannot live within us if we harbor walls of bitterness and unforgiveness towards our brothers and sisters. Our goal is to live a Kingdom centered life, and we cannot achieve that if we don’t extend forgiveness to those that hurt us. Pray today that God will help you to forgive the offenses of others, and that you will rest assured in the forgiveness that God has extended to us.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father we pray that we are able to forgive any transgressions against us. For your sake Lord, we know in order to be forgiven we must forgive. We look to you Lord as the example. For as you hung from the cross, even then you asked the Father to “forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:33). Help us to be more like you. To have a strong faith in God, believing that he will bring recompense in his perfect timing. We thank you Lord today for the gift of forgiveness that you extend to us, and in return we can extend to others. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.*



































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