

OH BE JOYFUL
Lenten
DEVOTIONAL.



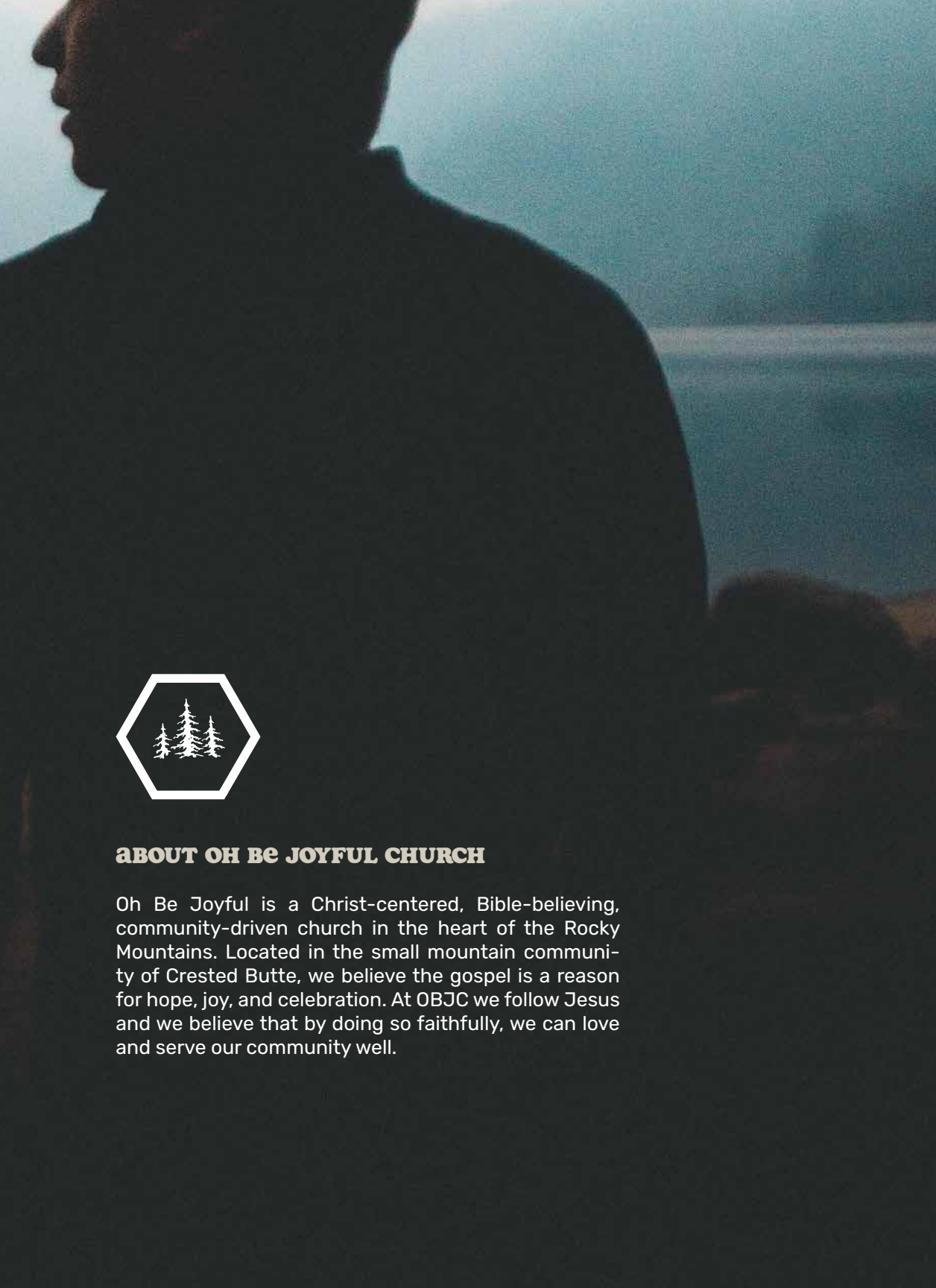


**OH BE JOYFUL CHURCH
40-DAY LENTEN DEVOTIONAL:**

Copyright © 2022 Oh Be Joyful Church
All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – for example; electronic, photocopy, recording – without prior written consent. The only exception is brief quotations in parenthesis.

To protect the privacy of those who have shared their stories with the authors, some details and names have been changed.



ABOUT OH BE JOYFUL CHURCH

Oh Be Joyful is a Christ-centered, Bible-believing, community-driven church in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Located in the small mountain community of Crested Butte, we believe the gospel is a reason for hope, joy, and celebration. At OBJC we follow Jesus and we believe that by doing so faithfully, we can love and serve our community well.

OH BE JOYFUL Lenten DEVOTIONAL.

Lent is a season of soul-searching and repentance. A season for reflection and taking stock. Although not a Biblical custom, lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days. All churches that have a continuous history extending before AD 1500 observe Lent. The ancient church that wrote, collected, canonized, and propagated the New Testament also observed Lent, believing it to be a commandment from the apostles.

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that does not involve starvation or dehydration. Quite often, our bodily appetites control our actions. The purpose of fasting is to make your bodily appetites your servant rather than your master.

THE WESTERN CHURCH

Because Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, we skip over Sundays when we calculate the length of Lent. Therefore, in the Western Church, Lent always begins on Ash Wednesday, the seventh Wednesday before Easter. In many countries, the last day before Lent (called Mardi Gras, Shrove Tuesday, Carnival, or Fasching) has become a last binge before the solemnity of Lent. For centuries, it was customary to fast by abstaining from meat during Lent, which is why some people call the festival Carnival, which is Latin for farewell to meat.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET?

The practices of worship, reading, and studying are only increased when we are acting together as one body. This corporateness can exist even when we are not together in the same room. The purpose of the Lenten Devotional is to gather everyone who calls Oh Be Joyful Church home on the same page all throughout the Lenten season.

Even though Lent is not a biblical expression it still provides a great opportunity to put our focus on Christ for an extended period of time. Make the space in your life to set aside time to enter into these devotions over the next 40 days in order to have a corporate experience during this Lenten season.

If possible, use this as a family time to prepare for Easter. Or get friends together to go through the booklet together. Again, the attitude taken when reading, praying, and studying is increased when corporately shared with others.

DEVOTION

Each section starts with a devotion written by someone in the Oh Be Joyful Church body. Read the scriptures associated with the devotions and let the reading pierce deeper into your heart each day.

JOURNAL

After each devotion there is a time to journal. Some days there will be questions or thoughts to aid in your journaling time. Other days use the space to reflect upon what the devotional was speaking to you. Ask your own questions and use the journal space to go a little deeper in your understanding of the devotional and yourself.

PRAYER

Lastly, take the time to pray. Again, some days will have a guided prayer for you, other days simply take the time to pray what is on your heart. Try to ensure each day has a time of prayer with the devotional.

BIBLE VERSES

The Bible verses were put in each day without the passages to encourage you to go to the Word. Open your Bibles each morning, read the passage, and study the contents deeply. Use these 40 days to go deeper in the Word as you pursue transformation in Christ.





Day 1: SACRIFICE OF SELF

Romans 12:1

Tyler Hansen

If you've been a part of the church for any length of time, you have probably heard the story of Johann Leonhard Dober and David Nitschmann. In 1732, it is said these two Moravian brethren were so determined to serve the slaves of the Danish West Indies that they sold themselves into slavery in order to accomplish it. As with so many stories of this sort, it's best not to get too caught up in the emotion of it because, as it turns out, some of the story isn't true. Dober and Nitschmann were real enough to be sure, but they never actually sold themselves into slavery in order to serve as missionaries. What is true, however, is their determination to serve. They did, in fact, offer themselves up as slaves to accomplish their goals, even if that's not how it played out in the end.

Why does the story resonate with us so? Why has it been passed down through the generations and taken on a life of its own? I believe it is because it is the story of ultimate sacrifice for the sake of others. In Dober and Nitschmann we see a modern(ish) retelling of the story of Christ. It is a story of dying to self for the gain of others. Just as our God made the ultimate sacrifice so we might have life, these two Moravians were willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the enslaved.

This Lenten season, consider the sacrifice of your convenience, your comfort, or your aims, in light of the ultimate sacrifice of Christ. Dwell not on the minor impacts and inconveniences. Instead, invite a deeper understanding of the dying to self that our savior undertook for your benefit.

JOURNAL:

How does the story of Dober and Nitschmann speak to you? How do your sacrifices compare to those of Jesus? In what ways can you die to self today for the benefit of others, and in so doing, emulate Christ?

PRAYER:

Lord, I offer myself to you this day: my goals and my aspirations, my comfort and my privilege, my influence and my importance. Take what little I have to offer and refine me to the greater work of your kingdom. Shape and mold me into a better servant of your purposes so that others may be blessed and you may be glorified. As I die to myself today, help me not fix my eyes upon my sacrifice but settle into a deeper understanding and appreciation of your sacrifice. And may that fuel your purposes in me for this day.

Day 2: a SYMPHONY OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Matthew 14:22-23; Mark 1:35-37

Scott Winn

The summer of 5th grade meant a decision had to be made: Band or Orchestra. I chose band and tried a couple of instruments in the following years with success measured in degrees of mediocrity. Despite my stunning lack of ability and poor practicing disciplines, I was always amazed when the band came together after hours of individual practice and the notes on my brass sheet music synced with different notes played by woodwinds, and percussion. Looking back now, I know that every now and then there was a moment that our band director really enjoyed his investment in us. Because a crew of awkward, rookie musicians would suddenly connect and create fleeting bars of actual music.

In a similar way when I first began to attempt to deepen my relationship with God through spiritual practices, I felt a lot like I did starting out in middle school band - I didn't know how to do any of it well and it seemed awkward and stilted. But over time I committed to one practice - prayer - then found that prayer happens best for me in solitude and silence, then I added some Bible study, and then occasionally fasting on top of that. Suddenly I had what might be called a tiny "symphony" of practices operating together. I certainly don't have it together, but I do know that in those fleeting moments when I hit my stride in a blend of spiritual practices it can feel really good to deepen my connection to God in that way.

JOURNAL:

Try writing out a few spiritual practices that you have just a little experience in - even if you aren't good at them. Then consider how you could blend those together at one time - perhaps you already are blending a few and could add another. Now, try it!

PRAYER:

Spend time in prayer today reflecting upon the practices. Ask for revelation in what practices you should pursue and the time to create your own symphony.

DAY 3: EVERLASTING LOVE AND HUMILITY

Luke 22:39-44; John 15:1-17

Tim Parchinski

Here is Jesus, Immanuel (God with us) living out His last hours on earth. He arrived as a baby and experienced everything we experienced for 33 years in a human body yet was without sin. He was without spot or blemish. Born to be the perfect sacrifice to take away our sins forever.

Jesus frequently went to the Mount of Olives to pray. Here, He separates Himself just a stone’s throw away from His disciples to “get alone” with the Father and kneels in prayer. In Jesus’s time prayer was regularly done while standing. But here is Jesus coming to His knees as He was about to enter a very intense and fierce battle for us. Reading on in verses 43 and 44, we see that Jesus was in such agony that His sweat was like drops of blood even after an angel was sent to strengthen him.

Then in prayer Jesus prays, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me.” In the Old Testament “cup” was a symbol of God’s wrath. What Jesus is saying is, “Father if there is any other way for your wrath to be satisfied, please make it so?” Then He finishes “Nevertheless, not My will, but yours, be done.” And the fact that He went to the cross reminds us there was no other way for our sins to be taken away.

The greatest gift we have ever received or will ever receive is the gift of God’s grace. We have done nothing to earn it nor can we. Three words sum it up very well, unconditional, undeserved love. All we do is believe. It is that simple. Our pride says I must strive and work hard to make myself righteous with God and to live a holy life. And it is that very attitude of pride in the Garden of Eden that got us in trouble, when man decided “my will be done, not Yours.” And here is Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane in absolute humility saying, “not My will Father, but Your will be done.”

Read John 15:1-17. Jesus repeatedly encourages us to remain in Him. The beautiful thing about remaining in Him is that it removes all striving, and it removes all pride. I have never seen an apple on an apple tree strive and work hard to become an apple. It just happens. We as the branches are completely dependent on the “True Vine” Jesus for both our salvation and to produce every good and lasting fruit of love, righteousness, and God honoring living.

JOURNAL:

- Are we deliberate in regularly “getting alone” with God the Father in prayer?
- Do we remember God does send the Holy Spirit and His angels to strengthen us when we need it? Even when He know we must go through whatever it is He has allowed?
- Do we remember there is no other way for us to be made right with God without Jesus? And do we remember the agony He lovingly embraced for us because he loves us?
- Is my life about “my will being done in my life on earth?” Or is it about, “Father, Your will be done in my life on this earth?”



PRAYER:

Lord, my thoughts of you are often too small and too limited. Today, help me ponder all your work and meditate on your mighty deeds because your way, O God, is holy and far beyond my comprehension. Expand in my mind today, O Christ, and let my attention be an act of worship.

DAY 5: JESUS' CUP OF SUFFERING

Matthew 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; John 18:11; Isaiah 53:11

Renee Schmidt

The Lord Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, has shown us how to suffer.

He chose His Father's Will.

Though Judas, prompted by Satan, was the instrument for mixing the cup and placing it to the Savior's lips, Jesus looked right beyond Judas to the Father, who permitted Judas to work his cruel way, and said, "The cup that My Father gives me to drink, shall I not drink it?" And He said repeatedly, "If this cup may not pass from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done."

Let all sufferers who read these lines go apart and dare to say the same words: "Thy will, and not mine." Say this thoughtfully and deliberately, not because you feel it, but because you will it; not because the way of the cross is pleasant, but because it must be right. Say it repeatedly, whenever the surge of pain sweeps through you, whenever the wound begins to bleed afresh, "Even so, Father, for so it seems good in Thy sight."

F.B. Meyer

Consider today that Jesus did not want to drink this "cup". He even prayed that God would take it from Him! He did not blame Judas for the cup. Nor did He blame the soldiers. No, Jesus said that His Father gave Him the cup to drink. He prayed. He exercised His faith -- "Everything is possible for You." Yet, in the end, Jesus drank the cup because it was His Father's Will.

JOURNAL:

What is your "cup"? Be honest with God about your feelings surrounding this cup. Jesus understands you wanting your cup of suffering to pass away. Surrender to His will even if it means drinking of the cup a little while longer. Soon, in due time, your cup of gall and wormwood will become your overflowing cup of joy! Anticipate the joy which is set before you!

PRAYER:

Pray today over your "cup" and what God is asking of you. Spend time today reflecting upon what God is calling you to.

DAY 6: FAITH, FASTING, FRIENDS, & FIGHTING

Esther 4:12-17

Eric Eaton

The story of Esther is one of those too often overlooked gems in the Bible. It has all the classic ingredients for a grand adventure: kings, queens, betrayal, fighting, more betrayal, and death. Yet, there is so much we can learn from Esther. When put in a place of authority, she was not going to simply glide through her life. The entire Hebrew nation was about to be slaughtered by a decree from the king and she did not know what to do. With some strong words from her relative Mordecai, he stated that “maybe you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” In other words, maybe you were born for this very moment.

What she does next is an example of what we should all do during trying times. In verse 16 we are told that she sent a message to gather all the Jews in Susa and fast for three days. Do not eat or drink anything and then she would go see the king. Imagine in your most trying times that you have a remnant of people around you to fight for you and with you. A group of people who would fast, pray, and seek God in what you are about to enter into. How drastically would that change how you walked through those difficult and trying decisions in your life?

JOURNAL:

Who is your remnant? Who are those people who are willing to come along side you and fight for you? Spend your time today journaling out a plan for your next big decision. It may not here now, but what are you going to do next time you have to make a big decision? Who is going to prayer with you, how will you pray, what else would you do in that process?

PRAYER:

Pray today over your remnant, those individuals who are willing to fight for you. Thank God for them and that they are in your lives. If you don't have a remnant then pray that God would reveal who those people are in your life.



Day 7: Let Your Yes Be Yes

Matthew 5:33-37; Psalms 139:4; Matthew 12:36-37
Whitney Gilliam

As believers we should be known for our integrity in ALL our speech. In Matthew 5 Jesus states "let your yes be yes, and your no be no, anything else comes from the evil one". Have you ever been canceled on without reason? Have you ever canceled on someone without reason? The answer to both of those questions is likely yes. We know how hurtful it can be when commitments aren't fulfilled and promises aren't kept. As believers we should be known for stating our commitments and keeping them.

On the flip side, no is, in fact, an option! A lot of us tend to say yes to everything, overcommit ourselves, and then are unable to fulfill our commitments to the best of our ability. Maybe we need to be doing less, better! In order to commit and say yes to some things, we have to say no to others. This also involves accountability in our community! Accountability for our speech, promises and commitments. No more "maybes" and not following through. Let us be known for our integrity!

JOURNAL:

List some ways in which you've kept your word and commitments. List some ways in which you could be better about keeping your word and commitments. What are some things you need to say "no" to?



PRAYER:

Ask God to help you have integrity in all of your words and speech. Thank God for the times people have kept their word and ask for grace for those who have not.



DAY 8: a CROWDED MIND

John 14:27

Tyler Hansen

The first time I heard the term “a crowded mind” it resonated deeply within me. I was in a place where my life was spinning dramatically out of control and my days were filled with a constant race to pick up the shards of a life broken into pieces. It was in the midst of that turmoil someone referenced my crowded mind and I suddenly felt I had language to understand where I daily found myself.

Despite the abundance of technology that ostensibly serves to simplify our lives, how often do we find ourselves overwhelmed with the simple daily task of living? How often does that very same technology draw from us peace and supplant it with a wellspring of chaos?

Our God calls us to something wholly different. In John 14:27 Jesus says He is leaving His peace with us, but it’s not a peace the world gives. It is far more than the absence of violence or conflict, it is the Hebrew notion of Shalom. We see Shalom throughout the Old Testament and it has a variety of connotations, but the most common is that of completeness and rightness. Peace is a harmony where the things that ought to be are, and the things that ought not to be aren’t. It is where the design of the world is no longer at odds with the state of the world.

Jesus brings us peace not by removing conflict and hardship and turmoil, that would be bringing something that is about us. Did you notice, he brings us HIS peace? What does that mean? The peace He gives us is something He has that we don’t. What Jesus is doing is giving us the peace He has with His Holy Father. And that has the capacity to quiet a crowded mind more than anything else.

JOURNAL:

What have you been chewing on lately? What’s occupying your emotional real estate and crowding your synaptic pathways? What kind of peace do you want and what kind of peace does Jesus offer?

PRAYER:

Jesus, I offer my crowded mind to you. Would you take all my cares and concerns and stresses and filter them through the abiding, transformative peace that you have and give. I accept your peace gladly and ask that you would help me live in it today and every day.

DAY 10: COMMUNITY/FELLOWSHIP

Proverbs 27:17; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 4:8-11;
1 Corinthians 12:12-26
Whitney Gilliam

We are created to be in community; it is not an optional part of the Christian life. When we are a part of a believing community, we have people to encourage us, pray for us, challenge us, and serve alongside us. Intentional Christian fellowship can be one of the most beautiful things God has created! But don't be fooled, community is not just for you, you are also for the community.

Rich and authentic community only works well if everyone is also giving and investing in the community. If everyone is simply receiving, it won't work. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:12 that we are all members of one body made up of many parts; we all have different gifts and talents that will serve the community, and each is important! You have a unique and vital role to play in this fellowship of believers. And remember, being a part of this community means you don't have to go through anything, whether joyful or painful, alone!

JOURNAL:

In what ways has your community blessed you? In what ways have you contributed to and blessed your community? What are some other ways you could give to your community?



A series of horizontal lines for journaling.

PRAYER:
Thank God for the gift of fellowship and community!
Ask God to bring about growth and change in your
community and to use you in the process.

DAY 11: LIFE: ACCELERATED

Psalms 46:10; John 10:10
Eric Eaton

Life moves at an amazing rate of speed; at time it appears life passes by without truly realizing what is happening. Society keeps pushing to be faster, and faster, and faster. There is fast food, fast internet, fast cars, bullet trains, supersonic jets, microwaves, instant coffee, instant meals, cliff note books, and even drive-thru spirituality. A spirituality with all of the perks and none of the commitments. All of this is in an effort to accelerate life to the point where if, or when, you truly get a chance to sit down, it simply becomes a blur.

You are so used to having the frenetic noise in your background through music, podcasts, phone, internet, or streaming television you can avoid the quietness in life. In fact, being still, sitting in your own thoughts might seem frightening at best. Yet, this is a place Christ is calling you. To strip the distractions in life and simply sit and be with the Faither.

JOURNAL:

In what ways is your life accelerated? What areas of your life feel out of control? Do you feel that you are chasing after a carrot that can never be reached? Spend time today writing out all of the activities that take up your time during the week? What distractions are constantly keeping you from Christ? What areas can you let go of, where can you give yourself a little breathing room during the week? Spend time today praying over your schedule to find out what truly is important from God’s perspective.



PRAYER:

Set your timer for 10 minutes and sit with God. Ignore all the distractions and busyness of life and simply sit in order to listen to what God may be trying to tell you.



DAY 12: THE COST OF BUSY

1 Corinthians 6:19

Eric Eaton

What keeps you busy in life? How do you define success? Are your days filled with activities because you have something to prove to others? Are you defining yourself by the amount of activities you immerse yourself into? If you could truly rest in the knowledge of who you are in Christ how would that affect your schedule? What are you trying to prove with all of your activities? When God tells us to “be still” how do you respond? What does that look like in your life? How can you “be still” to know who God is today?

Stress causes headaches, stomach aches, lack of concentration, can affect your immune system, heart, lungs, muscles, and attitude. What are you gaining by constantly putting yourself into a place of stress? How are you being obedient in treating your body as a temple when you cannot slow down enough to make sure you are healthy? For most people they are incapable of keeping up their current pace of life. Yet, they have no idea how to jump off the fast-moving train. If you are truly going to live an abundant life in Christ you need to start by recognizing the cost of a busy life.

JOURNAL:

Write out the specific stresses you face in your life and how you are handling them? Do you own your stresses or are they owning you? How are you taking charge of your own health in food, exercise, spiritual and mental health?

PRAYER:

Pray today that you could see your body as a temple. As a temple what does that really mean for your schedule, choices, and goals in life. Seek Christ's in attempting to live a life all out for him.

DAY 13: WAITING

Psalms 37:7 46:10; 5:3; 27:14, 33:20, 130:5-6, Romans 8:25, 1 Cor 1:7, 4:5, James 5:7, Jude 1:21, Isaiah 40:31
Eric Eaton

When you read all of the passages on waiting, resting, and being still what comes to mind? The life "in Christ" is very much at odds with the fast-paced lives of our Western culture. In light of these passages what does your own life look like? How are you waiting upon God, how are you being still to know who God is, how are you finding God in the fast lane of your over scheduled life? If God is more concerned with who you are and not what you do, how can you simply "be" with God today?

If you get a chance read the story of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Esther, Ruth, Jacob, or Joseph how does God's word and plan play out realistically in their lives? In a "have to have it now society" has waiting become a negative or bad word? How do you think waiting strengthened these individual's understanding of God? How do you think it can strengthen yours? A true life in Christ is going to be based on waiting for God to move and we must have the patience and fortitude to allow God to move on his time and not our own.

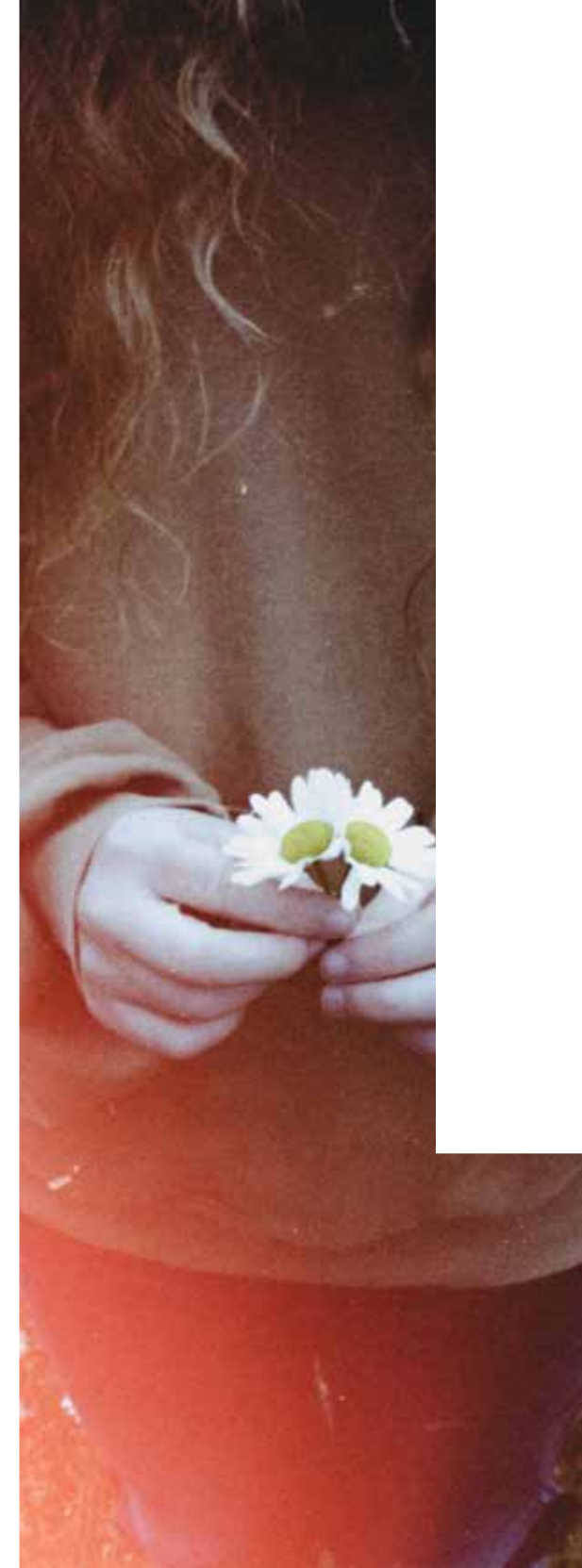
JOURNAL:

Write out your thoughts around waiting? How do you feel when you have to wait? Do you think you are a patient person? Also, write out how patient you are with God. Do you feel he is slow, where in your life would you like God to respond more readily?

Lined writing area consisting of 20 horizontal lines for journaling.

PRAYER:

Pray for the patience to let God's plan come to fruition in your life. That you believe more in his plan, than your own plan for your life. Allow the space for him to do his work in your life.



DAY 14: REMEMBERING GOD

Exodus 14:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:24

Molly Holsteen

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

The Israelites were in crisis. They had just witnessed the plagues being brought down on Egypt due to Pharaoh's hard heart. They were actively involved in the original Passover and had a front row seat to witness the power the blood of a lamb held to bring you into new life.

They had been rescued and yet longed to return to the familiarity of slavery. Here, with the Red Sea in front and the Egyptian army behind, the chaos and fear of the unknown was enough to drive them back to their old way of life.

I wonder how cozy we've made our captivity, how we've grown to prefer what never should have been over what could be if we would follow and believe.

In the middle of their panic and stress Moses tells them not to be afraid, and also to be still. Do nothing. Take a moment to rest while the Lord your God fights for you.

Where the Lord calls you to go, He will make a path for you to get there. Reminds me of this New Testament promise: The One Who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.

The Israelites were powerless to change their circumstances, but they did have a choice. They could choose to complain and panic and wail, or they could enjoy a moment of rest and stillness. Hopelessness or absolute confidence in the hope secured by their great God. Either way, a miraculous exodus awaited them. An angel of God and a pillar of cloud moved into a protective position behind them. They walked through a sea on dry land. Their captors were destroyed. They were free.

It is an exceptional gift to rest in relationship with Him and remember that He has not forgotten us and will act on our behalf at exactly the right time. God will be faithful because it's Who He is. His plans will come to fruition. The question is, will you fight your fights and cry and whine and panic, or will you allow Him to fight for you while you rest in sweet relationship with your Father Who loves you?



JOURNAL:

Where do you need God to fight for you in your life right now? What specific challenges are you facing? Write them down below and write next to them what you need to do in order to let God fight the fight while you rest in Him?

PRAYER:

Lord, remind us that you are God and we are not. Remind our hearts to rest comfortably in you while you fight for us. Show us where we have not believed, where we have tried in vain to take matters into our own hands. Thank you that you offer peace and stillness in the midst of life's storms. We love you and we praise you. Amen.

Day 15: SERVICE/GIFTS

Psalms 139:13-16; Romans 12:3-8

Tom Miller

The next time you're in a place where there's a crowd (church, a store, school, a lift line...) stop and ask yourself this question - "How many people in this place are just like me - that look like me, sound like me, think like me?" Clearly, we are all individually unique with special gifts, skills, interests, strengths and weaknesses. Scripture tells us we are created by a loving God and that we are all special in our uniqueness. Paul's writing in Romans calls us to serve each other out of our unique gifts and to do that actively and humbly - not comparing ourselves to others and not choosing to pay attention to how "the world" may evaluate our gifts and our service.

My favorite time of year is the Christmas season and the beginning of a new year. As a child, I loved the energy and anticipation of all things "Christmas". The Christmas cartoons were the best - A Charlie Brown Christmas (Schroeder's monologue and Snoopy's tree!), Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer (the Abominable still scares me) and...

...The Little Drummer Boy. The story line is taken from the historical account of Christ's birth and then adds a fictional character, a young boy named Aaron. Aaron has a tough childhood and ends up surviving by playing his drum in an obscure traveling circus. Circumstances lead Aaron to follow three kings to a small town called Bethlehem where Aaron ends up present at Jesus' birth. While the kings brought big gifts, all Aaron could do is play his drum - the only thing he owned and the only talent he believed he possessed. Offering this gift to Jesus and his family, renewed Aaron's sense of who he is and of his value.

Often, we get trapped into wanting other people's lives - we see others as more accomplished, more celebrated, more popular, more (insert your "more" here). Our best selves and our biggest lives exist in the space where God created us to be. As you search for your place of service where your gifts are most needed, remember that God built you for that place and that there is no higher honor than to serve in the place where you were made to be.

JOURNAL:

What is your special talent? The thing that, when you are exercising that talent, feels "right"? What are the life circumstances you find yourself in that may give you an opportunity to use that talent? Do you trust God's creation of you enough to actively look for ways to serve?



PRAYER:

Lord, I know that I am made by you. Special and unique... loved by you. I know that I am called by you to use my gifts to serve others so that you may be known. Please help me see opportunities to use my gifts and help others see your Kingdom.

DAY 16: JESUS' SUFFERING AND COMFORTS

2 Corinthians 1:5; Lamentations 3:19

Renee Schmidt

There is a blessed proportion. The Ruler of Providence bears a pair of scales--in this side He puts His people's trials, and in that He puts their comforts. When the scale of trial is nearly empty, you will always find the scale of comfort in nearly the same condition; and when the scale of trials is full, you will find the scale of comfort just as heavy. When the black clouds gather most, the light is more brightly revealed to us. When the night lowers and the tempest is coming on, the Heavenly Captain is always closest to His crew...Great hearts can only be made by great troubles. The spade of trouble digs the reservoir of comfort deeper, and makes more room for consolation... There is no prayer half so hearty as that which comes up from the depths of the soul through deep trials and afflictions. Hence, they bring us to God...Come, troubled believer, fret not over your heavy troubles, for they are the heralds of weighty mercies.

C. H Spurgeon

Meditate on how you have shared in the sufferings of Christ. Now think about the comfort that He provided to you along the way.

Under your cross you have many special comforts. There are cordials which God gives to sick saints which He never puts to the lips of those who are in health. Dark caverns keep not back the miners, if they know that diamonds are to be found there; you need not fear suffering when you remember what riches it yields to your soul. There is no hearing the nightingale without night, and there are some promises which only sing to us in trouble. It is in the cellar of affliction that the good old wine of the kingdom is stored...Even while we carry it, the cross brings present comfort; it is a dear, dear cross, all hung with roses and dripping with sweet smelling myrrh.

C. H. Spurgeon

JOURNAL:

How have you suffered in your life? How has God been there for you in your suffering? What difference did it make?

Series of horizontal lines for journaling.

PRAYER:

Spend time today giving thanks for those times God was with you in your suffering walking along beside you.



Day 17: THE LIES WE BELIEVE . . .

Psalms 25:5; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 John 3: 1-2; 1 John 5:19-20

Jessica Thomas

Look What You've Done by Tasha Clayton

"Look what you've done

How could you fall so far?

You should be ashamed of yourself

So I was ashamed of myself

The lies I believed

They got some roots that run deep

I let 'em take a hold of my life

I let 'em take control of my life

Standing in Your presence, Lord

I can feel You diggin' all the roots up

I feel Ya healin' all my wounds up

All I can say is, "Hallelujah"

Look what You've done, look what You've done in me

You spoke Your truth into the lies I let my heart believe

Look at me now, look how You made me new

The enemy did everything that he could do

Oh, but look what You've done

Suddenly all the shame is gone

I thought I was too broken, now I see

You were breaking new ground inside of me

Standing in Your presence, Lord

I can feel You diggin' all my roots up

I feel Ya healin' all my wounds up

All I can say is, "Hallelujah"

Look what You've done, look what You've done in me

You spoke Your truth into the lies I let my heart believe

Look at me now, look how You made me new

Oh, the enemy did everything that he could do

Oh, but look what You've done

On the cross, in a grave

With a stone rolled away

All my debt, it was paid

Look what You've done

In my heart, in my mind

In my soul, in my life

With my hands lifted high, I'm singing

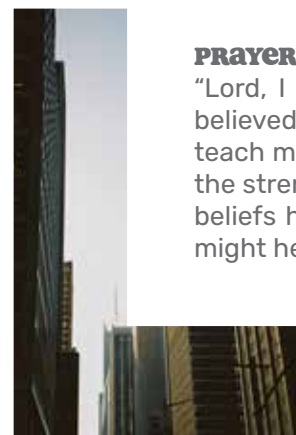
Look what You've done

This world is constantly telling us a new "truth"... "this is good for you", "you'll be happier if you do this", "you are worthy and successful if you do _____". The problem with this thinking is that it is ever changing and rooted in our brokenness, our humanness. So why do we expect to find fulfillment and truth in a fragile foundation? We let these lies tell us who we are, who we aren't, and how to feel. This can dictate how we act and see ourselves, holding us back from the purpose that God has chosen for each of us. The enemy will do all he can to throw us off course by planting seeds of deceit.

But . . . God is truth. He is the only one who can speak truth into the lies that our hearts believe.

JOURNAL:

Are there any lies that are rooted in your heart and mind? If so, take some time to bring them to the light and unpack them. What are they? Where did they come from? Do they elicit a certain emotion response (shame, guilt, anxiety, unworthiness, etc)? Now take some time to see what God says about who you are, whose you are, and what that truly means. What can you gain by handing over those lies to God or what did He do when you did?



PRAYER:

"Lord, I pray today that You will show me the lies that I have believed and point me to your truth. I ask that You continue to teach me more about my identity in You, not this world. Give me the strength and wisdom to dismantle the strongholds any false beliefs have in my heart and mind. Lord quiet my soul so that I might hear Your good and grace filled truth today."

DAY 18: PULLING BACK THE VEIL

Exodus 26:33; 30:10

Erica Eaton

The whole of the crucifixion story is overwhelming to me.

- How could Christ willingly give his life in such a brutal way so that I could have forgiveness?
- How could his mother stand at his feet and watch her son die?
- How deafeningly silent was the 3 days that Christ was in the grave?
- How devastating was it for the disciples to think they had given their lives for something that now seemed like a farce?

There are many details of the crucifixion that also leaves me in awe:

- Darkness fell over the land for the 3 hours prior to Christ's death.
- The earth shook when Christ breathed his last.
- Rocks were split.
- Tombs were opened and the saints who had been dead were up and raised but the part of this story that leaves me speechless is the tearing of the veil in the temple.

This veil served as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies in the temple. It represented the division between God and the people of Israel. In the Old Testament, only the high priest was allowed into this area and then only once a year to make atonement for the sins of Israel. Some scholars say that the veil was 4 inches thick and could not be torn apart by horses placed on both ends.

When Christ died and the veil was torn in two, this was more than just a supernatural response to his death. This was a physical representation from God that I now have direct access to Him. I no longer need a priest to make a sacrifice for me. Through Christ's sacrifice, I now can have a personal relationship with God.



JOURNAL:

What part of the crucifixion story amazes you? What keeps you from a personal relationship with Jesus?

PRAYER:

Thank you, Jesus, that you loved me enough to give your life so that I could know you.

DAY 19: THE NEED FOR REFUGE

Psalms 46
Mark Ewing

As you begin please read and meditate on Psalms 46.

Verse 10 is an invitation to Be still and know that I am God! God Himself asking us to stop and quiet ourselves so that He reveal can Himself to us. Setting aside all around us to seek Him. In solitude to be in the presence of the author of eternity. Many find solitude fearful, and being alone terrifying. We are surrounded by input from multiple sources often all at the same time. Family, friends, activities and responsibilities are pressing us constantly. In that we become accustomed to the noise of life and find it difficult if not impossible to retreat from it.

It is into that that God speaks; "Be Still and know that I am God"

He knows us and our lives, and this invitation is so loving, set all those things aside and enter into silence and solitude so that you may know Him!

The 46 Psalm was written in a time of conflict and war. Turmoil was everywhere. There was fear and many were asking where is God. So, the psalmist starts by affirming that God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in trouble!

He is our refuge (verses 1-3)

He is a place to retreat from fear, conflict and uncertainty. A sanctuary of peace from the noise of life. To underline this the psalm promises that we will not fear even if the Earth gives way and the mountains fall into the sea!

If this is the extent of His promise of refuge, what have we to fear? It is hard to stand on that promise when we are surrounded on all sides by the deluge of things we are in while we experience life...so the invitation to be still!
He is our refuge!

He is our strength (verses 4-7)

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth and all of creation is evidence of His strength and majesty. The City of God will not fall! He holds it in His mighty Hand, God will not fail! Here again is the promise; He is our strength! It's sad how often we rely on our own strength and find ourselves wishing we were stronger, only being as strong as we are. The invitation is to have God's strength rather than our own.
He is our strength

He is our help (verses 8-9)

If God has not been our help it is hard to imagine how mankind could have survived to this time. He has been ever-present as the psalm states. He helps often even those who do not love or honor Him in order to help those who do

call on Him. Scripture is full of examples of God moving in the heart of a non-believer to bring help to His people.

He asks us to remember the times He has been our help, and trust Him to be our help always! While the Earth trembles He remains steadfast in His love for us.
He is our Help

Be Still...

Set aside your cares and worry

Set aside conflict

Set aside striving

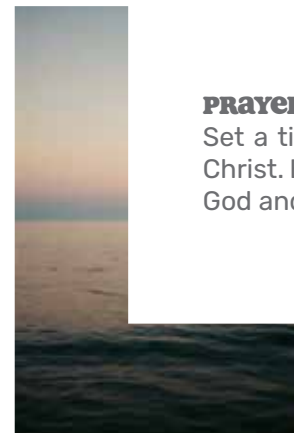
Set aside the noise

Set aside self

...And know that I am God.

JOURNAL:

- Where do I need refuge in my life?
- Why is it hard for me to let the cares of life go so I can be in solitude with God?
- How does remembering a time of refuge encourage me now?
- Where in life would I like to lay down my strength and have God's strength instead?
- What would I need to "still" in order to enter into solitude with God? What do I think I might find there?
- What do I most fear in being in solitude with God? What do I most hope?
- How does this Psalm compare to the 23rd Psalm?



PRAYER:

Set a timer for 10 minutes and simply sit and be with Christ. Be still and reflect upon how you can really know God and know that he is God.

DAY 20: WASHING FEET

John 13:2-5; 13-17

Tim Parchinski

For the most part we don't live in the days of open sandals and dirt paths unless you live in Crested Butte! But in Jesus's time this was the norm and when guests would enter someone's home for a meal it was the job of the lowest servant of the house to wash the guests' feet. Let me emphasize the "lowest servant."

So, let's think about the context of the scripture readings for a moment. This is the night Jesus is going to be betrayed. Within hours He will be mocked, scourged, crucified, and take all our sins and the sins of humanity upon Himself, experience the separation from the Father that was meant for us and then die a criminal's death. And He knows all of this is going to happen. He also knows Judas is going to betray Him in a matter of minutes and yet still in love He washes Judas's feet. Observe how this is not what we would consider an "ideal" time to serve or love others.

Here is the King of the Universe, The Son, God incarnate about to die for us. He entered the world in the most vulnerable and humble way possible, as a human baby. His mission was to save us who were lost, would die in our sins and experience eternal separation from Him for all eternity. Here Jesus gets up from supper, lays aside His outer garment, wraps a towel around His waist, pours water into a basin and then gets on His hands and knees as "the lowest servant" and washes the feet of these sinful disciples who are just like us, including Judas, who is about to betray Him and Peter, who in just a little time, will also deny Him in front of others.

Slow down and digest this. Jesus, The King and Creator, who holds all things together and made everything in the universe, gets on His hands and knees like "the lowest servant in the house" and pours Himself out to these sinners whom He loves the evening before His crucifixion. Then He says in verse 15, "For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."

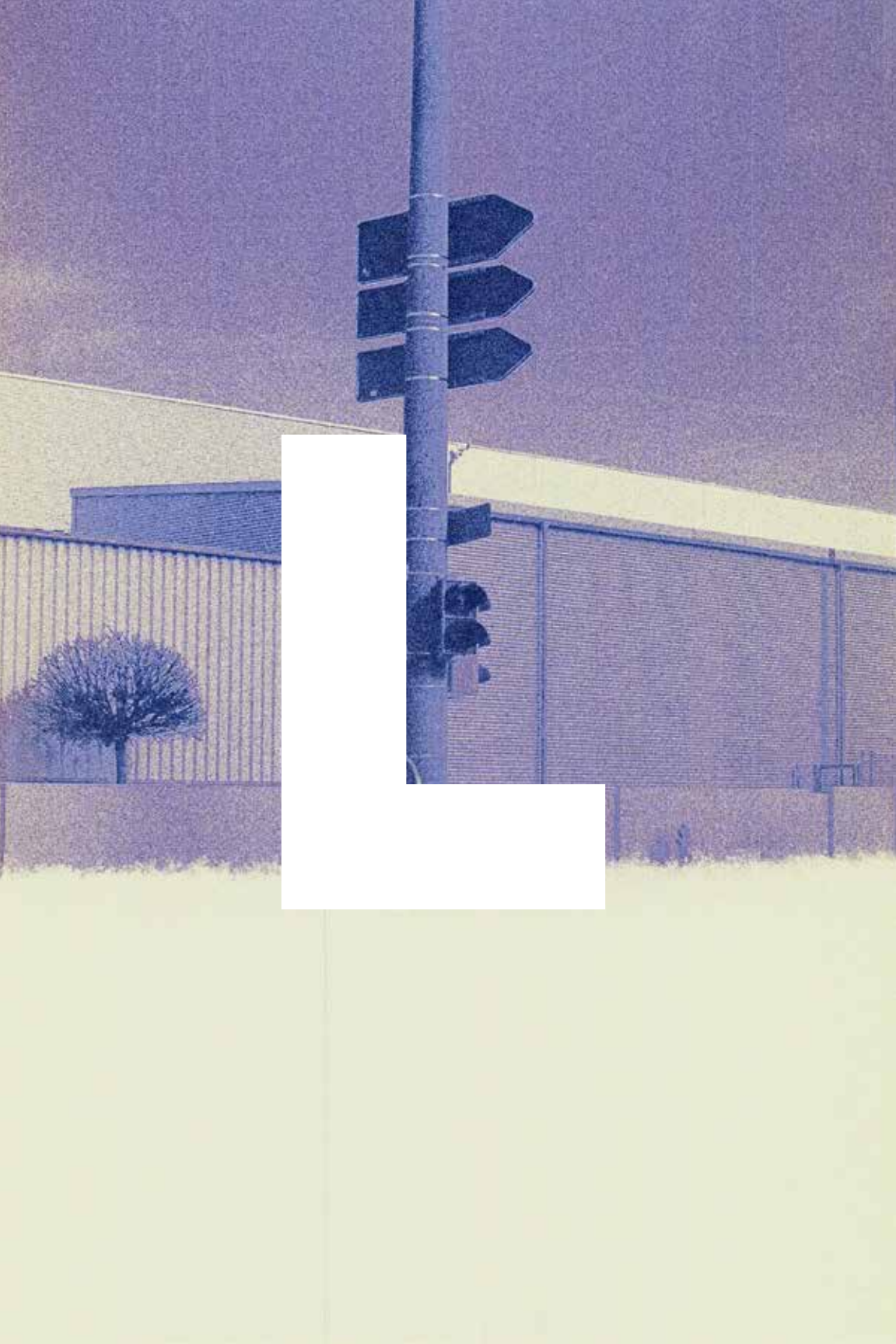
JOURNAL:

- Do I serve and love only those I like or get along with?
- Do I serve and love others only when it is convenient and does not disrupt my comfortable life?
- Do I ever consider myself too good or important to do the "smallest, menial, or most mundane" tasks to serve and love others?
- Jesus never did. So, let's follow His example and do as He has done.



PRAYER:

Father create in me a humble, unselfish, loving heart as Jesus just demonstrated. Make me, don't help me, but make me do nothing out of selfish ambition or pride but in all ways count others more important than myself, looking for every opportunity to love and serve others so that You are gloried and those around me are blessed because of You working through me, Your imperfect vessel, that is saved by Your Grace. Amen.



Day 21: TREATMENT OF THE FLESH

James 4:7-10; Romans 12:1-2

Joanna Jose

I took a class in graduate school titled "Treatment of Addiction." At the beginning of the semester, the professor asked us all to give up something we loved for the entire semester. Some chose TV, cheese, sugar, soda, and some even chose cigarettes. His point was clearly stated, "If you can't give up cheese for 5 months, how can you sit across from a cocaine addict in therapy and expect them to give it up, forever." About 20% of my 75 classmates made it through to victory. I was a part of the 80% that didn't. I chose to give up refined sugar in every form. It was the Spring semester, and I made it 4 months, but caved on my birthday. I reasoned that I "deserved it." Reasoning never got anyone anywhere.

All said, our flesh is weak. We want what we want when we want it. We often posture our lives to cater to our flesh. Whether it be food, other people, toys, activities, vacations, cars, or retirement plans. We plan for our flesh to be satisfied. None of these things are bad, in and of themselves, yet often we can't imagine life without them; which then elevates them to take over the throne of our lives.

The practice of fasting realigns our hearts with our Father's. When we remove our fleshly desires by fasting, our mind, body, and spirit have the chance for restoration with God. Setting aside the desires of this world allows the Almighty King to rightfully take His seat on the throne of our lives.

JOURNAL:

What, or who, often sits on the throne of your life? What comes to the front of your mind, that if asked to "take a break from" would cause you to have second thoughts? How might you have "reasoned" away the practice of fasting in your life?

PRAYER:

Lord help me to be obedient to your Word and draw near to you. Show me the things of this world that I put before you, through my time, with my money, and in my heart. Help me teach my body to follow your authority and renew my mind that it might also submit to your Spirit.

DAY 22: ARE YOU HUNGRY?

Acts 13:1-3
Joanna Jose

Our western culture today is gift wrapped in convenience and ease. With just about every want or desire at our fingertips, we very seldom recognize our need for dependence upon the Creator. When we are sick, we call the doctor; need to travel, we book a flight; aren't sure of something, search Google. People, stuff, and information come in and out of our lives like a revolving door, often with very little thought or concern. Our physical and mental faculties rest in easy access and quick fixes, walking a very dangerous line with the tendency to keep us satisfied just enough to eliminate any spiritual hunger.

The church of Acts chapter 13 was not in such condition. They were craving the Lord's presence, His leading, direction, and an answer. They were hungry for the Bread of Life and reflected it so by fasting and praying. Fasting together, fasting separate, fasting with expectation for more of the Holy Spirit.

In his book, A Hunger for God, John Piper writes, "If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because you have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Your soul is stuffed with the small things, and there is no room for the great."

So how hungry are you? How hungry are we as a church family? Are we stuffed, or even just satisfied enough that hunger pangs remain beneath the surface, never sending us the signal of our need for the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives?

JOURNAL:

Take some time to reflect on your deep desire for God. To what level is your life reflecting your need for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Are you satisfied in the ways in which you orchestrate your life? Or are you craving His oversight and Lordship?

Lined writing area for journaling.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, oh how I need you. Reveal to me the depths unto which my whole life depends upon your grace. Help me in the way of fasting. Strengthen me in this practice and show me your power. Give me obedience and self-control. Give me more of you Lord!



DAY 23: a CRY FOR OUR PEOPLE

Daniel 9:1-9
Joanna Jose

While living in Uganda, Africa, I experienced a new depth to the Christmas season. Each year was so rich in an authentic celebration of the Lord’s transcendence upon His creation. It was unforgettable. Yet to my surprise every year, Ugandan’s actually created a greater awareness and celebration around New Year’s Eve than they did Christmas. Honestly, nearly all of the 45 million Ugandan people pray and fast for a straight 24 hours beginning December 31st.

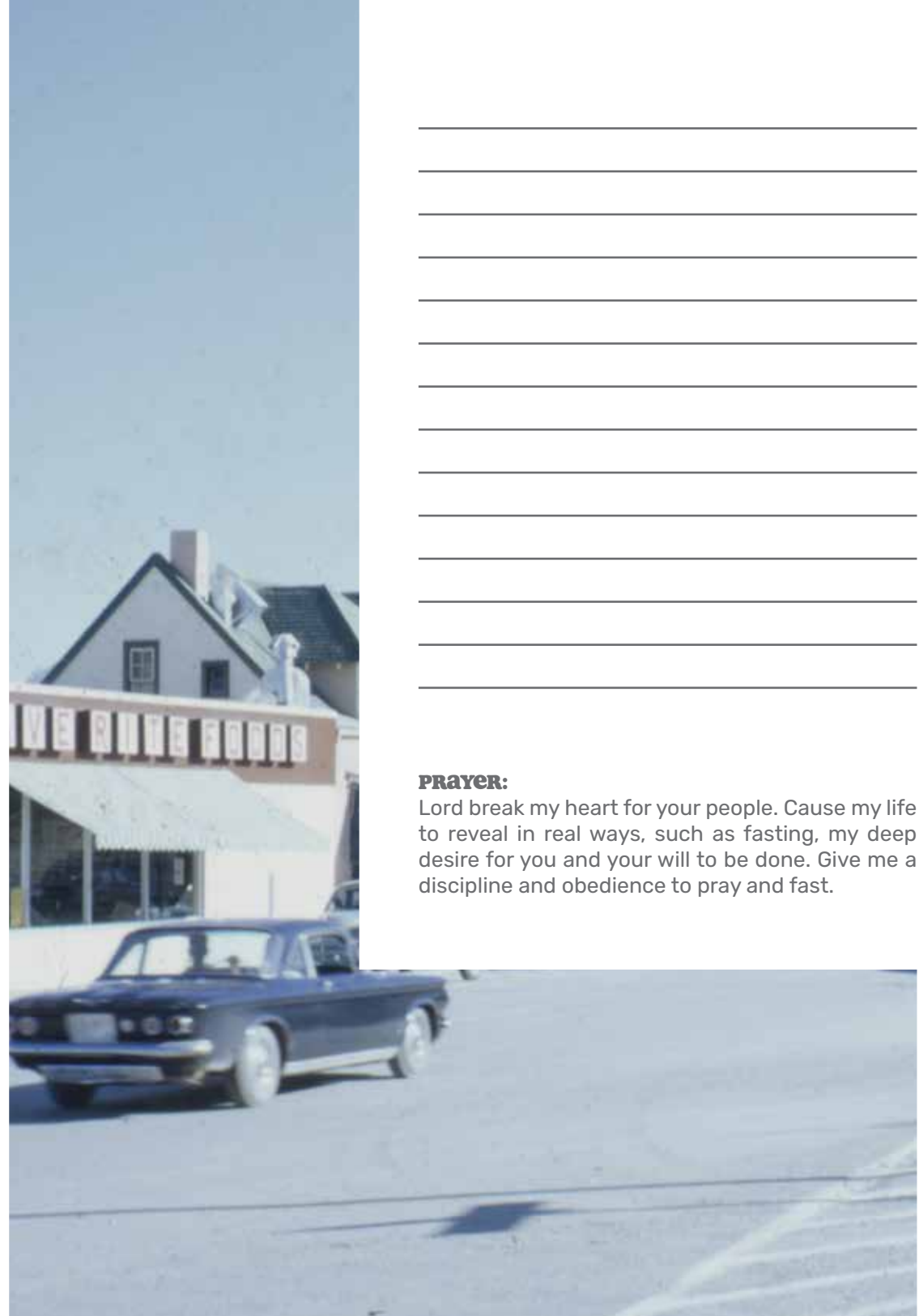
They gather at churches all across the country, sacrificing food, money, and time to pray and fast together all day and night. They praise God for keeping them alive and give Him glory for what He has done. They bring their sorrows and griefs, their pain and regrets. They leave behind their casseroles and charcuterie boards, all to reveal their deep spiritual hunger and dependence on God. The year behind them is closed with the acknowledgment of the Lord’s hand, and the year to come is ushered in with praise and hope.

Furthermore, their fasting didn’t just end on January 1st. Most of the Ugandans I know fast and pray weekly. They do so for health, for healing, for provision, for hope, for direction, and for His presence. It’s beautiful and ever-so humbling.

Let us come before the Lord in a cry for not only ourselves, but our families, our towns, our country, our people. Let us demonstrate our desperation for healing our nation. We pray, but let us plead. Let us fast with expectation and hope.

JOURNAL:

What types of traditions or habits have you set in place that reflect your dependance upon our Lord? Paring prayer with fasting can usher in the power of God, as read in Daniel 9 today. How would you describe Daniel’s heart for God’s people and his general posture towards the Lord?



PRAYER:

Lord break my heart for your people. Cause my life to reveal in real ways, such as fasting, my deep desire for you and your will to be done. Give me a discipline and obedience to pray and fast.



Day 24: PRAISE

Romans 1:20; Isaiah 6:3; Psalms 33:8
Coleen Bever

I used to wonder a lot about how people make it in this world without faith in God. Where do they find their strength or comfort? Where do they turn when they are afraid or worried, or when people disappoint or fail them? But recently, I have been thinking about another side of not having faith - the side without the praise of Him. Here in CB we play outside year-round and enjoy all the incredible beauty: mountains, rivers, waterfalls, flowers, wildlife, sunrises & sunsets, rainbows, and so much SNOW! Wow!!! But without our faith, what comes after "wow"?

I think our real appreciation for and response to what we see in creation is incomplete without taking that next step in acknowledgement, praise, and worship of Our Creator. And in not taking that last step, we miss out on the opportunity for connection and closeness to Him. I think C. S. Lewis meant something similar when he said it this way, "I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation." I believe He delights in our delight in what He's made for us to enjoy. Wow!



JOURNAL:

Where am I missing out on the "complete enjoyment" or "appointed consummation" of what I enjoy? Could I take a few minutes with Him in quiet contemplation in order to deepen my enjoyment of the activities I'm involved in and engage with my Creator in worship?

PRAYER:

Holy Spirit remind me of my Creator as I enjoy the magnificence of His creation. Help me to slow down my days and guide my attention toward the appreciation of all Your hands have made. Let it all spark my heart and mind to praise and worship You. And Father, let that praise and worship overflow naturally to anyone You choose to bring into my life, further sharing Your love and joy. All to Your honor and glory, Lord. Amen

DAY 25: DO NOT CONFORM

Romans 12:2; Galatians 5:16; John 10:10
Eric Eaton

If you are not moving toward Christ on a daily basis then you are being drawn to the world in some form. When you add your daily time on social media, advertisements, news, articles, friends, and various forms of communication and entertainment, there are simply too many messages coming at you each day. With the majority of these messages being contrary to the life Christ wants for you. Many of these messages can simply come in the form of an idea or thought about who you are. Your identity at the most basic level.

When we allow the world to interpret our thoughts, feelings, and emotions then a simple idea can have profound effects in conforming our lives to the world. Simple question around "Are you smart?" "Are you pretty?" "Are you strong?" Can disintegrate our self-worth in an instance when placed into the thoughts and processes of the world. But if you put your faith, life, and hope in Christ then those are simply questions written or stated from someone in the world and nothing more. Because you know your true identity, your true worth is found in Christ.

JOURNAL:

Go to the *Screen Time* setting on your phone and write down how you are spending your time. How are you letting yourself be conformed during your week? What messages or ideas do you unnecessarily hold on to? What is one thing you can do to stop yourself from conforming this week?



PRAYER:

Spend time in prayer seeking guidance and wisdom to battle against the many forces at work in this world to conform you. Specifically name the distractions, ideas, or thoughts which draw you to the world. Lay them down at the foot of the cross today.



DAY 26: TRANSFORM

Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 5:17 Matthew 6:21

Eric Eaton

Transformation is an all-encompassing process. Whether the transformation was for good or a destructive process. You would not have to tell the people around you that you transformed, they would know from being around you. The biggest problem with transformation will be your ability to admit your own weakness and find those people you can safely lay your weakness down with for the purpose of transformation.

Satan will always attack you at the point of your identity and usually with just a simple idea or thought. Knowing that your life in Christ can be easily derailed by making you doubt. Thus, delaying your own transformation. When you bring your weaknesses, sins, and doubts to the light, they no longer have power over you. This is the point where you can begin a very meaningful transformation in your own life. Where you are daily moving toward Christ instead of being drawn back to the world.

JOURNAL:

Do you know and understand the weakness or sins in your life which need transforming? Write out those details so they no longer have any power over your life or walk in Christ. Write out who you might be able to share those with in order to gain power in Christ instead of being enslaved to your own desires.

PRAYER:

Pray for the strength and wisdom to identify your weakness and seek a true transformation in Christ. Seek Christ daily in this process of transformation and let him be your guide.

Day 27: Renewing Our Mind

Ephesians 4:20-24; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Romans 6:15-23
Eric Eaton

What are the lies you believe about yourself? You are not smart enough, not pretty enough, don't have what it takes, your best isn't good enough, no one will ever like you? It is amazing how your mind can convince you of anything, both good and bad. The same mind which convinces you to do good things is the same mind which takes you down frightening rabbit holes. Which is why Paul talks about the need to renew your mind every day. To push out those lies of Satan and the world far away in order to believe the truths which come from Christ.

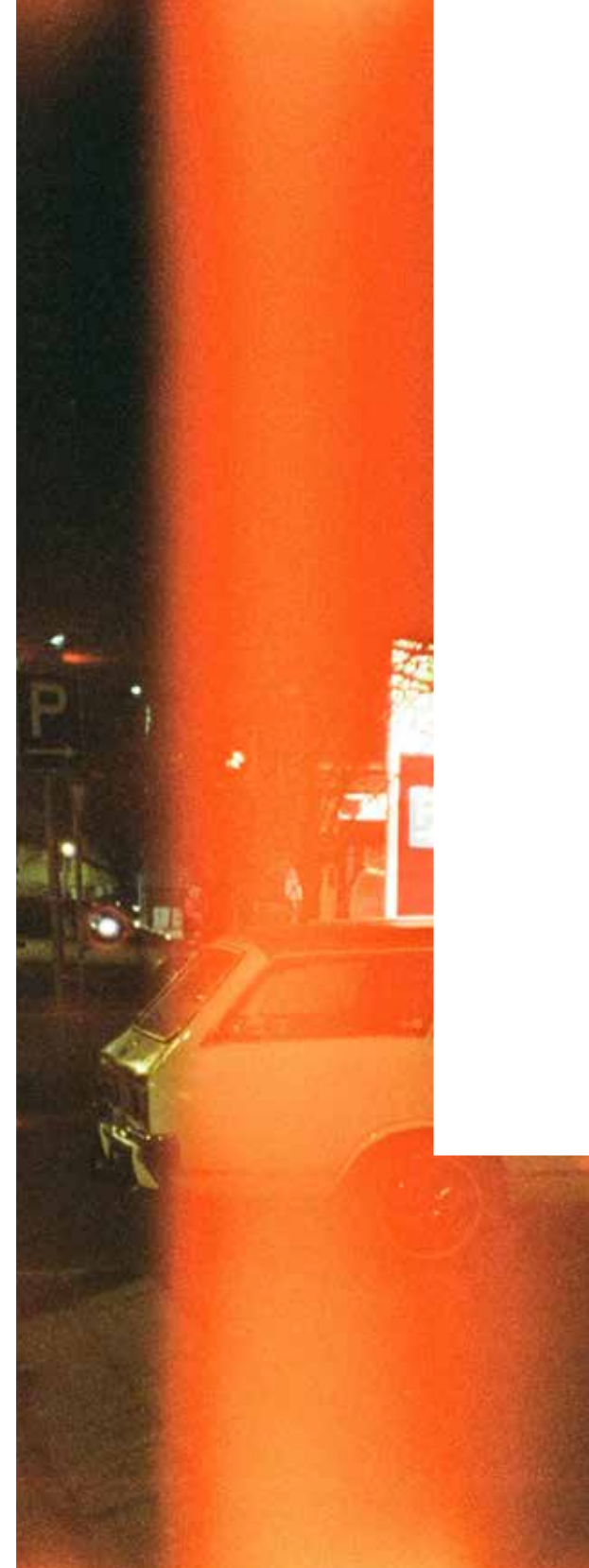
When Paul talks about being slaves to sin, this is an extremely accurate portrayal of your life when you believe the lies of the enemy. You become a slave to anything you obey. Whether that is likes, success, becoming viral, beauty, or being numb. You will spend time, energy, and resources to constantly be better or get more. Thus, being a slave to what you pursue. Your true freedom is found in Christ. His truth is what will break the chains or lies which consume and control you.

JOURNAL:

Take the time today to write out the lies you believe about yourself. What are you a slave to in your life? How does that enslavement affect your actions, decisions, and thoughts about yourself? What would freedom look like to you? A true freedom in Christ apart from those lies you consume in this world?

PRAYER:

Pray the Spirit over each of those lies, that they would be broken in the name of Jesus. Pray that the truth of the Holy Spirit would come over you and consume every part of your life breaking the chains which bind you to this world.



DAY 28: DARE TO BE DANIEL

Daniel 3:16-18; 6:10

Gary Davis

The little book of Daniel, written by Daniel, in the 500s BC, shows us the life of perhaps the Godliest man in the Bible, and additionally tells of the revelations God gave Daniel about the entire future that many believe are the backbone of all Bible prophesy.

As to Daniel himself, he was tenaciously loyal to our God; he studied then existing scripture like the book of Jeremiah; he prayed regularly and with deep emotion for his sins and those of his people and for God’s name and will to be honored; by God’s power he interpreted dreams and brought the great Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar to faith in the one true God.

As to the future, he foretold of the Persian decree that would come in 445 BC for the Jews to return to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2); of the coming of the Messiah to come and to be put to death at the precise time Jesus came (Daniel 9), of trouble thereafter for a time; and then of God’s ultimate victory. “At that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name is written in the book of life ... to everlasting life.” (Daniel 12)

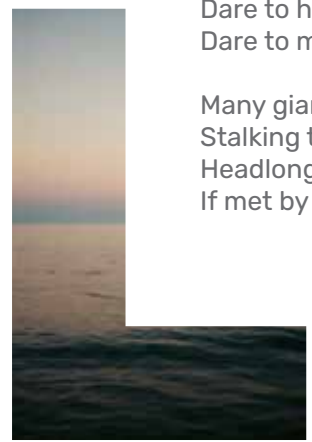
JOURNAL:

Do I, can I pray to our deserving Almighty Father as Daniel did? Am I, can I love, and be loyal to the King of Kings and His Son, as Daniel was?

PRAYER:
Heavenly Father, please motivate us, help us to dare to honor and please You, and to walk with You, as did Your “greatly beloved” Daniel (Daniel 9:23), in the name of our Lord Jesus we pray.

“Dare to be a Daniel.
Dare to stand alone.
Dare to have a purpose firm.
Dare to make it known.”

Many giants, great and tall,
Stalking through the land.
Headlong to the earth would fall
If met by Daniel’s band.”



DAY 29: JESUS AGONY OF SPIRIT

Luke 22:44; Song of Songs 2:10

Renee Schmidt

The emotions of that dolorous night are expressed by several words in Scripture. John describes Him as saying four days before His passion, "now is my soul troubled"...Matthew writes of Him, "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy"...Matthew represents the Savior Himself as saying "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death"...Mark records that He began to be "sore amazed", and to be "very heavy"... Luke uses the strong language of "being in an agony." These expressions are quite sufficient to show that the grief of the Savior was of the most extraordinary character, well justifying the prophets exclamation "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow which is done unto Me."

-C.H. Spurgeon

Is your soul troubled today? Do you feel sorrowful and heavy on the inside? Jesus understands. Days before His crucifixion--and perhaps even longer--Jesus was in the midst of people- yet His soul was troubled. Was He bearing a mighty grief, unshared and unspoken, when He turned the water into wine at the festive marriage feast or in the desert when he fed a multitude? Because He understands the depth of these emotions and how difficult it is to live our lives in the midst of these feelings, He desires to bring you comfort.

2 Corinthians 7:6 "...God, who comforts the downcast..."

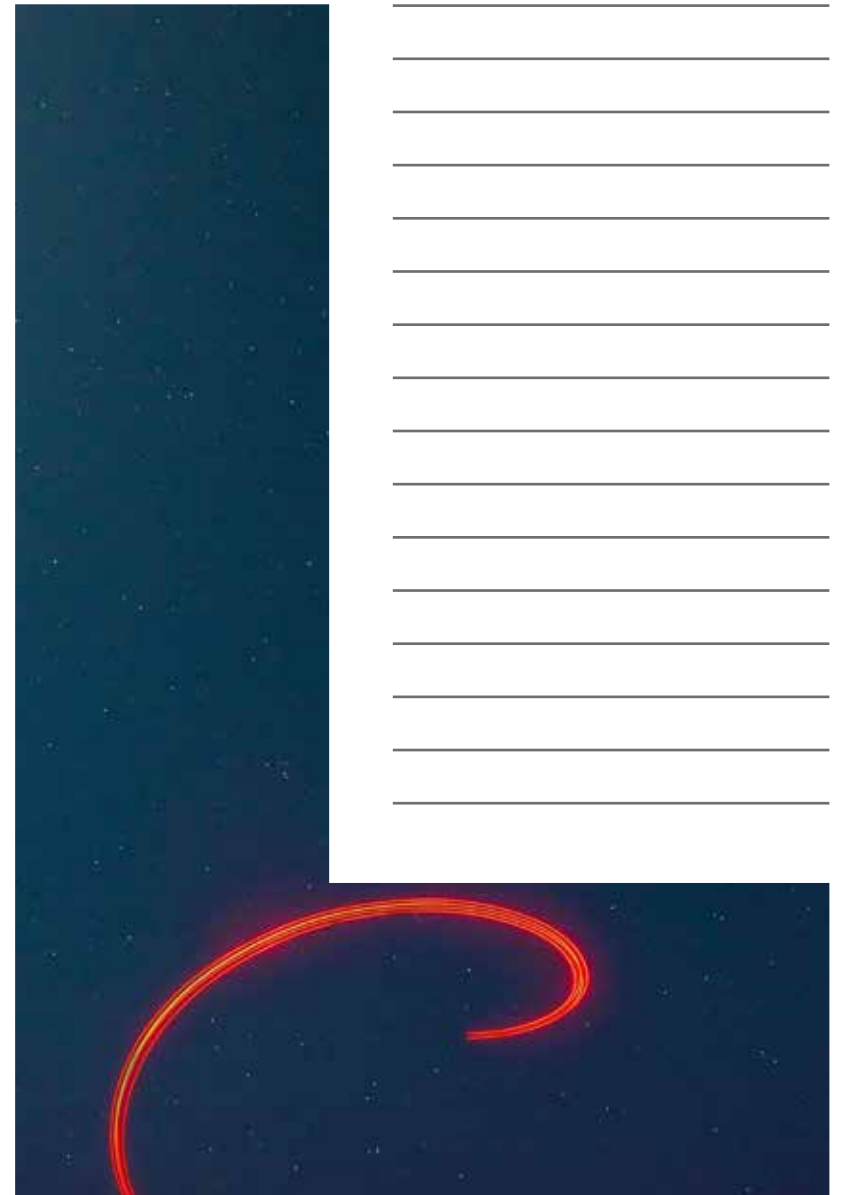
And who comforts like Him? Let God come to His child, let Him lift up his countenance, and the mourner's eyes glisten with hope. You could not have cheered him; but the Lord has done it; "He is the God of all comfort." There is no balm in Gilead, but there is balm in God. There is no physician among the creatures, but the Creator is Jehovah-Rophi. So, then, you do not need to sit down in despair. Go to the Comforter, and ask Him to give you consolation...go first and foremost to your "God, that comforts the downcast", and you will soon say, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul."

-C. H. Spurgeon

God knows just the right balm to apply to your soul.

JOURNAL:

Where is your soul troubled in this day? What are some specific ways you can seek comfort from the Creator in these troubled times? What does that comfort look like to you?



PRAYER:

Spend time in prayer today reflecting upon God as the great Comforter. Remember a time that God was there during difficult times, then pray gratitude over that moment. Rest in those times of comfort during tremendous trials.

DAY 30: GROWTH THAT OCCURS ONLY DURING DIFFICULTY

Luke 22:31-34

Tim Parchinski

The flour we buy in the store today has been milled and sifted for us. But in Jesus’ time the raw grain that had been threshed on the threshing floor still had parts of the husk and hull on it and it would then be taken to the miller and thoroughly ground by stone to make flour. This flour would still have pieces of husk in it. The miller would take this ground flour and sift it to separate out the husk during the intense grinding process.

In Luke 22:31-34 we are with Jesus and His disciples at the Last Supper just before His crucifixion. Jesus addresses Peter and says, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat.” Jesus is basically telling Peter “Hey Peter, after you are ground up Satan wants to separate you from Me.”

But then Jesus gives Peter some words of comfort. “I have prayed for you Peter.” “I have prayed that your faith may not fail.” Notice that Jesus did not pray that Satan would leave Peter alone. But instead prayed that his faith would remain after his failure of denying Jesus.

We might have prayed for Peter to be spared from the sifting, to be spared from his failure and from this trial he was about to experience. But Jesus did not. Jesus just prayed that His faith would remain. Jesus tells us that we will experience many trials and sorrows (John 16:33) He did not say we might, He said we will. He knew that Peter was about to suffer a failure and suffer because of it. But Jesus also knew good would come from it. It was a necessary process for Peter.

We often pray that the Lord would keep us from failures, trials, and from suffering. But if the Lord were to always answer the prayers of keeping us from times of failure, trials and suffering, we would likely remain in a state of spiritual infancy because in our Christian life most of our genuine spiritual growth occurs in the grinding times of life, not when things are “smooth sailing.” Look at Peter before his failure and trial. He was a man of courage, faith, bold, and impulsive. He was rugged, rough, independent, and not very refined. Almost like a horse that has not been broken. But when you see him in Acts chapter 4 after he returned to Jesus and was restored, he has many of those same qualities but now seems like a horse that is bridled and trained. In Acts chapter 4 verse 8 we see Peter now filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter was no longer relying on his own unbridled strength but now on the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, notice Jesus tells Peter “that when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” Jesus is saying, “Peter after your trial, I want you to strengthen your brothers.” Another purpose of trials in our lives is empathy for our brothers and sisters. The ability to understand and share the feelings of others is a gift not to be wasted. Jesus is telling us because you understand what it like to go

through a grinding and sifting process be there and strengthen others when they are being ground up and sifted. Don’t let your experience go to waste. Use it to love and help others.

2 Corinthians 1: 3-4 declares to us “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

JOURNAL:

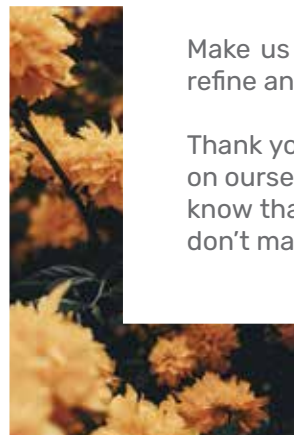
- Jesus prays specifically for us. Read John 17
- There is growth in us that can only occur through trials and failures.
- Trials have a way of teaching us not rely on ourselves but on the Lord. Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9.
- Empathy is a gift not to be wasted. Be ready to comfort others with the same love and comfort the Lord directly gave you or indirectly gave you through others.

PRAYER:

Father thank you for the trials you allow into our lives. You tell us in Your word that you discipline those whom You love and those who are Your children. Thank you that you love us and that we are Your children.

Make us embrace the things you allow into our lives that will refine and prepare us in both this life and the life to come.

Thank you for placing us in situations that teach us not to rely on ourselves, but to rely on You. There is nothing better than to know that we can rely on You and trust You even when things don’t make sense. Thank you. We love you.



DAY 31: INTENTION TO ATTENTION

Psalm 77:11-15

Tyler Hansen

At a staff meeting recently we discussed how we might each engage more deeply with worship in our daily lives. As I believe worship is our most blessed earthly vocation, it's a question we all ought to be asking. So often the answers seems like it can be found in some ritual or form or procedure. I want to propose something else entirely by suggesting we, simply put, devote ourselves to attention.

Spend any time in the Psalms and you'll see time and again that God's deeds and ways and works are to be beheld. That is to say, they deserve to be taken note of, to be dwelled upon, to be understood and acknowledged. It can be easy to look at the majestic mountains surrounding us and be in awe of the Lord's deeds and ways and works. But what about the mundane? Where is God revealed in the spigot of a hose or the cracks of a sidewalk or the far off echo of a tractor-trailer?

Believe me, He is just as present in the mundane as He is in the majestic, if we take the intention to be devoted to attention. A hose spigot ceases to be an everyday fixture and becomes a testament to the common grace of ingenuity he gave mankind to invent a way to secure safe drinking water. Cracks in the sidewalk become evidence of the profound power buried in the bonds of chemical elements. The echo of a tractor-trailer is the interconnected vibration of trillions of air particles orchestrated by an infinitely complex God.

When we devote ourselves to an intention of attention, the inconceivable majesty of our God becomes a little more conceivable, the mundane becomes extraordinary, and our worship—our holy attention—is stirred.

JOURNAL:

Consider something commonplace in your life. Write out everything you can think of about that thing. Where did it come from? How does it serve you? How did it find its way to you? Then consider where the Lord fits into that complex web.



PRAYER:

Lord, my thoughts of you are often too small and too limited. Today, help me ponder all your work and meditate on your mighty deeds because your way, O God, is holy and far beyond my comprehension. Expand in my mind today, O Christ, and let my attention be an act of worship.

DAY 32: HONORING GOD WITH YOUR BODY AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

Romans 12:1; Colossians 1:19-20; Ephesians 4:1
Priscilla & Holden MacRae

In a culture of comfort, entitlement and self-indulgence, the lives of believers in Jesus Christ should declare a very different message. I don't mean only what we say and sing on Sunday morning, but the very testimony of our living sacrifices, our whole bodies—flesh and spirit—presented to God as holy and acceptable (Romans 12:1). If the message of our God reconciling all things to Himself in Christ (Colossians 1:19-20), really applies to all things, then how we treat our bodies is directly related to a right proclamation of it. But in a world of fitness fanatics, diet gurus, and extreme risk takers, how do we reclaim a biblical view of our bodies that both bolsters our worship of Christ and buoys our witness to The Good News? But what does this mean for believers in day-to-day life?

In an attempt to flesh out (pun intended), let's consider three routine activities—sleeping, eating and exercising.

Honor God with Sleep

Babies love it. Toddlers fight it. College students belittle it. Working adults covet it. It improves memory, lowers stress, combats disease and increases longevity. We ought to approach sleep as if our lives depend on it—because they do. Our bodies require this God-ordained, God-gifted activity for survival. How are you doing in obtaining regular, refreshing sleep? Are you turning off technology an hour before you turn out the lights? Do you make time to focus on His Word before your head hits the pillow each night and greet Him in the morning declaring your love for Him and trust in His ways?

Honor God with Food

Do we view food today as fuel for fulfilling God's call to worship, excelling in our passion and gifts for His glory? The culture around us markets food according to different criteria:

- Quick:* You have more important things to do with your time.
- Easy:* You have more important ways to exert your energy.
- Cheap:* You have more important ways to spend your money.
- Tasty:* You deserve to satisfy your cravings.
- Healthy:* You want to look.

Should we gauge our consumption by such short-sighted standards? How are you doing at eating "real food" and reducing sugar intake? If you drink one 12-ounce Coke or 20-ounce Gatorade a day for seven days you would have consumed 63 teaspoons of sugar or 1 ½ cups of sugar.

Honor God with Exercise

Jesus didn't need a Fitbit. Some scholars speculate He walked 20,000 miles or more in His 33 years on earth. Physical fitness is a spiritual exercise, an expression of how we respect what God has created and walk in a manner worthy of the calling we have received (Ephesians 4:1). We view our bodies as vehicles of vitality that they might be used for the building up of the larger body.

Is physical activity a part of your daily routine? Some high intensity can be helpful, try a Tabata (8 rounds of 20 sec work, 10 sec rest), OR learning a new skill to keep mind and body engaged.

JOURNAL:

Write out those specific areas where you need to honor God right now? What do you need to cut out, what do you need to add? What are the three biggest changes you need to make?

PRAYER:

Holy Spirit, we love you and want to join in the dance of the Trinity. We value God's image displayed in us and want to have the health needed to advance Christ's kingdom. Help us to reclaim sleeping, eating, and moving as spiritual worship for the glory of God. In the precious and powerful name of Jesus. Amen

DAY 33: THE PRACTICE OF EVANGELISM

John 13:35; Romans 10:14

Scott Winn

Have you ever noticed that it is rare to see a pro or D1 college athlete out in public in their full uniform or jersey unless they are at the game? But it's not uncommon to see a fan who has never strapped on ice skates to be decked out in a monstrously oversized Avs or Blackhawks jersey at the grocery store. When the players on the ice, court, or pitch and wear the uniform they are serious about it - the gear confirms they are fully invested.

It seems that fangear is a big deal these days - whenever I watch sports today there are two kinds of commercials, I see a lot of - sports betting (boo), and fan wear (yay). It's easy these days to show others what team you would play for if you could - like the Liverpool football club scarf that I wear for big games while sitting on my couch in my warm house. And I would wear a jersey and boots (English speak for cleats) if I had them. I want people to know I am committed!

One of the most important steps we take to engage in bringing people towards relationship with Jesus is to find a meaningful way to make known that we are His committed follower. Let's be followers whose identity in Jesus is obvious and by the way, over much of Christian history it has been the way that believers have gone through suffering that has revealed their faith and drawn others in more than anything else.

JOURNAL:

What identifies a follower of Jesus to those who don't know Him (how can we put on the jersey)?

What about a follower of Jesus attracts a person to learn more about Him?

PRAYER:

Pray today that God would reveal to you those individuals you need to lean into with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. What does that moment look like for each of those people. Pray specifically about how God is calling you to reach out to those around you.





DAY 34: WHOSE AM I?

2 Corinthians 5:16-20; 1 Corinthians 7:23-24; Galatians 5:16
Eric Eaton

Once you start to find out who you are, you need to find out whose you are, we may say we are God's children but do we really know what the means or entails? As a child of God are you willing to walk the road Christ walked? You might find it is much easier to follow Christ in word rather than deed. Especially the last march he made to the cross. But it is in the cross where you find whose you are. The cross is where Christ calls you to follow him, to know him, and to be like him.

Have you ever taken the time to claim your heritage as a child of God and live out that heritage as a friend of God? The only reason Jesus was able to defend himself against temptation, trials, abuse, and ultimately death on a cross was that he knew whose he was. That was never a question for Jesus and through spending time with the Father that knowledge was strengthened. It was through this time with the Father that Christ had incredible freedom on this earth. Because he was not bound by anything of this world. His life was solely and completely for the will of his Father.

JOURNAL:

What does your life in Christ really look like? Take the time to write out what your heritage is like in Christ. Whose are you and where do you really belong? Spend time today claiming that heritage, and living in the light of whose you are in Christ.

PRAYER:

Spend time today resting in your heritage. Thank God for all the many gift that have been given to you and that you are truly called a Child of God.

Day 35: WHO ARE YOUR PEOPLE?

1 Samuel 18:1; John 15:12-17; Luke 14 & 15
Tom Miller

“Love one another...” The Bible makes it clear that we are created to be close to others. The book of 1 Samuel describes the friendship of David and Jonathan and that “their souls were knit together”. In Jesus’ words to his disciples and in his parables, he describes people being in relationship and in community. Throughout scripture, we see people relating to and connecting with others in varying degrees of intimacy – community/neighbor/friend/“soul mate”. It’s critical that we surround ourselves with people that love us, hope for us, pray for us, laugh with us, cry with us, hold us accountable and encourage us to be the person that God created us to be.

Let’s go through an exercise. Write down the name of the person or group that first comes to mind when you read these questions or statements. If no one comes to mind, place a question mark –

- When I spend time with this person, I feel whole and complete –
- This person is best able to describe who I really am –
- I have a blast with this person, and they make me laugh –
- When I’m upset or sad, I call this person –
- If I were to form “my gang”, it would be made up of these people –
- I’d be willing to hear correction from this person –
- This person helps me see Jesus –

Remember that relationships are two-way arrangements and that, finding “your people” means that your name is on other people’s list when they ask themselves the above questions.

Are there times when we’re lonely? Of course, scripture is full of examples of Godly people being in places of loneliness, heartbreak and despair. In these moments, our heavenly father may be our best comfort and companion – we have comfort knowing “He will never leave us or forsake us” – yet, we know we’re created for fellowship with other Christians.

JOURNAL:

What do I need to do to create relationships that help me, and others experience God’s best?



PRAYER:
Ask God to reveal the people that can be “your people”. Ask him to reveal to you the relationships that may not be healthy for you and that push you away from Jesus. Pray for opportunities to begin relationships with the people that God brings to mind.

DAY 36: FORGET ME NOTS

Psalms 103:2

Rosie Geisler

“And forget not ...” Ah! I do forget & so very fast. This lapse of memory has been referred to as “soul amnesia”, and I’m inclined to agree.

Forget not ... God pardons.
Forget not ... God heals.
Forget not ... God redeems.
Forget not ... God crowns.
Forget not ... God fills.

I forget - forget it all in a flash. I allow the Son to be eclipsed by self and circumstance. And in that loss of True Light? Shadows loom, they loom larger than life.

Ah, but in remembering? Hope buds, swells, blooms ... no more a starved seedling struggling in shadows but a flower thriving in the sun. As we turn towards the Son, basking in the beauty of His glorious Light touching our lives, we release a fragrance, an incense of praise rising to Him.

Forget not ... God pardons all my mess,
Forget not ... God heals all my hurt places,
Forget not ... God redeems my very beating, breathing life from the shadows,
Forget not ... God crowns me, even me, with goodness, kindness, faithfulness, & compassion,
Forget not ... God fills my days to the brim with beauty.

We tell of Him, His story giving life to ours, and He is blessed.

JOURNAL:

Have you ever asked God questions and made time and space for Him to answer you? The answer may not come immediately but jot down your question and carry it around with you for a while, listening for what He has to say to you.

- What have I forgotten about You?
- Which scripture speaks of this about You?
- What can I do to remember this about You?
- Who would You like me to share this with?

PRAYER:

Set aside a window of time to allow your soul to bless (to kneel before, to adore, to praise) the Lord for this specific aspect of Himself of which He has reminded you. It may feel awkward and stilted at first ... don’t stop there! Be brave, be bold and bless the Lord.





Day 37: MEDITATION

Psalms 1:1-2, 119:97-99, 63:5-7; Romans 6:6-8

Whitney Gilliam

The purpose of meditation is to enable us to hear God more clearly. Meditation is listening, sensing, and heeding the voice of Christ. It is characterized more by reflecting rather than studying, listening rather than thinking, and releasing rather than grabbing. Meditation is often thought of as an attempt to “empty the mind”, however the aim is to center the attention of the body, emotions, mind, and spirit upon the glory of God.

Everyone’s meditation practice will look different; the time, place, posture, and methods. This practice can often seem overwhelming, but start simple! Simply find a quiet place, free of distractions, and even if just for a few minutes, and think about and listen to God. It is an act of finding “holy leisure”: a sense of balance in life, and an ability to be at peace through the activities of the day, to take time to enjoy beauty and pace ourselves (Celebration of Discipline - Richard Foster). But do not be discouraged, this practice is not meant to be “completed” in a day or time, but rather it is to become a way of life. You will constantly be learning and growing as you practice meditation and encounter our living God.

JOURNAL:

- What are some of your initial reactions to the practice of meditation?
- If you’ve practiced meditation before, what was your experience like? If not, what are you looking forward to most?
- What makes your life crowded? Do you have a desire to hear God’s voice in the midst of it?

PRAYER:

Ask God to show you what meditation could look like in your life. Ask for the desire to practice it and to experience God’s presence.

DAY 38: JUST JESUS

2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:22; Philipians 4:13

Gary Davis

I was having dinner with my future in-laws at a steakhouse at the top of the Omni Hotel in Corpus Christi in the Fall of 2000.

The discussion turned to our faith in the Almighty. My mother-in-law Rosemary was a lifelong Catholic. Father-in-law Charles was an Episcopalian, then a Catholic, then an Episcopalian. At some point, Charles, a man of few words, tired of the conversation and summarized the discussion as follows: "Just Jesus".

It is about as simple and complex and magnificent as that. Jesus is our righteousness. He is the narrow door (John 10:9); we can do nothing unless we abide in Him (John 15: 4,5); we can do all things with Him; we take His yoke upon us and learn from Him for His yoke is easy and His burden light (Matthew 11: 28 -30); at the same time, we are to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24); we are crucified with Him and the life we now live, we live by faith in Him (Galatians 2:20). Above all other commands, we are to love Him with all our hearts, minds, and souls (Matthew 22:37 -40, and second, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves). He is the Lamb of God and the Lion of Judah, our divine and total friend and Lord.

Luther said it similarly many years ago with his 'Solus'. (I have always thought it a bit odd that he had "multiple" "solus", but paradoxically, like many things in the Bible, it makes sense.). His solas include 'Soli Deo Gloria', 'Sola Scriptural', and so forth. But the one I think of now is 'Solus Christu'.

As an old hymn says so well:
"Nothing in my hands I bring
Simply to the cross I cling."

I am not; I cannot, but He is and can and will and does, and therefore I can do all things through Him.

JOURNAL:

What are some ways you overcomplicate your life? What are some specific ways you could just use Jesus? If Christ if first in your life, what are three things which would change?



PRAYER:

Thank You Lord Jesus, the most gracious gift of our Abba in Heaven.

DAY 39: JESUS' FORSAKING

Matthew 27:46; Judges 6:12
Renee Schmidt

Here, Jesus is in the depth of His sorrow. He suffered spiritual agony surpassing all expression, resulting in the departure of His Father's presence.

The black midnight of His horror.

He descended the abyss of suffering.

No man can enter into the full meaning of these words. We think sometimes that we could cry these words--seasons when the brightness of the Father's smile is eclipsed by clouds and darkness.

But let us remember that God never does really forsake us. It is only a seeming forsaking with us, but in Christ's case, it was a real forsaking.

We grieve at a little withdrawal of our Father's love; but the real turning away of God's face from His Son, who shall calculate how deep the agony which it caused Him?

It was a dreadful fact with Christ, God had really turned away from Him for a season.

O, distressed soul, who once lived in the sunshine of God's face, but are now in darkness, remember that He has not really forsaken you.

Since even the thought that He has forsaken us gives us agony, what must the woe of the Savior have been when He cried these words?

Yes...even in scripture, God's mighty warrior, Gideon, is asking the very questions that may be running through your mind -- "Why did this happen to me? Why didn't You stop it? Where was Your working Hand on my behalf? Have you abandoned me?" No question, no matter how piercing, is too much for the Lord. Talk it out with Him. It's okay...tell Him your deepest thoughts and feelings. Be honest with Him. He is listening...Remember--He will never leave you nor forsake you. He may be the only one you can talk to right now...who else will understand the depths of your pain? Only the Lord knows how you really feel. Confide in Him. He has not left you. He is with you.

-C. H. Spurgeon



JOURNAL:

What are your honest and raw words you want to speak to Christ? What pain have you endured? What hurt to you feel has been too much? Write out an honest letter to God in how you feel?

PRAYER:

When you reflect upon what you wrote, remember that He will never leave you or forsake you. Let your prayer come naturally out of the place in your life where you experience hurt, yet know God is there.

Day 40: The Power of the Cross

Matthew 28:1-10; 1 Corinthians 15:13-19

Eric Eaton

A Physical Therapist's job is to help rehabilitate an individual after an accident or surgery. The problem is that the individual actually has to do the work. They have to put in the hard exercises, the pain, and discomfort in order to get better. But many people don't want to put in the work, the effort, or the time to get better, they just want a pill to make the pain go away. A rehabilitation doctor once stated that if 80% of his patients would actually do the exercises, he prescribes then they wouldn't be in pain and wouldn't need the medication.

This is a similar problem we face in our spiritual life. With the cross and resurrection, we are given answers to our problems, we are given a way out, but we have to believe in what God is telling us and commit ourselves to living our life "in him."

We can put so much effort, raw determination, and grit into our recoveries, into our job situations, into a hobby, or an event. But it is amazing how easily we give up at the foot of the cross, when it doesn't meet our expectations. What if the disciples had given up at the cross? The cross surely wasn't in any of their plans, the Jesus they were following was never supposed to end up on the cross. If they knew how it was going to end would they have still followed him.

If the disciples had given up on the cross because it was too hard, or too difficult, then they never would have discovered the glorious realities of the resurrection. It's because they persevered, it's because they kept going through the dark time of the cross, that they got to see what truly happens when the world does the illogical and Christ raises from the dead.

No one who experienced the resurrection was ever the same. The disciples were changed, Mary was changed, James, Jesus' brother who remained on the outskirts of his ministry became a powerful preacher in Jerusalem. You cannot experience the resurrection without experiencing transformation. How can you let the Resurrection of Jesus Christ permeate all that you do, and all that you are this Easter?

JOURNAL:

How is Jesus' resurrection transformational in your life? What hard work do you need to put in to truly experience the power of the cross?

PRAYER:

Spend some time today in quiet meditation reflecting upon Jesus' time on the cross and his resurrection. What words, thoughts, or ideas come to mind when you think about those events? Now pray that you could truly experience the transformational power of the cross. How Jesus freed you from the world in that one moment and what it means in living out your life.



END NOTES:

Day 5

Jesus Cup of Suffering
F.B. Meyer, "How to Bear Sorrow." Secret of Guidance, ccel.org, <https://bit.ly/3quGf66>, accessed on December 28, 2021.

Day 16

Jesus' Suffering and Comforts
C.H Spurgeon, "January AM," Spurgeon.org, <https://bit.ly/3EBuklL>, accessed on December 28, 2021.

Day 17

The Lies We Believe...
Tasha Layton, Look What You've Done, <https://bit.ly/32UppFv>, accessed January 4, 2022.

Day 22

Are You Hungry?
Piper, John. A Hunger for God: Desiring God through Fasting and Prayer, 2013.

Day 24

Praise
CS Lewis, "C.S. Lewis > Quotes > Quotable Quotes", Goodreads.com, <https://bit.ly/3Ghi7uq>, accessed on January 10, 2022.

Day 29

Jesus' Agony of the Spirit
C.H. Spurgeon, "Gethsemane," The Spurgeon Center, Spurgeon.org, <https://bit.ly/3EA3SyU>, accessed on December 28, 2021.

Day 37

Meditation
Richard Foster, "Celebration of Discipline," (New York, NY, HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1998), p. 27

Day 39

Jesus' Forsaking
C.H Spurgeon, "Morning Devo, Apr. 15th," Heartlight.org, <https://bit.ly/3z77CHd>, accessed on December 28, 2021.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

COLEEN BEVER

Wife to John, Dad & Mom to Zach, Mitch & Tassia, Pop-Pop & Coco to twin grandsons Jack and Riley, and Daddy & Mommy to fur-baby Willa.

GARY DAVIS

Gary is the husband of Cindy, the father of five, a trial lawyer, a poor golfer, and a forgiven sinner, who is so grateful for our Father's and our Lord's kindness and grace and blessing in all these things—except the quality of his golf game.

ERICA EATON

Erica is the wife of Eric Eaton and mother to Dylan, Jude, and Presley. Her family has lived in Crested Butte for 7 years and she has worked as a physician assistant at the hospital for 5 years.

ERIC EATON

COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT PASTOR

Eric has worked as a Senior Pastor, business consultant, non-profit Executive Director, and a leadership development advisor to organizations and ministries. He is the author of The Raging Sloth, The Thrival Guide, and The Thrival Man: 30-Day Devotional series. Eric and his wife Erica enjoy the Colorado outdoors with their three mostly grown children Dylan, Jude, and Presley.

MARK EWING

ELDER

Mark is a long time OBJC Elder, Bible college grad, and is a retired banker, currently serving as the Fire Chaplain for the Crested Butte Fire Protection District. Mark lives in Almont Colorado with his wife Brenda and their golden retriever Ginger.

ROSIE GEISLER

Rosie is a Jesus-following, mistake-making, grace-clinging, Word-loving, child of the King, wife to a sailor, momma to two man-cubs, marmite-munching, tea-drinking transplant from across the pond.

WHITNEY GILLIAM

YOUNG ADULTS PASTOR

Whit has been in the valley for over five years and working as the young adult's pastor here at Oh Be Joyful Church for over three and a half years. She enjoys spending time with her people (particularly her smoking hot husband, Will), backcountry snowboarding, and laughing.

TYLER HANSEN

DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP AND ARTS

Tyler has been a part of OBJC in some form or another since the late 80's. He has served with the worship team since 2000 and now oversees all aspects of OBJC's worship services, communications, special events, and whatever else is needed. He lives in a hobbit house in an aspen forest with his wife Janna, their two sons, Micah and Elijah, a grumpy old dog named Dolly and a spry puppy named Buddy (after Buddy the Elf, of course).

MOLLY HOLSTEEN

Molly's family has been in Crested Butte for nine years now and they've been involved in community at Oh Be Joyful Church just as long. They care deeply about taking part in the body of Christ locally and sharing community with fellow believers has really enriched their lives.

JOANNA JOSE

Joanna moved to Crested Butte in the summer of 2019 along with her husband, Jim, and three teenage children. Prior to Crested Butte, they lived in Uganda, Africa as Jim served on staff with Engineering Ministries International. Joanna enjoys helping out with youth and women's ministries, serves on the YL Committee, is a part of the OBJC Counseling ministry, and loves soaking in God's Word.

PRISCILLA AND HOLDEN MACRAE

Priscilla and Holden MacRae were both professors of Sports Medicine at Pepperdine University for 35 years before choosing "reassignment" in Crested Butte in 2018. They, and their two daughters (Micala and Manali), began camping in this valley in 1996 and built a house in Riverbend in 2012 where they spent many summers and winter holidays. Both Holden and Priscilla share a passion for following Jesus, researching the potential of the human body, and inspiring others to keep their bodies, minds, and spirits healthy so they can excel in their passions and talents. We are so grateful to be a part of Oh Be Joyful Church and the larger Gunnison Valley Community.

TOM MILLER

ELDER

Tom and his wife, Catherine, have been coming to Crested Butte for over 35 years. In those 35 years, they've added a son, Benjamin (and daughter-in-law Claire); daughter Elizabeth (and son-in-law Paul) and recently grandsons Jack and Miles (Elizabeth and Paul). Tom and Catherine now live full time in Crested Butte. Tom teaches in the business school at MSU Denver. When he's not teaching or playing with grandkids, he loves all the things that happen in and around CB.

TIM PARCHINSKI

Tim has been married to his best friend from northern Minnesota, Cari, for 31 years. They have three daughters that have blessed them beyond words. Cate 28, Annie 26 and Mary 21. Tim and Cari raised their family in Colorado Springs for 21 years and have lived in CB for 3 years.

RENEE SCHMIDT

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Renee, aka Nay Nay, has years of experience leading children's story times and finds her magic moments singing and dancing with children. Renee has a passion to creatively communicate God's love and the truths in His Word so that all the Joyful Kids enjoy learning and growing in their friendship with Jesus. She and her husband, Chris, have 2 sons, Brian and Michael.

JESSICA THOMAS

BUSINESS OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Jessica has been in Crested Butte, this time around, for 7 years now. Western State College originally brought Jessica to the valley in 2007 where she met her now husband, Kyle. Jessica and Kyle have a chubby cheeked son named Beckett who makes life an even greater adventure. In her free time, she likes gardening, sharing her love for the outdoors with her family, and sweet times with friends. Jessica handles business and building operations for OBJ and serves as a behind the scenes ninja to help things run smoothly.

FRAY WEBSTER

Fray has been married 40 years to Nancy, his childhood sweetheart. They spend their time living between Crested Butte and Colleyville, Texas.

At the age of 19 Fray accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior and knew that he had become a new creation in Christ. Nancy followed shortly thereafter with her decision to follow Christ and as a young family they joined First Baptist Church, Euless where they have worshiped and served in many ministries.

Fray and Nancy have 3 married children and 8 grandchildren with whom they are passionate about sharing the love of Christ and building a legacy of faith.

SCOTT WINN

SENIOR PASTOR

Scott and his wife Claire have been serving in church ministry together for almost 30 years. Both have their roots in Dallas, Texas and in the great north Texas institutions of Dallas Seminary, Northwest Bible Church, Young Life, and Pine Cove. Scott first served as a youth pastor, then pastor of missions and evangelism at Woodcreek Church in Richardson. The Winns have three fabulous kids: Taylor, Sarah, and Michael, who are all off in college and graduate school. They enjoy regularly having friends in their home and everything outdoors in Colorado.



So you, by the help of your God, return,
hold fast to love and justice,
and wait continually for your God.

HOSEA 12:6

PATHWAYS:

At Oh Be Joyful, our mission is simple: We Follow Jesus. But what does that mean? What does it mean to be a disciple, a student, and a devotee of this man? We believe it means reorienting all areas of your life; your finances, relationships, career, family, labor, recreation, sex, values, and views by committing to four things: Abiding, Learning, Becoming, and Doing. When we abide in Jesus, we commit to learning from him, becoming more like him, and doing what he did.

Pretty simple, right? But there is a lot to unpack in that simplicity and we believe a life spent pursuing these things is a life fully realized. We also believe a community of people devoted to the path of Jesus will be revolutionary and transformative in this post-Christian, digital age. We want to recover our full humanity not by some new paradigm or trendy program. We want to be transformative revolutionaries by following the path laid out for us by a carpenter and rabbi two thousand years ago.

LEARN MORE AT
OHBEJOYFULCHURCH.ORG/PATHWAYS



