

A PURPOSEFUL GRACE
DEVOTIONAL WORKBOOK



PURPOSEFUL GRACE



Learning to Walk With God

A 30-Day Scripture & Reflection Journey



*Growing in faith, understanding His Word,
and learning to follow Christ one day at a time.*

HIS WORD
CHANGES
EVERYTHING



FAITH • GROWTH • PURPOSE • GRACE

A Personal Note From Purposeful Grace

Welcome to Learning to Walk With God: A 30-Day Scripture & Reflection Journey. Purposeful Grace was created from my desire to grow closer to Jesus Christ and encourage others to do the same.

I am a believer who is continuing to learn, study, pray, and grow in my relationship with God. I don't claim to know everything about Scripture, and I am not presenting myself as a pastor or biblical scholar.

My hope is that we can open our Bibles and learn together.

Why I Created Purposeful Grace

In Matthew 28:18–20, Jesus commissions His disciples to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey His commands.

These words remind me of the importance of sharing the message of Jesus Christ and encouraging others to follow Him.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul encourages believers to encourage and build one another up.

Hebrews 10:24–25 also teaches the importance of encouraging one another toward love and good deeds, while continuing to gather together as believers.

These passages remind me that growing in faith is not simply an individual journey. Christians are called to encourage and strengthen one another.

My prayer is that Purposeful Grace will serve as a small encouragement in that journey.

Why Biblical Accuracy Matters

In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul instructs Timothy to handle the word of truth correctly.

Although this instruction was given to Timothy in the context of his ministry, it reminds me of the importance of approaching Scripture with care, humility, and a willingness to keep learning.

I recognize that my understanding is still growing. I may not explain every passage perfectly, and I want to remain open to correction when necessary.

That is why I encourage you to read each Scripture passage in your own Bible rather than relying only on the explanations in this workbook.

In Acts 17:11, we read about the Bereans examining the Scriptures to determine whether what they were hearing was true.

I hope you will approach this journey with that same desire to understand God's Word for yourself.

An Invitation to Learn Together

Throughout these thirty days, we will read Scripture, explore its meaning in context, reflect on what it teaches, consider how to respond, and spend time in prayer.

The explanations and reflections are intended to support your study, not replace Scripture or the guidance of a faithful Christian community.

If you encounter a passage you find difficult, I encourage you to continue studying, praying, and seeking sound biblical guidance.

I am learning alongside you.

My greatest hope is that through this journey, you will come to know Jesus Christ more deeply, develop a greater understanding of God's Word, and continue growing in faith long after these thirty days are complete.

God's Word is our foundation. Purposeful Grace is simply a companion to help us study it.

May everything shared here point you toward Jesus Christ.

Welcome to Your Journey

Have you ever opened your Bible wanting to grow closer to God but found yourself unsure where to begin?

Maybe you've read a passage and wondered what it really means. Maybe you've struggled to understand how to apply God's Word to your everyday life.

This journey was created for you.

Over the next 30 days, we'll walk through Scripture together, learning not only what God's Word says but how to understand it, reflect on it, and live according to it.

You don't need to know everything about the Bible before you begin. You simply need a willingness to seek God, learn from His Word, and allow Him to work in your heart.

Each day will guide you through a passage of Scripture, offer an explanation of its meaning, and encourage you to reflect on your own relationship with God.

You'll also learn simple Bible-study habits that can help you continue growing long after these 30 days are complete.

This isn't about rushing through a devotional or checking another task off your list.

It's about making time to know God, understand His Word, and learn to follow Jesus one day at a time.

My prayer is that this journey encourages you to open your Bible with a greater desire to know God and a heart willing to follow Him.

With love and grace,

Purposeful Grace

How to Use This Workbook

Each day follows five simple steps designed to help you develop a meaningful Bible-study habit.

READ

Begin by reading the assigned Scripture in your own Bible. Read slowly, paying attention to the surrounding verses and what the passage is communicating.

UNDERSTAND

Explore the meaning of the passage in its biblical context. Learn what the writer is communicating before considering how the passage applies to your life.

REFLECT

Consider what you've learned and how it relates to your own heart, choices, and relationship with God. Use the writing spaces to record your thoughts honestly.

APPLY

Think about how you can respond to what Scripture teaches. Choose one practical way to put what you've learned into action.

PRAY

Spend time speaking with God about what you've learned. Use the suggested prayer as a starting point, then write your own prayer from your heart.

Each day also includes a Bible-study habit to help you grow in understanding Scripture and a takeaway to remember throughout your day.

Remember: This is not a race. If you need more than one day to study a passage, take the time you need.

A note about your reflections: If you need more room than the writing lines provide, use a separate notebook or journal. Take the time you need to consider Scripture and write your answers.

DAY 1 | Where Do I Begin?

Today's Scripture: Psalm 63 • Focus: Psalm 63:1

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Begin by seeking God Himself, not merely what He can do for me.

READ

Read Psalm 63 slowly, then read it again. Notice the words that describe the writer's longing for God, his remembrance of God, and his praise.

UNDERSTAND

David speaks of thirsting for God in a dry and weary land. He longs for God Himself, not merely relief from his circumstances. He remembers God's help, praises Him, and clings to Him even in difficulty. Psalm 63 invites us to begin with a desire to know God, rather than treating prayer only as a way to obtain what we want.

David describes his longing for God even in a dry and weary land. His remembrance and praise direct us to God's character rather than to the circumstances alone. Before applying Psalm 63 personally, notice what David says about God and why he seeks Him.

Read the psalm as David's prayer, not as a promise that seeking God removes hardship. David speaks of remembering God while resting, praising Him, and trusting the One whose faithful love is better than life (verses 3–7). His worship is rooted in who God is, even while he is in a difficult setting.

The invitation for a reader today is to begin by seeking God Himself. Reading Scripture and praying help us know and respond to Him; they are not techniques for making every circumstance immediately better. David's longing is personal, but it remains directed toward the God he praises.

REFLECT

- What am I seeking from God right now?
- Do I desire to know Him, or am I mainly looking for a change in my circumstances?
- When I remember God's faithfulness, how does that shape my prayer and praise?
- Where am I honestly beginning this journey with God?

APPLY

Set aside a few quiet minutes to read Psalm 63 again. Tell God what you long for, then spend time praising Him for who He is. Write one way you can make room to seek Him this week, without treating this practice as a way to earn His favor.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, awaken in me a sincere desire to know You. As I seek You through Your Word, teach me to turn toward You with an honest heart. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Notice who is speaking, to whom, and in what circumstances. Ask what the passage reveals about God before applying it to yourself.

TAKEAWAY

I can begin right where I am by seeking God Himself and making room to know Him more deeply.

DAY 2 | Don't Just Read It. Live It.

Today's Scripture: Psalm 119:9–16 • Focus: Psalm 119:11

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

God's Word is to be treasured, considered, and lived—not merely read.

READ

Read Psalm 119:9–16 twice. On your second reading, mark the action words: seek, hide, learn, recount, rejoice, meditate, delight, and neglect.

UNDERSTAND

The psalmist seeks God wholeheartedly and treasures His Word. He learns God's commands, speaks about them, rejoices in them, meditates on them, and resolves not to neglect them. His desire to obey flows from seeking God (verse 10). The passage is not merely about collecting biblical information; it describes a life shaped by attentiveness to God's teaching.

The psalmist treasures God's instruction in his heart so that it can guide his response to temptation. Learning, remembering, meditating, and choosing obedience belong together. His example invites us to carry Scripture beyond the moment we read it.

The passage repeatedly connects what the psalmist knows with what he does. He seeks God, asks not to wander from God's commands, stores God's word in his heart, recounts His laws, rejoices in His instruction, and meditates on His ways. These are related responses rather than a formula guaranteeing that someone will never sin.

Verse 11 is especially useful in context: treasuring God's Word in the heart is part of seeking to resist sin. Memorizing a verse can help, but the aim is not merely to recall words; it is to understand God's instruction and live by it. The whole passage calls for ongoing attention and obedience.

REFLECT

- Am I reading God's Word mainly to know what it says, or am I willing to let it shape how I live?
- Where might I need to respond differently because of what Scripture teaches?

- What is one area of my life where I want God’s Word to guide my choices, words, or relationships?

APPLY

Choose one truth from Psalm 119:9–16. Write it down and ask: ‘If I really believe this, what would obedience look like today?’ Choose one small, specific action and return to the passage later to reflect on how you responded.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us Your Word. Help me not only to read it, but to remember and obey what You teach. In Jesus’ name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Look for action words. Ask: What is the writer doing? What is God doing? What am I being called to believe, remember, or obey?

TAKEAWAY

I don’t want to only know God’s Word. I want to live by it.

DAY 3 | When I Need Wisdom

Today's Scripture: James 1:2–8 • Focus: James 1:5–8

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

When I lack wisdom, I can ask God and trust His generosity.

READ

Read James 1:2–8 slowly. Trace the progression: trials → testing of faith → perseverance → maturity → need for wisdom → asking God.

UNDERSTAND

James addresses believers facing trials. The testing of faith can produce perseverance, and perseverance has a maturing work in us (verses 2–4). Verse 5 then invites those who lack wisdom to ask God, who gives generously. This is wisdom for responding faithfully amid difficulties, not a promise that every question will receive an immediate or specific answer.

James invites those who lack wisdom to ask God, who gives generously. Asking in faith involves wholehearted reliance on Him rather than divided trust (verses 6–8). We can pray, examine what Scripture already teaches, and respond faithfully while some outcomes remain unknown.

James does not tell believers to enjoy suffering itself or pretend trials are easy. He asks them to consider the way tested faith can produce perseverance, and how perseverance contributes to maturity. His next instruction—to ask God for wisdom—belongs within that setting of trials and faithful endurance.

James contrasts asking in faith with being divided in one's allegiance or trust. This warning should not be used to condemn every sincere question or moment of uncertainty. The reader can acknowledge difficulty, ask God for wisdom, and seek to act in light of His Word rather than being pulled between competing loyalties.

REFLECT

- When something is difficult, where do I turn first—God, myself, other people, or my emotions?

- Am I asking God for the answer I already want, or am I willing to seek His wisdom even if it leads me differently than I expected?
- What is one situation in which I need God's wisdom right now?

APPLY

Name one situation where you need wisdom. Pray specifically about it. Consider whether Scripture already offers principles that apply, then choose a response consistent with those principles. Asking for wisdom is not the same as expecting God to reveal every detail of the future.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when trials expose my need for wisdom, help me ask You with faith and trust Your generosity. Teach me to persevere as I follow You. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Read what comes before and after a verse. James 1:5 makes fuller sense when read alongside the teaching on trials and perseverance.

TAKEAWAY

When I don't know what to do, I don't have to depend on my own understanding. I can ask God for wisdom and trust Him as I seek to walk faithfully.

DAY 4 | When I Don't Understand

Today's Scripture: Proverbs 3:1–8 • Focus: Proverbs 3:5–7

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Trust God's wisdom above my own, even when I cannot see the outcome.

READ

Read Proverbs 3:1–8 twice. Notice the instructions: do not forget, keep, trust, do not lean, submit, do not be wise in your own eyes, fear the LORD, and shun evil.

UNDERSTAND

Proverbs 3 calls us to use our judgment humbly, remembering that our perspective is limited. Its opening verses emphasize remembering instruction and holding fast to love and faithfulness. Trust shapes our conduct and priorities, not only decisions about which direction to take.

Acknowledging God in all our ways means bringing our whole lives under His direction, not asking Him merely to approve the path we have already chosen. The passage connects trust with humility and turning away from evil. Its language about straight paths should not be turned into a promise that faithful people will never experience suffering or uncertainty.

Proverbs speaks with the language of wisdom: it teaches the ordinary direction of a life ordered by reverence for God, not a mechanical guarantee that every choice will have an easy outcome. Verses 5–6 call for wholehearted trust and acknowledging the Lord in all our ways; verse 7 adds that we should not be wise in our own eyes but fear the Lord and turn from evil.

Trusting God does not require abandoning sound judgment, refusing advice, or expecting an unmistakable sign for each decision. It means allowing His revealed wisdom to correct our assumptions, guide our conduct, and humble our confidence when we cannot see the whole picture.

REFLECT

- Where am I trying to control something because I fear what will happen if I let go?
- Am I trusting God only when His direction agrees with what I want?

- What is one faithful action I can take, and what outcome is beyond my control?
- Where do I need to recognize the difference between responsible action and trying to control everything?

APPLY

Write one thing you are trying to control. Separate the faithful action you can take from the outcome you must entrust to God. Take the action that is yours to take, while remembering that trust does not mean neglecting responsibilities or appropriate boundaries.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me trust You with all my heart rather than relying only on my understanding. Teach me to acknowledge You in my choices and turn away from what is evil. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Notice repeated ideas and contrasts: trusting the LORD versus leaning on our own understanding. Ask why the writer sets them against each other.

TAKEAWAY

I don't have to understand everything to trust God. I can follow what He has shown me and leave what I cannot control in His hands.

DAY 5 | Learning to Surrender

Today's Scripture: Luke 9:18–26 • Focus: Luke 9:23–26

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Following Jesus means putting Him before my own desires, even when obedience requires sacrifice.

READ

Read Luke 9:18–26 slowly. Jesus speaks of His coming suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection before calling His followers to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him. Read verses 23–26 again and consider why He connects discipleship with sacrifice and with losing one's life for His sake.

UNDERSTAND

DENY YOURSELF. Jesus does not say that we have no value or that our needs and feelings do not matter. He calls us to put following Him above our own desires and preferences. When what we want conflicts with His teaching, discipleship means choosing His way rather than treating our wishes as the highest authority.

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS DAILY. In the context of Jesus' coming suffering, taking up the cross is a willingness to follow Him even when it involves sacrifice, rejection, or suffering for His sake. It is not simply a label for every everyday frustration. The word 'daily' calls attention to continuing discipleship, not only a one-time decision.

LOSE YOUR LIFE FOR HIS SAKE. Jesus contrasts trying to preserve life on our own terms with being willing to lose it for His sake. He asks what it profits someone to gain the whole world but lose or forfeit themselves. He is not telling people to harm themselves or ignore their worth. He is teaching that gaining the world is not worth abandoning Him.

REFLECT

- What am I holding on to that makes it difficult to follow Christ wholeheartedly?
- When my desires conflict with His teaching, which do I choose?
- Am I willing to follow Jesus when obedience requires sacrifice?

- What is one area of my life where following Jesus may require me to surrender my own desires?

APPLY

Identify one situation where your desires are influencing your response. Ask, ‘What would choosing Christ over my own desires look like here?’ It may involve apologizing, refusing retaliation, or acting faithfully when doing so is uncomfortable. Surrender does not require accepting wrongdoing, neglecting responsibilities, or abandoning appropriate boundaries.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me deny myself, take up my cross daily, and follow Jesus. Teach me to value faithfulness to Him more than my own way. In Jesus’ name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Pay attention to the cost of discipleship. Read Jesus’ instructions in context: He speaks of His suffering before calling disciples to take up their cross. Ask what following Him means and what obedience might require.

TAKEAWAY

Following Jesus means putting Him before my own desires, taking up my cross daily, and choosing His way even when it requires sacrifice. I may not always find obedience easy, but I want my life to reflect my commitment to Christ rather than my desire to live on my own terms.

DAY 6 | Learning to Walk by the Spirit

Today's Scripture: Galatians 5:13–26 • Focus: Galatians 5:16–25

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Our freedom in Christ is not permission to indulge sinful desires. We are called to walk by the Holy Spirit, serve one another in love, and live in a way that reflects His work in our hearts.

READ

Read Galatians 5:13–26 slowly in your Bible. Paul reminds believers that they have been called to freedom, but warns against using freedom to indulge the flesh. Instead, he calls them to serve one another humbly in love. Read verses 16–25 a second time. Notice the conflict between flesh and Spirit, the contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit, and the call to keep in step with the Spirit. What does belonging to Christ mean for the way you live?

UNDERSTAND

Freedom in Christ is not freedom to indulge in sin

In Galatians 5:13, Paul reminds believers that they have been called to freedom. This freedom is not permission to follow every desire. Instead, Paul calls believers to serve one another humbly in love. In verses 16–17, he describes the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. Here, “flesh” refers to human desires opposed to God, not the idea that physical bodies or every ordinary human desire are inherently sinful. Walking by the Spirit involves resisting sinful desires rather than allowing them to govern our lives. Following Christ does not mean we will never struggle with temptation or sin, but we are not called to accept sinful behavior as the pattern directing our lives.

The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit

In verses 19–21, Paul identifies behaviors such as sexual immorality, impurity, jealousy, selfish ambition, hatred, and divisions. He gives a serious warning that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. We should not overlook this warning or excuse sinful behavior. At the same time, the passage does not establish that every believer who experiences temptation or commits an

individual sin has automatically lost salvation. Christians differ on how this warning relates to repentance, perseverance, and assurance. For our study, we should take sin seriously, turn away from sinful practices, and learn to live by the Spirit.

Paul contrasts these works with the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23): love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These qualities describe the character the Holy Spirit produces in those who belong to Christ. They are not a checklist to earn God’s love, nor something we produce by determination alone. As we continue walking by the Spirit, we are called to resist sinful desires and live in a way that reflects His work in us. Growth does not mean perfection overnight, but neither should we treat sin as an accepted pattern of life.

Keeping in step with the Spirit

In verse 24, Paul says those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Verse 25 calls believers to keep in step with the Spirit. This connects with Day 5: Jesus calls His followers to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him. Paul explains that following Christ involves living by the Spirit rather than letting the flesh direct our choices. Verse 26 also warns against conceit, provoking one another, and envy. Walking by the Spirit affects both personal choices and relationships: we are called to serve others in love and reflect the Spirit’s work in our lives.

REFLECT

- Do I notice a difference in my attitude, choices, or relationships depending on how intentionally I seek God?
- Which qualities of the fruit of the Spirit do I see developing in my life?
- Where do sinful desires or reactions still influence my actions?
- Which quality of the fruit of the Spirit do I most need to grow in right now, and how could that change the way I respond to others?

APPLY

Think about one situation where you recently struggled with your attitude, emotions, or response to another person. What would keeping in step with the Spirit look like there? Perhaps it means responding with gentleness, practicing patience, choosing kindness, or recognizing a sinful desire and choosing not to act on it. Choose one quality of the fruit of the Spirit to pay particular attention to today. Pray for God’s

help, remembering that walking by the Spirit is not something we accomplish through determination alone.

One quality of the fruit of the Spirit I want to grow in:

One way I can respond according to the Spirit today:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, teach me to walk by Your Spirit rather than give in to sinful desires. Grow in me the fruit that reflects Your work in my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Pay attention to contrasts in Scripture. In Galatians 5, Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. Read both lists in their surrounding context. Ask: "What two things is the writer comparing, and what does this comparison teach me about the passage's central message?" Understand the passage first, then consider its application.

TAKEAWAY

My freedom in Christ is not an opportunity to follow my sinful desires, but a call to walk by the Holy Spirit and serve others in love. As I continue following Christ, I want to turn away from the desires of the flesh and keep in step with the Spirit, allowing His fruit to become evident in my character, choices, and relationships.

Galatians 5:13–26

DAY 7 | Learning to Love Like Christ

Today's Scripture: John 13:31–35 • Focus: John 13:34–35

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Jesus calls His disciples to love one another as He has loved them. The love we demonstrate toward one another should reflect His example and show that we belong to Him.

READ

Read John 13:31–35 slowly in your Bible. Jesus is speaking to His disciples during His final meal with them before His arrest and crucifixion. Earlier in the chapter, He washed His disciples' feet, giving them an example of humble service. Now He gives them a command that will shape how they are to live together as His followers.

Read verses 34–35 a second time. Consider: What does Jesus command His disciples to do? How has Jesus demonstrated His love for them? How will others recognize that they are His disciples? Pay attention to the connection between His own love and the love His disciples are called to demonstrate.

UNDERSTAND

Jesus gives His disciples a new command

In John 13:34, Jesus commands His disciples to love one another as He has loved them. The command to love others was already present in the Old Testament. What Jesus emphasizes here is His own love as the example His disciples are to follow.

Earlier in John 13, Jesus washed His disciples' feet. Although He was their Lord and Teacher, He willingly took the position of a servant. His actions demonstrated humility and a willingness to serve others. Jesus' love would also be demonstrated through His coming death, which He speaks about in the surrounding chapters of John's Gospel. His disciples are called to love one another according to the example He has given them.

Love identifies us as His disciples

In verse 35, Jesus teaches that the love His disciples have for one another will show others that they belong to Him. Their love is meant to be a visible expression of their

relationship with Christ. This love goes beyond words or feelings. It is demonstrated through the way believers treat, serve, and care for one another.

Jesus is not teaching that we earn our place as His disciples by performing enough loving actions. Rather, the love we demonstrate toward one another should reflect the One we follow. As we learned in Day 6, love is also identified as part of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23. As we continue walking by the Spirit, our relationships should increasingly reflect the love Christ has shown us.

REFLECT

- How does Jesus' example of humility and service shape the way I understand love?
- Are there relationships where impatience, irritation, or selfishness make it difficult for me to respond with love?
- In what relationship or situation do I find it most difficult to demonstrate Christlike love?
- What might Jesus' example teach me about how to respond differently?

APPLY

Today, look for one opportunity to demonstrate Christlike love through your actions. It may be an opportunity to serve someone, offer encouragement, listen patiently, or respond with kindness during a difficult conversation. Before acting, ask yourself: "How can I demonstrate the love Jesus has shown me?" Choose one specific action and put it into practice.

Remember that showing love does not require you to accept mistreatment or neglect appropriate boundaries. You can treat someone with kindness while addressing harmful behavior.

One person I can demonstrate Christlike love toward today:

One action I can take to demonstrate that love:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for the love Jesus has shown us. Help me love fellow believers as He commanded, in ways that truly reflect His example. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Look for the connection between Jesus' words and actions. When studying the Gospels, pay attention to how Jesus demonstrates what He teaches. In John 13, Jesus washes His disciples' feet before commanding them to love one another as He has loved them. His actions help us understand the humility and service that should characterize His followers. Ask: "How do Jesus' actions help me understand His teaching?" Read the surrounding verses before considering how His example applies to your own life.

TAKEAWAY

Jesus calls me to love others as He has loved me. May the love I show my fellow believers reflect His example and demonstrate that I belong to Him.

John 13:34–35

DAY 8 | Learning to Forgive as Christ Forgave Us

Today's Scripture: Ephesians 4:25–32 • Focus: Ephesians 4:31–32

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Because God has forgiven us through Jesus Christ, we are called to put away bitterness and forgive one another, demonstrating kindness and compassion in our relationships.

READ

Open your Bible to Ephesians 4:25–32. Paul teaches believers how their new life in Christ should influence their words, actions, and relationships. Read the entire passage slowly, then read verses 31–32 a second time.

Consider: What attitudes and behaviors are believers told to put away? What should characterize their treatment of one another? What reason does Paul give for forgiveness?

UNDERSTAND

Our new life in Christ should change how we treat others

Earlier in Ephesians 4, Paul teaches believers to put off their former way of life and put on the new self (verses 22–24). He then gives practical instructions about truthfulness, anger, honesty, and speech. In verses 26–27, he warns believers not to let anger lead them into sin. Feeling angry is not automatically the same as acting sinfully; our response matters. Verse 29 calls for words that build others up rather than harm them.

Putting away bitterness and choosing forgiveness

In verse 31, Paul instructs believers to put away bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and malice. In verse 32, he calls them instead to kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. God's forgiveness through Christ is the reason believers are called to forgive one another. We do not forgive to earn God's forgiveness; we respond to the forgiveness already given to us in Christ. Forgiveness does not mean pretending

wrongdoing never occurred. Rebuilding trust can require time and accountability, although that process is not the direct subject of this passage.

Paul's instructions belong to his larger call for believers to live as people who have learned Christ and put on the new self. The commands about speech, anger, honesty, and forgiveness are not isolated self-improvement tips; they show how the new life should affect a community of believers.

Forgiving another person does not mean calling evil good or eliminating appropriate boundaries. Those are practical questions that require wisdom, but Paul is clear that bitterness and malice should be put away and that God's forgiveness in Christ is the model for how believers treat one another.

REFLECT

- How do I tend to respond when someone hurts me or when circumstances do not go as expected?
- Have anger or painful memories affected my words or actions?
- When has anger or frustration influenced how I treated someone?
- How could remembering God's forgiveness influence the way I respond?

APPLY

Today, notice how you respond when frustration or anger arises. Before speaking, pause and ask God to help you respond with kindness and compassion. If you have hurt someone through your words or actions, consider an appropriate step toward making things right.

Is there someone I need to forgive, apologize to, or treat with greater kindness?

What is one action I can take today?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for forgiving me through Christ. Help me put away bitterness and speak with kindness, and teach me to forgive others as You have forgiven me. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Look for instructions and the reasons behind them. In Ephesians 4:32, Paul calls believers to forgive one another because God has forgiven them in Christ. When you read a biblical instruction, ask: “What is being taught, and what reason does the passage give?” Read the surrounding verses to understand the author’s larger message.

TAKEAWAY

Because God has forgiven me through Jesus Christ, I am called to forgive others. May His grace guide my heart, helping me put away bitterness and respond with kindness and compassion.

Ephesians 4:31–32

DAY 9 | Finding Peace Through Prayer

Today's Scripture: Philippians 4:4–9 • Focus: Philippians 4:6–7

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

When worries weigh on our hearts, we can bring our concerns to God through prayer and thanksgiving, trusting Him to guard our hearts and minds with His peace in Christ Jesus.

READ

Open your Bible to Philippians 4:4–9. Read the passage slowly, noticing how Paul connects rejoicing, gentleness, prayer, thanksgiving, and the way believers direct their thoughts. Read verses 6–7 a second time.

Consider: What does Paul tell believers to do with their concerns? How does thanksgiving relate to prayer? What does he say God's peace will guard?

UNDERSTAND

Bringing our worries to God

In Philippians 4:6, Paul directs believers to bring their requests before God through prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, rather than being consumed by anxiety. This instruction is an invitation to turn to God with our needs; it does not mean that experiencing anxiety automatically indicates a lack of faith. Thanksgiving helps us remember God's goodness even when circumstances are difficult.

The peace of God

In verse 7, Paul teaches that God's peace, which surpasses understanding, will guard believers' hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. He does not promise that every problem will immediately disappear or that every request will be granted exactly as we hope. In verses 8–9, Paul also calls believers to consider what is true and worthy of praise and to practice what they have learned. Prayer and faithful action belong together.

Paul writes these instructions in the midst of a letter that repeatedly calls believers to stand firm and rejoice in the Lord. He combines prayer and thanksgiving with a deliberate pattern of attention and action: consider what is true and honorable, and practice what has been taught and received.

The promise that God's peace will guard hearts and minds is explicitly 'in Christ Jesus.' It should not be reduced to an expectation that prayer always makes painful emotions vanish at once. Paul calls believers to bring their requests before God and continue responding to His instruction.

REFLECT

- What concern has been occupying my thoughts lately?
- What concerns have been weighing most heavily on my heart?
- What would it look like to bring those concerns honestly before God?
- How can I practice bringing them to Him with thanksgiving even while the situation remains unresolved?

APPLY

Today, identify one concern that has been weighing on your heart. Bring it before God in prayer and thank Him for His care and faithfulness. Rather than allowing uncertainty to consume your thoughts, consider what is true according to God's Word and seek His wisdom for your next step. Trusting God does not require neglecting practical responsibilities or appropriate support.

What concern do I need to surrender to God in prayer?

What is one way I can put today's Scripture into practice?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You that I can bring my concerns to You in prayer. Help me turn away from anxious preoccupation, dwell on what is true and worthy, and trust You as I follow Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Read God's promises in their full context. In Philippians 4:6–7, Paul instructs believers to bring requests to God with thanksgiving and describes His peace guarding their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. He does not promise the immediate removal of every difficulty. Ask: What does this passage actually promise, to whom, and what do the surrounding verses teach?

TAKEAWAY

When worry weighs on my heart, I can bring my concerns before God through prayer and thanksgiving. Even when I cannot control my circumstances, I can trust Him to guard my heart and mind with His peace in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6–7

DAY 10 | Hearing Jesus - and Putting His Words Into Practice

Today's Scripture: Matthew 7:24–29 • Focus: Matthew 7:24–27

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Jesus teaches that hearing His words is not enough. Wisdom is shown by putting His teaching into practice.

READ

Open your Bible to Matthew 7:24–29. These verses come at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus closes His teaching with the picture of two builders: one builds on rock and the other on sand. Both hear His words, but only one puts them into practice.

Consider: What is the difference between the two builders? What happens to both houses? According to Jesus, what makes the first person wise?

UNDERSTAND

Hearing is not the same as obeying

Both builders hear Jesus' words. The difference is that the wise builder hears them and puts them into practice, while the foolish builder hears them and does not. Jesus is showing that knowing His teaching is not the same as living according to it. We can read Scripture, listen to teaching, and understand biblical truth, but He calls His followers to put His words into practice.

The storm comes to both houses

Rain falls, waters rise, and winds strike both houses in Jesus' illustration. The difference is the foundation: the wise builder hears Jesus' words and puts them into practice. Matthew then tells us that the crowds were amazed because Jesus taught with authority. Jesus calls His hearers to respond to His teaching, not merely admire it.

This comparison comes at the close of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). He has been teaching His hearers how to live in response to His words. The two houses

illustrate two different responses to that teaching—not two different levels of storm or two promises of comfortable circumstances.

The result of each foundation becomes visible when the same kinds of forces strike. Jesus' emphasis is on hearing and doing His words. The closing verses underline His authority, so the passage invites readers to take His teaching seriously rather than simply admire its wisdom.

REFLECT

- Is there a difference between knowing what Jesus teaches and allowing His words to shape my choices, attitudes, and relationships?
- Where do I find it difficult to put Jesus' teaching into practice?
- What might obedience look like in that area of my life?

APPLY

Choose one teaching of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) that you know but sometimes struggle to live out. Read that teaching again in its surrounding context. Then identify one concrete way you can put it into practice this week. The goal is not perfection; it is allowing what you hear from Jesus to shape how you live.

One teaching of Jesus I want to put into practice:

One specific way I can practice it this week:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for the words of Jesus. Help me hear His teaching and put it into practice, building my life upon obedience to Him rather than merely knowing His words. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Ask what the passage calls you to do. Bible study is not only about understanding what a passage means; it should also lead us to consider how its truth shapes our lives. After reading a passage in context, ask: “What does this teach me about God, and how should I respond?” In Matthew 7:24–27, Jesus makes the connection clear: the wise person hears His words and puts them into practice.

TAKEAWAY

I do not only want to hear the words of Jesus. I want to build my life on His teaching by putting His words into practice. (Matthew 7:24–27)

DAY 11 | Remaining in Christ

Today's Scripture: John 15:1–11 • Focus: John 15:4–5

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Jesus calls His disciples to remain in Him. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit apart from the vine, we cannot bear spiritual fruit independently of Christ. As we remain in Him, His Word and love shape our lives, and the fruit that follows brings glory to the Father.

READ

Open your Bible to John 15:1–11. Jesus is speaking to His disciples during His final evening with them before His arrest. He uses the picture of a vine and its branches to teach them about their dependence upon Him. Read the passage once all the way through. Then read it again slowly, noticing the words and ideas Jesus repeats - especially remain, fruit, love, words, and commands.

Consider: What does a branch depend upon the vine for? What does Jesus say happens when His disciples remain in Him? What connections do you notice between remaining in Jesus, His words, obedience, love, and bearing fruit?

UNDERSTAND

Jesus is the vine; His disciples are the branches

A branch has no independent source of life or fruitfulness. It bears fruit because it remains connected to the vine. Jesus uses this picture to teach His disciples about their dependence upon Him. In verse 5, when He says that apart from Him they can do nothing, the immediate context is bearing fruit as His disciples. Jesus is not teaching that people apart from Him are literally incapable of accomplishing ordinary tasks. His point is that His disciples cannot produce the spiritual fruit He desires independently of Him.

Remaining involves relationship and obedience

Jesus describes remaining in Him as continuing dependence upon Him. He connects abiding with His words remaining in His disciples, remaining in His love, keeping His commands, prayer, and bearing fruit. His followers respond through obedience while looking to Him as the source of their spiritual life.

Fruit brings glory to the Father

In verse 8, Jesus says that the Father is glorified when His disciples bear much fruit and show themselves to be His disciples. Spiritual growth is not about appearing more righteous than someone else. The fruit growing in our lives should ultimately point back to God and bring glory to Him. The movement of the passage is clear: remain in Christ, bear fruit, glorify the Father.

Jesus also gives a sobering warning in verse 6: a branch that does not remain in Him withers and is thrown away. That warning belongs to His illustration and should not be omitted. Christians may differ on some theological implications of the image, but Jesus is unmistakably teaching that remaining in Him matters profoundly.

In the surrounding verses Jesus connects remaining with His words, His love, His commands, and joy. Thus, abiding is not merely a passing spiritual feeling; it involves continuing dependence on Him and responding to what He teaches. The Father's pruning in verses 1–2 is part of the image of fruitfulness, not a license to identify every hardship in someone's life as a particular act of pruning.

REFLECT

- Where am I relying mostly upon my own strength right now?
- Are there things I am trying to change, solve, or carry without depending fully on Christ?
- What might abiding in Christ and allowing His Word to shape my response look like in that area?

APPLY

Jesus' illustration gives us an important question: Am I trying to produce spiritual fruit through my own strength, or am I living in dependence upon Christ? Think about one area where you want to become more Christlike - perhaps patience, love, forgiveness, self-control, kindness, obedience, or trust. Instead of beginning with "I need to try harder," begin with Christ. Spend time in His Word, bring that area before Him in prayer, consider what Jesus teaches about it, and look for an opportunity to put His teaching into practice. Remaining in Christ does not mean doing nothing; it means our obedience flows from dependence upon Him rather than confidence in ourselves.

One area where I want Christ to continue changing me:

What does Scripture teach me about this area?

How can I put that teaching into practice today?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You that Jesus is the true vine. Help me remain in Him, take His words seriously, and depend on Him for fruitfulness rather than on my own strength. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Notice repeated words and ideas. When you read Scripture, pay attention to words or ideas that appear repeatedly. Repetition can help you recognize what a passage is emphasizing. In John 15:1–11, Jesus repeatedly returns to the idea of remaining. He also speaks repeatedly about fruit, love, His words, and His commands. Before moving immediately to application, ask: What keeps appearing in this passage? Why might this idea be important to what the passage is teaching? You do not have to understand everything immediately. Good Bible study often begins by simply noticing what is actually there.

TAKEAWAY

I cannot produce spiritual fruit through my own strength. Jesus calls me to remain in Him, allow His Word to shape my life, and depend upon Him as I learn to follow His teaching. As Christ changes me and fruit grows in my life, may that fruit point beyond me and bring glory to God.

John 15:4–5

DAY 12 | A Mind Being Renewed

Today's Scripture: Romans 12:1-2 • Focus: Romans 12:1-2

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Because of God's mercy, believers are called to offer their lives to Him rather than simply conforming to the patterns around them. As our minds are renewed, the way we think and evaluate life is transformed, helping us discern what reflects God's will.

READ

Open your Bible to Romans 12:1-2.

Read both verses slowly several times.

As you read, notice the movement of Paul's thought:

God's mercy -> offering ourselves to God -> not conforming -> being transformed -> renewing the mind -> discerning God's will

Pay particular attention to the contrast between conforming and being transformed.

Consider:

What does Paul ask believers to do in response to God's mercy?

What two different influences or directions do you see in verse 2?

What connection does Paul make between a renewed mind and discerning God's will?

UNDERSTAND

Our response begins with God's mercy

Romans 12:1 begins with the word "Therefore," which points believers back to the mercy of God Paul has been explaining throughout the letter.

This matters because Paul does not begin by telling Christians to change themselves so that God will accept them. He appeals to them in view of God's mercy.

The Christian life is a response to what God has done, not an attempt to earn His mercy through good behavior.

Offering our lives to God

Paul tells believers to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice.

The language of sacrifice would have carried the idea of something being presented to God. But here Paul speaks of a living sacrifice. The believer's life is to be offered to God.

This helps us see that worship is not limited to singing, praying, attending church, or other activities we might normally call worship. How we actually live - what we do with our bodies, choices, relationships, time, and everyday lives - matters to God.

Conformed or transformed?

Verse 2 gives us an important contrast.

Paul warns believers not to be conformed to the pattern of this world. The values around us can influence our thinking without us always recognizing it.

Success, possessions, appearance, approval, status, pleasure, and other things can begin shaping what we believe is most important. These things are not necessarily wrong in themselves, but they can become unhealthy measures of our worth, identity, or purpose when they take the place that belongs to God.

Paul points believers toward something different: transformation through the renewing of the mind.

Christian transformation is deeper than simply changing outward behavior. The way we think, value things, evaluate choices, and understand what matters is also being changed.

A renewed mind learns to discern

Paul connects the renewing of the mind with being able to test and approve what God's will is.

This does not mean every decision will suddenly become obvious or that every inner feeling is a message from God.

Rather, as our thinking is shaped according to God's truth instead of simply absorbing the values around us, we become better equipped to recognize what is consistent with His will.

REFLECT

- What has been shaping the way I think about what matters most?
- Are there attitudes or values I once accepted without questioning that I now see differently as I grow in my relationship with God?

- What is one area of my thinking that I believe God may be changing as I grow in my understanding of His Word?

APPLY

Today, identify one message or value you regularly encounter from the world around you.

It might concern success, money, possessions, appearance, relationships, happiness, approval, status, or something else.

A message or value that may be influencing the way I think:

Does this way of thinking agree with what Scripture teaches?

Instead of relying only on how you feel about it, look for what God's Word actually says.

What biblical truth can begin reshaping the way I think about this?

Then consider one practical way that renewed thinking could affect the way you live.

The goal is not simply to tell yourself to "try harder."

Transformation includes allowing God's truth to challenge patterns of thinking you may have accepted without realizing it.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your mercy. Renew my thinking so that I do not simply follow the patterns of this world, and help me discern what pleases You. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Stay With What the Text Says

When studying Scripture, begin with what the passage actually says before adding ideas you know from other parts of the Bible.

For example, Romans 12:1-2 speaks about God's mercy, offering ourselves to God, conformity, transformation, renewing the mind, and discerning God's will.

Other Scriptures can help us understand how the Holy Spirit works in believers, but Romans 12:1-2 does not explicitly mention the Holy Spirit.

That distinction matters.

When you study a passage, ask:

What does this passage explicitly say?

Then ask:

What other biblical truths may help me understand it without changing what this particular passage is saying?

Learning to make that distinction can help us handle Scripture more carefully.

TAKEAWAY

Because of God's mercy, I want my life to belong to Him. I do not want the patterns around me to determine how I think. As my mind is renewed according to God's truth, I want to grow in recognizing and living according to His will.

Romans 12:1-2

PURPOSEFUL GRACE / SCRIPTURE & REFLECTION JOURNEY

DAY 13 | Grace Comes First

Today's Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10 • Focus: Ephesians 2:4-10

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

We are not saved because we have done enough good works or made ourselves worthy of God. Salvation is God's gift, received by grace through faith. Good works do not earn our salvation; they belong to the new life God has created us to live in Christ.

READ

Open Ephesians 2:1-10. Read it slowly and notice the movement of the passage:

Our condition -> God's mercy and love -> made alive with Christ -> saved by grace through faith -> created in Christ for good works

As you read, consider: What is our condition apart from Christ? What does God do? What role do works play in salvation? What place do good works have after salvation?

UNDERSTAND

We could not save ourselves. Paul describes people as spiritually dead in transgressions and sins. The picture is not of people who simply need to become a little better. We need God to act.

Then the passage turns: God, because of His great love and rich mercy, made believers alive with Christ. The order matters. It is not, "We became good enough, so God saved us." God acts in mercy and love toward people who could not rescue themselves.

Ephesians 2:8-9 makes clear that salvation is by grace through faith, not by works, so there is no room for boasting. The Christian life can easily become a kind of performance - measuring ourselves by whether we prayed enough, read enough, helped enough, or behaved well enough. Those things can be good, but they do not purchase salvation.

When we fail, struggle, or recognize sin in our lives, the answer is not to accumulate enough good behavior to make ourselves worthy. Our confidence rests in God's saving work through Christ.

Verse 10 also shows that good works still matter. Believers are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared for them to do. The order is important:

Grace -> salvation -> new life in Christ -> good works

Good works are not the price of salvation. They are part of the purpose of the new life God has given us in Christ.

In verses 1–3, Paul describes the former condition of those now addressed as believers, including the influence of the world and sinful desires. The turning point is God's mercy and love, not an improved human performance. God's gracious action provides the reason for the new life that follows.

Paul then says believers are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works. Good works are not optional in the sense that obedience is irrelevant, but neither are they the means of earning salvation. Keeping that order clear safeguards both the generosity of God's grace and the seriousness of the life believers are called to live.

REFLECT

- Do you ever find yourself trying to prove you're "good enough" for God?
- When you make a mistake or recognize sin, what are you tempted to believe about your relationship with God?
- How does remembering that salvation is by grace through faith change how you think about those moments?

APPLY

Think about the difference between earning and responding.

If I believed I had to earn salvation, I might

Because salvation is a gift of grace, I can

Choose one good work you can do today - not to earn God's love or salvation, but as part of the new life you have in Christ. It might be an act of kindness, service, encouragement, generosity, forgiveness, helping someone, or faithfully carrying out a responsibility.

Reminder: I am not doing this to earn salvation. I am responding to the grace God has already shown me.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for saving believers by grace through faith, not by works. Teach me to respond gratefully through the good works You prepared for us in Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Follow The Order Of The Passage

Sometimes two true statements can be reversed in a way that changes how we understand their relationship. Ephesians 2:8-10 teaches salvation by grace through faith before it speaks of the good works believers are created to do. Reversing that order could wrongly suggest that works earn salvation.

As you study, ask: What happens first? What follows because of it? Is the passage giving me a cause, a result, or a response?

Following the writer's order can help you understand how the ideas in a passage relate to one another.

TAKEAWAY

I do not have to make myself good enough to earn salvation. I am saved by God's grace through faith. Because I belong to Christ, I want the good works in my life to be a response to what God has already done - not an attempt to earn what only His grace can give.

DAY 14 | Search My Heart

Today's Scripture: Psalm 139 • Focus: Psalm 139:23–24

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

God knows me completely - my thoughts, words, ways, and every part of my life. Because nothing is hidden from Him, I can invite Him to search my heart, use His Word to reveal what needs to change, and lead me in His way.

READ

Open Psalm 139 and read the whole psalm slowly. Pay attention to what David says about God knowing him, being present with him, forming him, and searching him.

As you read, notice the movement of the psalm: God knows me completely -> I cannot escape His presence -> He formed me and knows my days -> David speaks strongly about God's enemies -> David asks God to search his own heart and lead him.

UNDERSTAND

Psalm 139 begins with David recognizing that God knows him completely. God knows when he sits and rises, understands his thoughts, is familiar with his ways, and knows his words before he speaks them. David is describing God's complete knowledge of him.

Verses 7-12 emphasize that there is nowhere David can go beyond God's presence. These verses do not promise that believers will never experience suffering or danger. They show that even darkness and distance do not place us beyond God's sight or presence.

In verses 13-18, David reflects on God's involvement in forming him before birth. His life was never unknown to God. Verse 16 speaks of David's days being written in God's book; in this immediate context, the emphasis is God's knowledge of David's life and days, not a reference we should automatically identify with the Book of Life.

Verses 19-22 are difficult. David expresses strong opposition toward those he identifies as God's enemies. We should not skip or soften these words, but neither should we turn them into a general command to hate unbelievers. Christians also read these verses alongside Jesus' command to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.

Then David turns the examination toward himself. He asks God to search him, know his heart, test his thoughts, reveal any offensive way in him, and lead him in the everlasting way. The psalm does not tell us that David is specifically repenting of verses 19-22. What we can say is that after speaking about the wrongdoing of others, he is willing to place his own heart before God's examination.

REFLECT

- Am I willing to let God's Word examine my own heart, not only help me notice what is wrong in someone else?
- Are there attitudes, desires, habits, or actions I tend to hide, excuse, or avoid bringing before God?
- What has Scripture been showing me lately about an area where I need to grow or change?
- How does knowing that God already knows me completely affect the way I come to Him?

APPLY

Spend a few quiet minutes before God with Psalm 139:23-24. Ask Him to use His Word to show you where your attitudes, desires, or actions need to change.

When something comes to mind, do not rush to excuse it or become discouraged. Bring it honestly before God. Compare it with Scripture, confess sin where needed, and ask Him to help you respond faithfully.

Repentance is not a way to earn forgiveness or make yourself worthy of God's grace. It is a genuine turning toward God when His Word exposes sin and calls you to change.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, You know me completely. Search my heart, reveal anything in my ways that displeases You, and lead me in Your everlasting way. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Let Scripture Examine You

Bible study is not only about gathering information or noticing what a passage says about other people. After understanding a passage in context, ask: What is God's Word showing me about my own heart?

Difficult verses should not be skipped or changed to make them easier. Read them in context and consider what the rest of Scripture teaches. Then allow the passage to turn your attention inward as well as outward.

TAKEAWAY

God already knows me completely, so I do not need to hide from Him. I can invite Him to search my heart, bring what He reveals into the light of His Word, and ask Him to lead me as I continue growing in Christ.

DAY 15 | An Undivided Heart

Today's Scripture: James 4:1–10 • Focus: James 4:6–10

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

God gives grace to those who recognize their need for Him. Rather than living with a divided heart - wanting God while holding on to desires and values that pull us away from Him - we are called to submit ourselves to God, turn from sin, draw near to Him, and humble ourselves before Him.

READ

Read James 4:1-10 in your Bible. As you read, notice the movement of the passage: conflict and desires -> divided loyalty -> God's grace -> submission -> drawing near to God -> repentance -> humility.

UNDERSTAND

James speaks directly to believers whose desires and loyalties had become divided. Their selfish desires were leading to conflict, and James warns them about friendship with the world - a way of living that places the desires and values of the world above devotion to God.

But in the middle of this strong correction, James reminds them of something important: God gives grace.

Because of His grace, the response James calls for is not to hide from God, but to turn toward Him. He tells them to submit to God, resist the devil, draw near to God, turn from sin, and purify their divided hearts.

James also calls them to grieve over their sin and humble themselves before the Lord. This is not about earning God's grace by becoming good enough. Grace comes first. Their response is genuine repentance and humble surrender to God.

James calls us to recognize desires and loyalties that divide our hearts. When we notice something drawing us away from God, his teaching invites us to humble ourselves, repent, and return to Him rather than continue pursuing what competes with our devotion.

God does not ask us to divide our devotion between Him and the world. He calls us to draw near to Him with humble, surrendered hearts.

The chapter begins with conflict and selfish desires, including distorted motives in prayer. James's warning about friendship with the world is therefore about divided loyalty to values opposed to God—not a command to refuse ordinary contact or friendship with unbelievers.

The strong call to mourn in verse 9 concerns the seriousness of sin and the need for repentance. It is not a command that Christians remain unhappy. The movement toward humbling ourselves before the Lord in verse 10 must be kept together with the assurance that God gives grace to the humble.

REFLECT

- Are there areas of my life where my heart feels divided between following God and holding on to something that pulls me away from Him?
- What desires, priorities, or influences might be competing with my devotion to God?
- When God's Word reveals something in my life that needs to change, do I tend to resist it, excuse it, or humbly bring it before Him?
- What would drawing near to God with a more surrendered heart look like in my life right now?

APPLY

Think about one area where you may be struggling to fully surrender to God. It could be a desire, habit, attitude, relationship, priority, or something else that continually pulls your attention away from Him.

Bring that area honestly before God. Instead of trying to change through your own strength, remember what James says: God gives grace.

Ask yourself: What would submitting this area of my life to God look like today?

Then take one practical step of obedience based on what Scripture has shown you. That may mean turning away from something you know is sinful, changing a choice or attitude, removing an influence that continually pulls you away from God, or intentionally spending time drawing near to Him through prayer and His Word.

The goal isn't perfection. It's a heart that keeps turning toward God rather than choosing what pulls it away from Him.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You that You give grace to the humble. Show me where my loyalties are divided; help me submit to You, resist what opposes You, and turn from sin. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Follow The Flow Of The Passage

When studying Scripture, pay attention to the order in which ideas appear. Ask: What comes first? What follows? How are the ideas connected?

In James 4:6-10, James begins by reminding us that God gives grace before calling his readers to submit to God, resist the devil, draw near to Him, turn from sin, and humble themselves.

Following the flow helps us avoid reversing the message. We don't obey, repent, or humble ourselves to earn God's grace. God gives grace, and we respond to Him with humility, repentance, and surrender.

TAKEAWAY

God gives grace, and I don't have to earn it by making myself good enough. When my heart becomes divided or something pulls me away from Him, I can humble myself, turn toward God, and draw near to Him with a surrendered heart.

DAY 16 | Learning Contentment

Today's Scripture: Philippians 4:10–13 • Focus: Philippians 4:11–13

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Paul learned contentment both in plenty and in need because he drew strength from Christ. His circumstances varied, but his reliance on Christ remained. That is the foundation for learning contentment wherever we find ourselves.

READ

Read Philippians 4:10-13 in your Bible. For additional context, read Philippians 4:4-20. As you read, notice what Paul says about the Philippians' concern for him, the different circumstances he had experienced, what he had learned about contentment, and where his strength came from.

UNDERSTAND

Paul begins by expressing joy in the Lord and gratitude for the Philippians' renewed concern for him. Their care mattered to him. But he explains that his contentment did not depend upon whether he received support. He had learned contentment through changing circumstances.

Paul knew both need and plenty. He had experienced hunger as well as being well fed. Contentment did not mean pretending that hunger was pleasant or that genuine needs did not matter. It meant learning not to make his circumstances the ultimate source of his strength.

Needs, desires, and contentment. We may have genuine needs for food, shelter, or help during a difficult season. We may also desire greater comfort, stability, or opportunities. Wanting circumstances to improve does not automatically mean we lack contentment. The question for reflection is whether what we have—or do not have—has become the foundation of our security and satisfaction. This is an application of Paul's example, not a separate command stated in these verses.

Depending on Christ in plenty and in need. In a season of lack, we can acknowledge our needs honestly, pray, and accept appropriate help. In a season of abundance, we can be grateful without making our possessions or comfort our source of confidence.

Paul himself welcomed the Philippians' generosity; contentment did not require him to refuse their care.

His strength came from Christ. Philippians 4:13 belongs to Paul's discussion of contentment. He is not promising that Christ will enable believers to accomplish any goal they desire. He is explaining that Christ strengthened him to live faithfully in both abundance and hardship.

The point is not that we must stop wanting anything or never seek to improve difficult circumstances. Paul's example directs us to continue depending upon Christ, whose strength sustained him when circumstances changed. Contentment is learned through that dependence, not manufactured by denying real needs.

REFLECT

- How much does my sense of contentment depend on my circumstances going the way I want them to?
- Is there a circumstance in my life right now that I wish were different? How might I depend on Christ for strength while I walk through it?
- When I have plenty, am I just as aware of my dependence on Christ as I am when I am in need?
- Do I sometimes confuse contentment with having to like or feel good about every circumstance? What does Paul's example show me instead?
- Where might God be teaching me to rely less on my circumstances and more on Christ?

APPLY

Think about one circumstance in your life right now that you wish were different. It may be something you're waiting for, something you're lacking, a difficult season you're walking through, or even an area where you have plenty but have begun depending more on what you have than on Christ.

Bring that circumstance honestly before God.

Instead of asking yourself to pretend that everything is fine, ask: What would it look like for me to depend on Christ for strength in this circumstance today?

Then choose one simple response of faith. You might pray honestly about what you're struggling with, thank God for a specific way He has provided, resist comparing your circumstances with someone else's, accept help that God has provided through another person, or continue faithfully doing what you know is right even while your circumstances remain difficult.

Contentment isn't pretending you don't have needs or wishing nothing were different. It is learning, as Paul did, that your circumstances do not have to be the source of your strength. Christ is.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me learn contentment in both plenty and need. Thank You for the care of others, and teach me to depend on Christ for strength whatever my circumstances. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Read Familiar Verses In Context

Sometimes a Bible verse becomes so familiar that we remember the verse without remembering the passage around it.

When you come across a familiar verse, do not stop there. Read the verses before and after it and ask: What is the writer talking about here? What situation or idea leads into this verse? How does the surrounding passage help me understand what the verse means?

Philippians 4:13 is a good example. When we read verses 10-13 together, we see that Paul has been describing what he learned through experiencing both abundance and need. His statement about receiving strength comes in the middle of that discussion.

Reading the surrounding verses helps us avoid giving a familiar verse a meaning that is broader or different from what the passage is actually communicating.

TAKEAWAY

My contentment does not have to depend on my circumstances. Whether I am experiencing plenty or walking through need, I can learn to depend on Christ for the strength to remain faithful through it.

DAY 17 | The Power of Our Words

Today's Scripture: James 3:1–12 • Focus: James 3:9–12

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Our words may seem small, but they can have tremendous influence and cause serious harm. Because people are made in God's likeness, we cannot separate our worship of God from the way we speak to and about others. James calls us to recognize the seriousness of our speech and the inconsistency of using the same mouth both to praise God and to tear others down.

READ

Read James 3:1-12 in your Bible. As you read, notice the different illustrations James uses to describe the tongue and its influence. Pay particular attention to what James says about praising God while also using our words against people made in God's likeness.

UNDERSTAND

James uses several illustrations to show how something small can have an enormous effect. A bit can direct a horse, a small rudder can steer a large ship, and a small fire can set a great forest ablaze. In the same way, the tongue is small, but the words we speak can have a powerful effect.

James gives a serious warning about the tongue because of its ability to cause great harm. Just as a small fire can spread far beyond where it began, words can cause damage that reaches beyond the moment in which they were spoken.

James also points to a troubling inconsistency. With our tongue we praise God, yet with that same tongue we can curse people who are made in God's likeness. James says this should not be.

He illustrates this inconsistency by asking whether fresh water and salt water can flow from the same spring and whether certain plants can produce a different kind of fruit. His illustrations challenge us to recognize that our worship of God should not be separated from the way we use our words toward people made in His likeness.

James also acknowledges that everyone stumbles in many ways. He does not present controlling the tongue as something easy. In fact, he emphasizes how difficult it is for human beings to tame it.

His warning should lead us to take our speech seriously and examine how we use our words. As followers of Christ, the way we speak to and about others should increasingly reflect the God we worship.

REFLECT

- When I think about the way I speak to and about other people, what patterns do I notice in my words?
- Are there situations or certain people around whom I am more likely to speak out of anger, frustration, impatience, or carelessness?
- Have I ever treated gossip, sarcasm, criticism, or hurtful words as insignificant when they may have caused more harm than I realized?
- Is there someone I have spoken to - or spoken about - in a way that does not reflect the fact that they are made in God's likeness?
- How can remembering that I use the same mouth to praise God change the way I think before I speak?

APPLY

Think about the situations in which you are most likely to speak without considering the effect of your words. Maybe it happens when you are angry, frustrated, hurt, impatient, joking with others, or talking about someone who isn't present.

Choose one area of your speech that God's Word has brought to your attention today.

Before you speak, practice asking yourself: Are these words necessary? Are they truthful? Could they unnecessarily hurt or tear someone down? Do these words reflect the God I worship and the way Scripture calls me to treat others?

If you realize that something should not be said, choose not to say it. If you have already hurt someone with your words, consider whether you need to acknowledge what you said, apologize, and seek to make things right.

And when you stumble, don't use that failure as an excuse to give up. Bring it honestly before God and continue learning to use your words more carefully.

The goal isn't simply to become someone who says fewer harmful things. It is to become increasingly intentional about using your words in ways that reflect the God you worship.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, forgive me when my words wound others. Remind me that people are made in Your likeness, and help my speech reflect the One I praise. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Pay Attention To Illustrations And Comparisons

Biblical writers sometimes use illustrations or comparisons to help communicate an important truth. When you notice one, don't rush past it. Ask: What two things are being compared? What do they have in common? What is the writer trying to help me understand through this picture?

In James 3:1-12, James uses several vivid illustrations. A bit is small compared with a horse, yet it can direct the horse. A rudder is small compared with a ship, yet it can help steer the ship. A small fire can spread and cause enormous destruction.

James uses these pictures to help us understand the serious influence of something that may seem small - the tongue and the words we speak.

James then continues emphasizing the inconsistency he has been describing through illustrations involving a spring and different kinds of fruit.

When Scripture uses an illustration, pay attention to the details - but also keep the illustration connected to the point the writer is making.

The goal isn't to find a hidden meaning in every detail. It's to understand what the comparison helps the passage communicate.

TAKEAWAY

My words may seem small in the moment, but they can have a lasting effect. The same mouth I use to praise God should not be used to tear down people made in His likeness. I want to take my words seriously, think before I speak, and continue learning to use my speech in ways that reflect the God I worship.

DAY 18 | Who Is This Jesus?

Today's Scripture: Mark 4:35–41 • Focus: Mark 4:39–41

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

The disciples were terrified by a storm they could not control. When Jesus commanded the wind and the sea and they obeyed Him, He demonstrated an authority they were still learning to understand. Their question about who He was directs our attention beyond the storm itself and toward the identity of Jesus.

READ

Read Mark 4:35-41 in your Bible. As you read, notice what the disciples fear before Jesus calms the storm and how they respond afterward. Pay attention to what Jesus does, what He asks the disciples, and the question they ask about Him at the end of the passage.

UNDERSTAND

Jesus and His disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee when a severe storm arose. Waves were breaking over the boat, and the boat was beginning to fill with water. Meanwhile, Jesus was asleep.

The disciples woke Him and questioned whether He cared that they were in danger. The situation they were facing was serious.

Jesus got up, rebuked the wind, and commanded the sea to be still. The wind stopped, and the water became calm. He then turned to His disciples and asked why they were afraid and questioned their faith.

Jesus directly connects their fear in this moment with a question about their faith, so we should not remove the force of His words. At the same time, this passage should not be turned into a blanket statement that every experience of fear proves a person has no faith. Jesus is addressing these disciples in this particular situation as they continue learning who He is.

But the passage doesn't end with the storm becoming calm.

After witnessing what Jesus had done, the disciples responded with intense fear and asked one another who He was that even the wind and the sea obeyed Him.

Their question points us toward something deeper than the storm itself. The disciples were still learning who Jesus truly was. What they had just witnessed confronted them with His extraordinary authority: even the wind and the sea obeyed Him.

The storm reveals both the disciples' fear and Jesus' authority. Instead of reading this passage only by asking what Jesus might do about difficult circumstances in our lives, we should first consider the question the passage itself brings to the surface:

Who is Jesus?

The One standing before the disciples possessed an authority they were still learning to understand.

REFLECT

- What does Jesus' authority over the wind and the sea show me about who He is?
- The disciples questioned whether Jesus cared about what was happening to them. When circumstances are frightening or uncertain, am I ever tempted to judge His care by what is happening around me?
- Are there circumstances in my life right now that feel beyond my control? How might what this passage reveals about Jesus shape the way I view them?
- The disciples ended this experience asking who Jesus was. What am I learning about Jesus from this passage that I want to remember when circumstances become frightening or uncertain?

APPLY

Think about one circumstance in your life right now that feels uncertain, frightening, or beyond your control.

Bring that situation honestly before God. You do not have to pretend that you are not afraid or that the situation is easier than it really is.

Then, instead of focusing only on what you want God to change, return to what this passage reveals about Jesus.

Ask yourself: What do I know about Jesus from this passage, even if my circumstances do not change today?

Choose one practical response based on what Scripture has shown you. You might pray honestly about your fear, return to this passage when you feel overwhelmed, or continue faithfully doing something you know is right even while the outcome remains uncertain.

The goal is not to manufacture a feeling of fearlessness. It is to allow what Scripture reveals about Jesus to shape the way you respond when circumstances are beyond your control.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing Jesus' authority over the wind and sea. When I am afraid, help me remember who He is and respond with faithfulness rather than demand a particular outcome. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Ask What The Passage Reveals About God - And About Jesus

When reading Scripture, it can be easy to immediately ask: What does this mean for me?

Application matters, but before asking how a passage applies to our lives, take time to consider what it reveals about God - His character, His authority, His actions, and His ways.

Depending on the passage, ask questions such as: What does this passage reveal about God? What does it reveal about Jesus? What does God do or say here? What do His words or actions help me understand about Him? How should what I learn about Him shape the way I understand and respond to this passage?

In Mark 4:35-41, we could easily focus only on the disciples, their fear, or the storm. But when we pay attention to Jesus, we see Him speak to the wind and the sea, and they obey Him.

The disciples themselves are left asking who Jesus is. Their question directs our attention toward the identity and authority of Jesus.

When you study Scripture, don't begin and end with yourself. Application is important, but first look carefully at what the passage reveals about God. Then allow what you learn about Him to shape the way you understand yourself, your circumstances, and your response to His Word.

TAKEAWAY

The disciples entered the storm afraid of what was happening around them, but after Jesus commanded the wind and the sea, they were left asking a much bigger question: Who is this? Jesus' authority over the wind and the sea directs my attention toward who He is. When circumstances are beyond my control, I want to return to what Scripture reveals about Jesus and allow the truth of who He is to shape the way I respond.

DAY 19 | We Need One Another

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 • Focus: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Believers are many different members, but by one Spirit we have been brought into one body in Christ. No member should believe they do not belong, and no member should believe they do not need the others. God has arranged the body with different members who are called to care for one another in unity.

READ

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 slowly in your Bible. As you read, notice how Paul compares the body of Christ to a human body made up of many different parts. Pay attention to what he says about the parts that seem different, weaker, or less important, and notice how often his illustration emphasizes that the different parts still belong to one body.

Consider these questions as you read:

What happens when one part believes it doesn't belong?

What happens when one part believes it doesn't need the others?

What does Paul say should characterize the way the members of the body care for one another?

UNDERSTAND

One body, brought together by the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul is teaching a church about spiritual gifts and how believers should treat one another. Earlier in the chapter, he explains that different gifts come from the same Spirit and are given for the common good (verses 4-7). Paul then compares the church to a human body: although it has many different parts, they all belong to one body.

In verse 13, Paul explains that believers were all baptized by one Spirit into one body and were all given the one Spirit.

Paul specifically mentions “Jews or Gentiles, slave or free.”

In Paul's time, the words “slave or free” distinguished between people who were enslaved and people who were not enslaved. His point is that differences in ethnic

background or social status do not prevent believers from belonging to the same body in Christ.

Their unity comes through the work of the Holy Spirit, not because everyone has the same background or position in society.

Being different does not mean we do not belong. Paul imagines a foot deciding that, because it is not a hand, it does not belong to the body; then he pictures an ear saying the same thing because it is not an eye. But a different function does not make either part less truly a member. God has arranged the members as He intended (verse 18). The body would not be a body if every part were identical.

Being different does not mean we do not need one another. Paul next describes the opposite attitude: the eye telling the hand, or the head telling the feet, 'I don't need you.' He rejects that thinking as well. A member with a prominent role cannot dismiss another as unnecessary. Paul specifically says that members that seem weaker are indispensable and calls for special honor and care toward those who receive less recognition.

Unity involves mutual concern, not sameness. God has arranged the body so that there should be no division but that its members should have equal concern for one another (verses 24-25). When one member suffers, the others suffer with them; when one is honored, the others rejoice (verse 26). These are calls to compassionate participation in the lives of fellow believers, not merely attending the same gathering.

This care is expressed in practical ways. When another believer is struggling, we should not ignore their suffering. When someone else is honored, we can rejoice with them rather than respond with jealousy or comparison. In this way, believers demonstrate the mutual concern Paul calls for.

Paul is not promising that church relationships will never be difficult. The Corinthian believers themselves needed correction. Nor does he say that every Christian has the same gift, responsibility, or visibility. Instead, he challenges both comparison that says 'I do not belong' and pride that says 'I do not need you.' The members are different, but each belongs to Christ's body and is called to honor and care for the others.

This passage invites us to examine how we view ourselves and fellow believers. We need not measure our contribution by someone else's role, and we must not overlook

people whose work is less visible. Our differences should lead neither to inferiority nor independence, but to unity, humility, and genuine care for one another.

REFLECT

- Do I ever compare myself with other believers and begin to think that what I contribute is less important because I am different from them?
- Are there ways I have treated another believer as though their role, gifts, or contribution mattered less than someone else's?
- Do I tend to approach my faith independently, forgetting that God has made me part of a body in which believers need and care for one another?
- When another believer is hurting, how willing am I to enter into their suffering rather than simply continuing with my own life?
- When someone else is honored, blessed, or recognized, can I genuinely rejoice with them - or am I tempted to compare their place in the body with mine?
- What might change in the way I view other believers if I remembered that differences within the body are not a problem to overcome, but part of how God has arranged it?

APPLY

Think about your relationships with other believers. Is there one area where this passage is calling you to move from simply knowing that you are part of the body of Christ to actually living like you are part of it?

Maybe you have been comparing yourself with someone else and assuming that because your abilities or role look different, you have less to offer.

Maybe you have been trying to walk through your faith mostly on your own instead of allowing other believers to encourage, support, or care for you.

Or perhaps God's Word is bringing someone else to mind - a person who is hurting, overlooked, or in need of encouragement.

Choose one practical response today.

Reach out to someone who is struggling. Encourage someone whose contribution often goes unnoticed. Rejoice sincerely with someone who has something worth

celebrating. Allow another believer to support you instead of insisting that you can handle everything alone.

And if comparison has made you question whether you belong or whether your contribution matters, return to what Paul actually teaches: a body needs different parts.

You do not need to become someone else's part of the body.

But you also were never meant to act as though you do not need the rest of the body.

Ask God to help you see both yourself and other believers as members who belong to one body in Christ - and then choose one way to live out that truth today.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for making believers members of one body in Christ. Free me from comparison and pride, and teach me to care for others and receive their care with humility. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Look for the Problem the Writer Is Correcting

Sometimes a biblical writer isn't simply explaining a truth - he is correcting a particular way of thinking or behaving.

When you recognize the problem being addressed, the writer's teaching often becomes clearer.

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Paul addresses two opposite attitudes within his illustration of the body.

One member can look at another and think, "Because I'm not like you, I don't belong."

Another can look at a different member and think, "I don't need you."

Paul corrects both attitudes. Different members belong to the same body, and the body needs its different members. Instead of comparison, division, or independence, Paul calls the members toward mutual concern for one another.

When studying a passage, ask:

What attitude, belief, or behavior is the writer addressing?

How does the writer correct it?

What truth does the writer give in its place?

Recognizing the problem being addressed can keep us from pulling one sentence out of context and help us understand why the writer said what he did.

TAKEAWAY

I do not have to compare my place in the body of Christ with someone else's. God has made His body with many different members, and we need one another. I want to value the people God has placed around me, care when they are hurting, rejoice when they are honored, and remember that we belong together in Christ.

DAY 20 | Death Does Not Have the Final Word

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:12–28 • Focus: 1 Corinthians 15:20–28

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Christ's resurrection is the foundation of our hope. Because Jesus truly died and was raised from the dead, those who belong to Him do not have to view death as the end. Christ will ultimately defeat every enemy, including death itself. Until then, we can live with our hope firmly placed in the risen Christ, knowing that our future with Him extends beyond this present life.

READ

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-28 slowly in your Bible.

As you read, pay attention to the way Paul builds his argument. Notice what he says would be true if there were no resurrection of the dead, and then watch for the change beginning in verse 20 when Paul declares that Christ has been raised.

Consider these questions as you read:

What does Paul say would be true if Christ had not been raised?

What does Christ's resurrection mean for those who belong to Him?

Why does Paul describe Christ as the "firstfruits" of those who have died?

What does Paul say will eventually happen to Christ's enemies - and which enemy does he identify as the last to be destroyed?

As you read, try to follow Paul's entire thought rather than focusing on only one verse. Notice how the passage moves from what would be true without the resurrection to the hope believers have because Christ has been raised.

UNDERSTAND

Paul is addressing a serious question among the Corinthians. Some were saying that there was no resurrection of the dead. Paul shows them that this belief would have enormous consequences. If the dead are not raised, then Christ Himself has not been

raised. And if Christ has not been raised, Paul says their faith is futile, they are still in their sins, and those who have died in Christ are lost.

Christian faith does not rest on the idea that Jesus simply lived a good life, taught important truths, and then died. The resurrection is essential to the gospel.

Then, in verse 20, Paul's argument changes direction. Christ has been raised from the dead.

Paul calls Christ the "firstfruits" of those who have died. The firstfruits were the beginning of a harvest, with more still to come. In the same way, Christ's resurrection points forward to what is still coming: those who belong to Christ will also be raised.

Paul also compares Adam and Christ in verses 21–22. Through Adam, sin entered the world, and death came through sin (Romans 5:12). Through Jesus Christ comes the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:21). Paul then identifies those who belong to Christ as being raised at His coming (verse 23). This is resurrection hope grounded in Christ, not a statement that everyone automatically receives eternal life regardless of belonging to Him.

Paul explains the order of these events in verses 23–28. Christ has been raised first. When He comes, those who belong to Him will be raised. Then comes the end, when Christ hands the kingdom over to God the Father after bringing every opposing rule, authority, and power to nothing. Christ must reign until all His enemies are placed under His feet. Death is the last enemy to be destroyed. Paul also makes clear that God the Father is not among those subjected to Christ, and describes the Son's final submission to the Father, so that God may be all in all.

"The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

Death is still an enemy. Following Christ does not mean that death no longer brings grief or that believers should pretend it is not painful. But because Christ has been raised, death will not have the final victory.

Our Christian hope therefore reaches beyond the circumstances of this present life. It is rooted in the risen Christ and looks forward to the day when even death itself will be defeated.

REFLECT

- When I think about my future, how much of my hope is tied to what happens in this present life rather than to what Christ has promised beyond it?

- How does knowing that Christ truly has been raised change the way I think about death?
- Are there circumstances in my life that sometimes feel so final or overwhelming that I forget my ultimate hope is not dependent on how those circumstances turn out?
- Do I live as though the resurrection of Jesus is simply something I believe happened in the past, or as a truth that shapes the way I live and what I hope for today?
- What does it mean to me personally that death - the enemy that can seem so final - will one day be destroyed?
- If my hope is firmly rooted in the risen Christ, what might look different about the way I live my life right now?

APPLY

Think about where you are placing your hope right now.

It is easy to become so focused on what is happening in this present life - our circumstances, plans, relationships, struggles, or uncertainties - that we begin to live as though everything depends on how things turn out here.

But Paul reminds us that our hope reaches beyond this present life because Christ has been raised from the dead.

Choose one way to live in light of that truth today.

Maybe you are facing something uncertain and need to remind yourself that your ultimate hope does not depend on getting the outcome you want.

Maybe fear of death - your own or the possibility of losing someone you love - has been weighing heavily on you. You do not have to pretend that death is not painful. Scripture itself calls death an enemy. But you can bring that fear to God while remembering that death will not have the final victory.

Or perhaps the resurrection has become so familiar that you rarely stop to consider what it means for the way you live. Take time today to thank God that Christ did not remain in the grave and ask Him to help you live with your hope rooted in the risen Christ.

Then consider one practical question:

If I truly believe that Christ has been raised and that my hope extends beyond this life, what is one choice I can make today that reflects that hope?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You that Christ has been raised from the dead. Strengthen my hope in His resurrection and the future victory over death as I follow Him today. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Reread When a Passage Is Difficult

Not every passage will make sense the first time you read it. Sometimes the writer is building an argument across several verses, and understanding one sentence depends on seeing how it connects with what comes before and after it.

When a passage feels confusing, don't assume you cannot understand it and don't immediately give up. Slow down and read it again.

As you reread, look for words or ideas that connect one thought to another. Pay attention to changes in the writer's argument. Ask yourself:

What question or problem is the writer addressing?

How does each statement connect with the one before it?

Is there a word or phrase that signals a change in the argument?

What becomes clearer when I read the whole section again?

In 1 Corinthians 15:12-28, Paul begins by explaining what would be true if there were no resurrection. Then verse 20 marks an important change: Christ has been raised. From there, Paul shows what Christ's resurrection means for those who belong to Him and ultimately for death itself.

Sometimes understanding Scripture takes patience. Rereading isn't a sign that you're failing to understand God's Word - it is part of learning to study it carefully.

TAKEAWAY

My hope does not end with this life. Jesus Christ died and was raised from the dead, and because He has been raised, those who belong to Him have the hope of resurrection. Death is still an enemy, and it can bring real grief and pain, but it will not have the final word. I want to live today with my hope firmly rooted in the risen Christ, knowing that one day even death itself will be defeated.

DAY 21 | Learning to Examine What We Hear

Today's Scripture: Acts 17:10–12 • Focus: Acts 17:11

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Not everything we hear about God should be accepted simply because someone teaches it confidently. Scripture teaches us the importance of receiving God's Word with eagerness while carefully examining what is taught. Growing in biblical understanding means learning to recognize the difference between what Scripture actually says and what someone claims it says.

READ

Open your Bible to Acts 17:10–12. Read the passage slowly, paying attention to how the people in Berea responded when Paul and Silas came to them.

Notice two things Luke tells us about the Bereans: they received the message with eagerness, and they examined the Scriptures daily to see whether what Paul was saying was true.

Consider: What were the Bereans willing to do? Why did they examine the Scriptures? What does their example teach us about listening to biblical teaching?

UNDERSTAND

The Bereans received the message with eagerness.

In Acts 17, Paul and Silas arrived in Berea after encountering opposition in Thessalonica. When Paul began teaching in the synagogue, the Bereans responded differently from those who had opposed him in Thessalonica. Luke describes them as receiving the message eagerly. They were willing to listen and consider what Paul was teaching, rather than reject it simply because it challenged what they already understood.

They examined the Scriptures to see whether the message was true.

Acts 17:11 tells us that the Bereans examined the Scriptures daily to determine whether Paul's teaching was consistent with what God had already revealed. Paul was proclaiming Jesus Christ, yet they did not simply accept his message without

examination. Because the New Testament had not yet been completed, the Scriptures they were examining were the Old Testament writings. They were considering whether Paul's message about Jesus was supported by those Scriptures. Eagerness to hear God's Word and careful examination of biblical teaching belong together.

God's Word must guide our understanding.

Today, we hear biblical teaching through sermons, books, devotionals, videos, social media, and conversations. Some teaching faithfully explains Scripture; other teaching may take a verse out of context, misunderstand its meaning, or add promises God has not made. A message can sound encouraging and still fail to represent Scripture accurately. This does not mean distrusting every teacher or assuming we understand everything correctly. We should approach biblical teaching with humility and discernment, willing to correct our own understanding when Scripture shows we have misunderstood something.

REFLECT

- When I hear someone teaching Scripture, do I usually examine the passage for myself?
- Have I ever believed something about God mainly because I heard someone else say it?
- Am I willing to reconsider something I believe if careful study of Scripture shows me that I misunderstood it?
- How can I become more intentional about distinguishing biblical truth from someone's personal opinion or interpretation?

APPLY

Choose one biblical teaching, familiar statement, or Scripture reference you have recently heard. Open your Bible and read the passage yourself. Consider who is speaking, who is being addressed, and what comes before and after the verse.

Ask: Does the teaching accurately represent what the passage says? Is the speaker explaining Scripture in context, or using a verse to support an idea the passage may not teach? If something is difficult, continue studying rather than rushing to a

conclusion. Seek help from knowledgeable, trustworthy Christian teachers while continuing to examine the Scriptures.

One teaching or Scripture reference I want to examine more carefully, and what I learned from reading its context:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word. Give me eagerness to learn and discernment to examine teaching against Scripture rather than accepting everything without question. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Compare What You Hear With Scripture

When someone quotes a Bible verse, open your Bible and read it in context. Ask: What does the passage actually say? What did it mean in its original context? Does the teaching I'm hearing accurately explain that meaning?

Carefully examining Scripture is not disrespectful to those who teach it. The Bereans were commended both for receiving Paul's message eagerly and for diligently examining the Scriptures. The goal is not to prove everyone else wrong; it is to understand God's Word faithfully.

TAKEAWAY

I do not want to build my faith only on what other people tell me about God. I want to learn to examine Scripture carefully, receive faithful teaching with humility, and recognize when something does not agree with God's Word. As I continue growing in Christ, I want Scripture—not popularity, opinions, or emotions—to guide my understanding of biblical truth.

DAY 22 | When My Heart Asks, “How Long, Lord?”

Today's Scripture: Psalm 13:1–6 • Focus: Psalm 13:1–2, 5–6

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

God's Word gives us examples of faithful people bringing their sorrow, questions, and distress honestly before Him. We do not have to pretend that everything is fine when we pray. Psalm 13 teaches us that we can express our pain to God while continuing to place our trust in His character and faithfulness, even when our circumstances have not changed.

READ

Open your Bible to Psalm 13 and read the entire psalm slowly. This psalm was written by David. Pay attention to how his prayer begins, what he asks God to do, and how he ends. Notice how often David asks, “How long?”

Consider: What emotions does David express in the opening verses? What does he ask God to do? What changes in the way he speaks toward the end? Does the psalm tell us that his difficult circumstances have already been resolved?

Read verses 5–6 again, paying attention to what David says about God's love and goodness.

UNDERSTAND

David brings his distress honestly before God.

Psalm 13 begins with David expressing deep sorrow and a sense that God is distant. He asks how long he must wrestle with his thoughts, experience sorrow, and watch his enemy triumph over him. David does not hide his distress; he brings it directly to the Lord. This is an example of biblical lament—expressing grief, distress, or complaint before God while looking to Him for help. Lament is not the same as rejecting God. David directs his questions to God because he continues to seek Him. His feeling of being forgotten does not mean God had actually abandoned him.

David asks God to respond.

In verses 3–4, David moves from describing sorrow to asking God to look upon him and answer. He speaks about the danger of death and the possibility that his enemies will rejoice over his downfall. He seeks God’s help in serious circumstances, not simply a change in feelings. Biblical faith does not require denying reality. We can acknowledge suffering and uncertainty without turning away from God.

David remembers God’s faithful love.

In verses 5–6, the direction changes. David expresses trust in God’s unfailing love, rejoices in His salvation, and resolves to praise the Lord for His goodness. The psalm does not explain whether David’s circumstances changed before he said this. We should not assume that his sorrow disappeared or every problem was resolved. His confidence rests in who God is and what He has done.

Faith can bring sorrow and trust before God.

Psalms 13 does not teach that faithful believers must always feel joyful or that struggling emotionally means faith is weak. It shows sorrow and trust within the same prayer. We do not need to manufacture positive feelings before approaching the Lord. We can come in sorrow, ask for help, remember His goodness, and continue trusting Him even when answers have not yet come.

REFLECT

- When I am hurting or struggling, do I bring those feelings honestly before God, or do I feel I must hide them?
- Have I ever interpreted a difficult season or unanswered prayer as evidence that God has forgotten me?
- What does David’s example teach me about expressing sorrow while continuing to trust God?
- How can remembering God’s faithfulness help shape my prayers when circumstances remain unresolved?

APPLY

Think about something difficult to understand or a situation that has caused sorrow. Instead of trying to find the right words or pretending everything is fine, bring that concern honestly before God.

Follow the movement of Psalm 13: first acknowledge what you are experiencing; then ask God for help; finally remember something true about His character or a way He has demonstrated faithfulness. You do not need to force yourself to feel differently at the end of prayer.

One concern I want to bring honestly before God, one truth about His character I want to remember, and one way I can continue responding faithfully while I wait:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, You hear me when I bring You sorrow and questions. Help me speak honestly to You and remember Your steadfast love, even when I cannot see what comes next. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Recognize Different Types of Biblical Writing

The Bible contains historical accounts, letters, poetry, wisdom literature, prophecy, and more. Understanding the kind of writing helps us interpret Scripture carefully. Psalm 13 is Hebrew poetry written as a prayer of lament. It expresses David's personal distress, request for help, and renewed expression of trust.

When reading a psalm like this, notice emotions, images, questions, and changes in tone. Ask what the writer is expressing, what his situation is, what the passage reveals about God, and how its movement helps explain its meaning. A biblical

writer's feeling is not automatically an objective declaration about God: David feels forgotten, but that does not establish that God had forgotten him.

TAKEAWAY

I do not have to hide my sorrow or unanswered questions from God. Like David, I can bring my struggles honestly before Him, ask for His help, and remember His faithful love. Even when my circumstances remain difficult and I do not understand what is happening, I can continue seeking God and placing my trust in who He is.

DAY 23 | Looking Beyond Appearances

Today's Scripture: James 2:1–13 • Focus: James 2:1–9, 12–13

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Following Jesus Christ should change the way we view and treat other people. James warns believers against showing favoritism based on outward appearances, wealth, or social position. Our faith in Christ is not consistent with treating some people as more worthy of honor than others. We are called to love our neighbors and demonstrate mercy in the way we speak and act.

READ

Open your Bible to James 2:1–13. Read the passage slowly, paying attention to the example James gives of two people entering a gathering of believers. One person appears wealthy and is dressed in fine clothing; the other is poor and wearing worn clothing. Notice how each is treated.

Read verses 8–13 again, paying attention to how James connects favoritism with God's command to love our neighbors and the importance of mercy.

Consider: What makes the treatment of these people different? What does James identify as wrong? How does loving our neighbors relate to favoritism? What does he teach about mercy?

UNDERSTAND

Favoritism contradicts our faith in Christ.

James begins by warning believers not to show favoritism while professing faith in Jesus Christ. He describes a wealthy-looking person who receives special attention and a desirable seat, while a poor person is treated with less consideration and dignity. James challenges that unequal treatment. The problem is not noticing differences; it is letting those differences determine the honor and consideration each receives. Such behavior is inconsistent with faith in Christ.

The world's standards should not determine someone's worth.

In verses 5–7, James challenges the dishonoring of the poor. He reminds his readers that God has chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom promised to those who love Him. That does not mean every

poor person automatically belongs to God's kingdom or that every wealthy person is unfaithful. James challenges the assumption that wealth and social position make someone more worthy of honor. We should not let wealth, appearance, status, or influence determine whether we show dignity and consideration.

Loving our neighbors leaves no room for favoritism.

In verses 8–9, James reminds readers to love their neighbors as themselves and identifies favoritism as sin. We may welcome people who seem successful, important, familiar, or similar to us, while overlooking others. James calls us to examine whether our actions agree with this command. In verses 10–11, he warns that we cannot disregard one of God's commands while treating ourselves as obedient elsewhere.

Mercy should influence how we speak and act.

James instructs believers to speak and act as those who will be judged by the law that gives freedom. He warns about judgment without mercy for those who show none and concludes that mercy triumphs over judgment. He is not teaching that people earn salvation by doing enough merciful actions. His warning calls us to take our conduct seriously. Mercy does not mean ignoring wrongdoing or abandoning wise boundaries; it means refusing needless harshness, contempt, and indifference.

REFLECT

- Have I ever treated someone differently because of appearance, finances, social position, or what I assumed about them?
- Are there people I give more attention because I feel comfortable with them or believe they have something to offer me?
- Have I overlooked someone or made assumptions about their character without knowing them?
- How does James's teaching challenge the way I think about loving my neighbor?
- Where do I need to show greater fairness, kindness, or mercy toward another person?

APPLY

Think about the people you encounter. Do you give more attention or consideration to certain people because of how they look, what they possess, or their position? Ask God to help you recognize attitudes of favoritism.

Choose one practical response: include someone often overlooked, listen more carefully to someone you judged too quickly, or show equal courtesy regardless of circumstances. The goal is not simply to appear kind, but for Scripture to change how we view and treat others.

One attitude or assumption I need to examine, and one way I can show greater fairness, kindness, or mercy today:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, forgive me when I show favoritism. Help me treat others with mercy and dignity, remembering that faith in Jesus must shape how I love my neighbor. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Pay Attention to the Examples Scripture Uses

Sometimes biblical writers teach truth by describing a specific situation. In James 2:1–13, James illustrates favoritism through the unequal treatment of two people entering a gathering. The example makes the problem visible.

Ask: What situation is described? What attitude or behavior is corrected? What biblical principle explains why it is wrong? How can I apply that principle without changing the passage's original meaning? A specific example can illustrate a principle beyond that circumstance. James uses differences in wealth and

appearance, and the principle challenges other ways we might unfairly favor one person over another.

TAKEAWAY

My faith in Jesus Christ should shape the way I see and treat other people. I do not want to judge someone's worth by appearances, wealth, or social position. God's Word calls me to love my neighbor, reject favoritism, and show mercy in the way I speak and act. As I continue following Christ, I want my treatment of others to reflect the love and mercy Scripture teaches.

PURPOSEFUL GRACE / SCRIPTURE & REFLECTION JOURNEY

DAY 24 | In the Presence of a Holy God

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 6:1–8 • Focus: Isaiah 6:3–8

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

God is perfectly holy, and His holiness reveals how different He is from us. When Isaiah encountered the Lord's glory, he became aware of his own sinfulness and need for cleansing. God graciously provided that cleansing, and Isaiah responded willingly to His call. This passage reminds us to approach God with reverence, recognize our need for His mercy, and respond to Him with willing hearts.

READ

Open your Bible to Isaiah 6:1–8. Read the passage slowly, paying attention to what Isaiah sees, hears, and says.

Notice the Lord seated on His throne, the seraphim proclaiming His holiness, and Isaiah's response to what he witnesses. Read verses 5–8 again.

As you read, consider:

- What do the seraphim proclaim about the Lord?
- Why does Isaiah become distressed when he sees the Lord?
- What happens after Isaiah acknowledges his uncleanness?
- How does Isaiah respond when he hears the Lord's call?

Pay attention to the order of events. Isaiah's response to God's call comes after his guilt has been taken away.

UNDERSTAND

Isaiah encounters the holiness of God.

Isaiah 6 begins in the year King Uzziah died. Isaiah sees a vision of the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Above Him are seraphim proclaiming that the Lord Almighty is holy and that the whole earth is full of His glory. Their voices cause the doorposts and thresholds to shake, and the temple fills with smoke. These details emphasize the majesty of the scene as Isaiah stands before the holy Lord.

God's holiness is central to this passage. To say that God is holy means that He is set apart from His creation, completely pure, and without sin. His holiness reminds us that He is not simply a greater version of ourselves. He is the sovereign Lord, worthy of reverence and worship.

Isaiah witnesses a display of God's majesty and glory that causes him to recognize something important about himself.

Recognizing God's holiness reveals Isaiah's sinfulness.

In verse 5, Isaiah cries out in distress. He identifies himself as a man of unclean lips who lives among a people of unclean lips. Isaiah recognizes his sinful condition in the presence of the holy King.

The passage does not identify particular sinful words Isaiah had spoken or describe every thought within his heart. We should be careful not to add details Scripture does not provide.

What the passage does show us is that Isaiah's vision of God's holiness brings him face-to-face with his own uncleanness. He does not attempt to defend himself or claim that he is worthy. He acknowledges his need before God.

This reminds us that understanding who God is should shape the way we understand ourselves. We do not measure holiness merely by comparing ourselves with other people. God's character reveals the true difference between His perfect holiness and our sinful condition.

God graciously provides cleansing.

In verses 6–7, one of the seraphim takes a burning coal from the altar and touches Isaiah's mouth. The seraph announces that Isaiah's guilt has been taken away and his sin atoned for.

The seraph acts as God's messenger within the vision. Isaiah does not cleanse himself or earn the removal of his guilt. The cleansing is provided through God's gracious action.

The altar and the announcement of atonement are important details. They show that Isaiah's guilt is not simply overlooked or dismissed. The passage does not explain every aspect of how atonement works, and we should not force every detail of the vision into a meaning that Isaiah does not give us. What is clear is that God provides the cleansing Isaiah needs.

As Christians, we understand our own forgiveness through the saving work of Jesus Christ. Yet when studying Isaiah 6, we should first understand what this particular vision reveals before connecting it with the fuller teaching of the New Testament.

Isaiah responds to God's call.

In verse 8, Isaiah hears the Lord asking whom He should send. Isaiah responds with a willingness to be sent.

Notice the order. Isaiah first recognizes God's holiness and his own uncleanness. God then provides cleansing, and afterward Isaiah expresses his willingness to respond.

Isaiah does not earn his cleansing through service. Nor does the passage say that God rewarded him for being worthy. Rather, after receiving cleansing, Isaiah is ready to respond to the Lord's call.

The following verses explain the difficult message Isaiah is commissioned to deliver. His willingness to serve should not be interpreted as a promise that obedience will always lead to an easy assignment.

This passage teaches us to approach God with reverence, acknowledge our need for His mercy, and respond willingly to His direction. The focus is not on making ourselves worthy enough for God. It begins with recognizing who God is.

REFLECT

- When I think about God's holiness, do I approach Him with the reverence and humility He deserves?
- Am I sometimes more concerned with how I compare with other people than with what Scripture reveals about God's character?
- What does Isaiah's response teach me about acknowledging my sinfulness rather than making excuses for it?

- How does seeing that God provided Isaiah's cleansing help me understand the importance of God's mercy?
- Is there an area of my life where I recognize what God calls me to do through His Word, but I have been hesitant to respond?

APPLY

Take a few quiet moments to reflect on what Isaiah's vision reveals about the holiness of God. Begin by focusing on God's character rather than immediately thinking about something you need to change. Consider His purity, majesty, and worthiness of worship.

Then ask yourself whether there is an attitude, action, or pattern in your life that Scripture has shown you needs to change. Bring it honestly before God rather than trying to excuse or minimize it.

Remember that we do not earn God's forgiveness through our efforts. Our hope for forgiveness rests in His grace through Jesus Christ.

Finally, consider one area where you can respond faithfully to what God has already revealed in His Word. You do not need to assume that every inner impression is a personal calling from God. Instead, begin with what Scripture clearly teaches.

One truth about God's holiness I want to remember:

One area where I need to respond to God's Word with greater humility or obedience:

One practical step I can take today:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, You alone are worthy of worship. Help me recognize my sin, receive Your mercy with humility, and answer Your call with a willing heart. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Notice the Order of Events in a Biblical Narrative

When studying a biblical narrative, pay attention to the order in which events unfold. Ask what happens first, how the people involved respond, and what takes place afterward.

In Isaiah 6:1–8, the sequence is important:

- Isaiah sees the Lord's holiness.
- Isaiah acknowledges his uncleanness.
- God provides cleansing.
- Isaiah responds to the Lord's call.

If we reverse these events, we might misunderstand the passage and wrongly conclude that Isaiah earned God's acceptance by offering to serve. But that is not what Scripture records. Following the sequence helps us recognize that Isaiah's willing response follows the cleansing God provides.

As you study other biblical narratives, remember that not every event is a command for every believer to repeat. First ask what happened, why it matters within the passage, and what it reveals about God. Then consider how the biblical truth should shape your own response.

TAKEAWAY

God is holy, and His holiness reminds me of my need for His mercy. Like Isaiah, I must recognize that I cannot make myself worthy through my own efforts. God provided the cleansing Isaiah needed, and through Jesus Christ I can receive forgiveness for my sins. I want to approach God with reverence, acknowledge what

His Word reveals about my life, and respond willingly as I continue learning to follow Him.

DAY 25 | Called to Make Disciples

Today's Scripture: Matthew 28:16–20 • Focus: Matthew 28:18–20

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Jesus Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth. He commands His followers to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey His commands. Making disciples involves more than introducing someone to Jesus; it includes helping others learn to follow Him. As we participate in this mission, we can depend on His promised presence.

READ

Open your Bible to Matthew 28:16–20.

Read the passage slowly, remembering that these events take place after Jesus' resurrection.

Notice what Matthew tells us about the eleven disciples when they see Jesus.

Then pay close attention to Jesus' words.

As you read, consider:

- What does Jesus say about His authority?
- What does He command His disciples to do?
- How are baptism and teaching connected to making disciples?
- What does Jesus promise at the end of the passage?

Read verses 18–20 again.

Notice how Jesus' authority, His command, and His promised presence belong together.

UNDERSTAND

Jesus speaks with all authority.

Matthew tells us that the eleven disciples went to the mountain in Galilee where Jesus had directed them.

When they saw Him, they worshiped Him, but Matthew also records that some doubted.

The passage does not explain the precise nature of their doubt. We should not assume details Scripture does not provide.

Jesus approached them and declared that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Him.

These words are important because the commission that follows is grounded in who Jesus is.

He is not merely offering advice or asking His disciples to carry out a personal project.

The risen Lord, who has all authority, is giving them a command.

Jesus commands His disciples to make disciples.

Jesus tells His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations.

This reveals that His commission reaches beyond one nation or group of people.

The good news of Jesus Christ is to be proclaimed among all nations, and people are to be called to become His disciples.

A disciple is a follower and learner.

Making disciples involves helping people come to know Jesus and learn what it means to follow Him.

This mission is not simply about gathering a large number of people or encouraging someone to make a momentary decision.

Jesus describes an ongoing process of discipleship.

Baptism and teaching are part of this mission.

Jesus instructs His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

He also commands them to teach disciples to obey everything He has commanded.

Both are included in the Great Commission.

Baptism is not presented as an unimportant step, and teaching obedience is not offered as a replacement for baptism.

Jesus includes both within His instruction to make disciples.

Teaching others to follow Jesus involves more than passing along information about the Bible.

It includes helping them understand His teachings and encouraging them to live in obedience to Him.

This does not mean that disciples will follow Jesus perfectly or never struggle.

Instead, discipleship is a continuing life of learning, growing, and responding to Christ's teachings.

Jesus promises His continuing presence.

Jesus concludes His commission by promising to be with His disciples always, to the very end of the age.

This promise follows a responsibility that would take His disciples beyond the places and people they already knew.

Jesus does not promise that carrying out His mission will always be comfortable or easy.

His disciples would encounter difficulties and opposition.

But He assures them of His continuing presence.

The mission rests on His authority, and those who follow Him are not left to depend on their own strength alone.

As believers today, we participate in the continuing mission of making disciples. That does not mean every Christian must serve in exactly the same way or have the same opportunities.

We can faithfully point others toward Christ through sharing the gospel, teaching what Scripture says, encouraging fellow believers, and helping others grow in their understanding of Jesus.

We must remember that we cannot produce saving faith in another person through our own efforts.

Our responsibility is to be faithful to Christ and the mission He has given His followers.

REFLECT

- How does knowing that Jesus has all authority change the way I understand His command to make disciples?
- Have I thought of sharing my faith as a single conversation rather than recognizing the importance of helping others continue learning about Jesus?

- Am I growing in my own understanding of Christ's teachings so that I can faithfully encourage others?
- How can I help point someone toward Jesus without making myself the center of their spiritual growth?
- When I feel uncertain about speaking of my faith, how does Jesus' promise of His presence encourage me?

APPLY

Begin by asking God to help you see the Great Commission as part of the continuing mission of the church, rather than something intended only for the original eleven disciples.

Consider the people God has placed in your life.

Is there someone who has questions about Jesus or wants to understand Scripture better?

Is there a fellow believer who could benefit from encouragement, prayer, or studying God's Word together?

A faithful conversation may begin with what you do understand about Christ's authority and teaching. When a question requires further study, you can return to Scripture with humility.

You do need to be willing to learn, speak truthfully, and direct people to God's Word rather than relying only on your opinions.

Choose one practical way to participate in helping another person learn about Jesus.

That might involve sharing a passage of Scripture, having a thoughtful conversation about faith, inviting someone to study the Bible, or encouraging a believer who is learning to follow Christ.

Remember that making disciples is not about gaining recognition for ourselves.

It is about helping others know, follow, and obey Jesus.

Someone I can prayerfully encourage in their understanding of Jesus:

One way I can help point someone toward God's Word:

One practical step I can take to participate in Christ's mission:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for the risen Jesus and His authority. Help me faithfully share His teaching and participate in making disciples, trusting His presence rather than my own ability. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Identify the Main Command and Its Supporting Details

When studying a passage that contains instructions, look carefully at the main command and the details that explain how it is carried out.

In Matthew 28:18–20, Jesus' central command is to make disciples of all nations. He also speaks of going, baptizing, and teaching.

These instructions belong together and help us understand what making disciples involves.

Notice, too, what surrounds the command.

Before giving it, Jesus declares His authority.

After giving it, He promises His continuing presence.

Reading the entire passage prevents us from separating one instruction from the larger meaning of Jesus' words.

As you study other passages, ask:

- What is the main command?

- Who is being addressed?
- What details explain the command?
- What comes before and after it?
- How does the surrounding context help me understand its meaning and application?

This habit will help you avoid focusing on one phrase while overlooking the full message of Scripture.

TAKEAWAY

Jesus has all authority, and He calls His followers to make disciples. I want to continue growing in my own understanding of His Word while helping others learn to know and follow Him. Making disciples includes more than introducing someone to Jesus; it involves encouraging a continuing life of learning and obedience. I can participate faithfully in Christ's mission, trusting His promise to be with His followers always.

Matthew 28:16–20

DAY 26 | When Good Things Become Distractions

Today's Scripture: Luke 10:38–42 • Focus: Luke 10:39–42

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Even worthwhile responsibilities can distract us from listening to Jesus. In Luke 10:38–42, Jesus reminds Martha of the importance of giving His teaching our attention rather than allowing worry and busyness to take priority.

READ

Open your Bible to Luke 10:38–42. Read the entire account slowly, noticing what Mary and Martha each do and what Jesus says to Martha.

As you read, consider:

- What is Mary doing while Jesus is speaking?
- What is distracting Martha, and what does she ask Jesus to do?
- How does Jesus describe Martha's concerns?
- What does Jesus say Mary has chosen?

Read verses 40–42 once more. Notice that Jesus addresses Martha's worry and distraction, not the act of hospitality itself.

UNDERSTAND

Mary listens to Jesus.

Luke describes Jesus entering a village where Martha welcomes Him into her home. Her sister Mary sits at the Lord's feet, listening to His teaching. Mary is not merely nearby; she gives attention to what Jesus is saying. Her posture in the story directs our attention to the value of hearing His Word.

Martha is distracted by her preparations.

Martha, meanwhile, is distracted by the work of serving. Preparing for guests and showing hospitality are not wrong. Scripture elsewhere encourages believers to practice hospitality and serve others. Luke does not criticize every household

responsibility; he shows how Martha's preparations have taken her attention away from Jesus.

Martha asks Jesus to tell Mary to help her. Jesus responds personally and tenderly, addressing her by name and describing her as worried and upset about many things. The passage invites us to notice not only what Martha is doing, but also how her concern has become consuming.

Jesus identifies what matters most in that moment.

Jesus tells Martha that few things are needed—or indeed only one—and that Mary has chosen what is better, which will not be taken away from her. His response sets Mary's attentive listening above Martha's anxious distraction in this encounter.

The lesson is not that faithful service and practical responsibilities should be abandoned. Rather, a good task can become a distraction when it prevents us from listening to Jesus. The heart of this account is the priority of receiving His teaching.

What this means for our lives.

Many responsibilities are genuinely important: caring for others, working, maintaining a home, and serving in ministry. Yet it is possible to become so occupied with even good things that we neglect hearing and learning from God's Word.

As believers, we learn Jesus' teaching through Scripture. Setting aside regular time to read, consider, and respond to His Word is one practical way to give it attention. For some, a quiet morning is best; for others, another time of day is more realistic. Luke 10 does not command a particular hour or routine. It calls our attention to the greater priority of listening to Jesus.

Giving Jesus' teaching attention helps us grow in knowing Christ and allows His Word to shape the way we carry out our responsibilities.

REFLECT

- Have I become so busy with responsibilities that I rarely slow down to consider God's Word?
- Are there good activities that sometimes crowd out my attention to Jesus' teaching?
- When I feel overwhelmed, do I recognize how worry may be shaping my response to others?
- What does Mary's choice teach me about the value of listening?
- How might I give Scripture more intentional attention in my present season of life?

APPLY

Identify a realistic time to listen to God's Word through reading Scripture and prayer. If your mornings allow it, consider beginning the day with Scripture before other activities. If not, choose another time when you can give it genuine attention.

Read Luke 10:38–42 again. Rather than treating this as a command to stop working, ask how you can carry out your responsibilities without letting busyness consistently crowd out your time in Scripture.

Choose one manageable step, such as setting aside a few uninterrupted minutes to read a passage and consider what it reveals about Jesus. Pray for a willing, attentive heart, not merely a more productive routine.

A responsibility that sometimes distracts me from God's Word:

A time I can intentionally set aside to read and pray:

One practical step I will take:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for the opportunity to listen to Jesus. Help me recognize when even good responsibilities distract me from His words, and give me wisdom to attend to what matters. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Distinguish the Passage's Meaning from Your Personal Application

Before deciding how a passage applies to you, identify what it actually teaches. In Luke 10:38–42, Jesus affirms Mary's choice to listen to Him and corrects Martha's worry and distraction. He does not establish a universal requirement that every believer must read the Bible at a certain hour.

A personal application might be to begin each morning with prayer and Scripture. That can be a helpful habit, but it should not be presented as a command directly stated in this passage.

As you study, ask:

- What does the text explicitly say?
- What does the surrounding context help me understand?
- What truth does it teach about God or faithful living?
- What practical response fits that truth without adding a new rule to Scripture?

Learning to separate meaning from application helps us live faithfully without claiming Scripture says more than it does.

TAKEAWAY

Good responsibilities matter, but I do not want busyness or worry to keep me from listening to Jesus. Like Mary, I want to give His Word my attention. I can choose a realistic time to read, reflect, and pray as I grow in knowing and following Him.

Luke 10:38–42

DAY 27 | Remembering to Give Thanks

Today's Scripture: Luke 17:11–19 • Focus: Luke 17:14–19

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

God's mercy deserves our gratitude and praise. In Luke 17:11–19, one of ten men who were cleansed returns to glorify God and thank Jesus. His response invites us to recognize God's mercy rather than simply move on after receiving help.

READ

Open your Bible to Luke 17:11–19. Read the whole account slowly. Notice where Jesus is traveling, what the ten men ask Him to do, what He tells them, and when they are cleansed.

As you read, consider:

- What do the ten men call out to Jesus?
- What does Jesus instruct them to do?
- When does their cleansing take place?
- What makes the response of the returning man different?
- What does Jesus say to the man in verse 19?

Read verses 15–19 again. Pay attention both to the man's praise and thanksgiving and to Jesus' comments about his faith.

UNDERSTAND

The ten men ask Jesus for mercy.

Luke places this account during Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem. As He enters a village, ten men with leprosy stand at a distance and call out for mercy. Their appeal is directed to Jesus, whom they address as Master. Luke does not specify every detail of their condition or circumstances, so we should not assume more than the passage tells us.

All ten are cleansed as they go.

Jesus tells the men to go and show themselves to the priests. This instruction fits the priestly role in examining someone who had been cleansed, as described in Leviticus

14. Luke states that the men are cleansed as they go. The healing is not presented as something they achieve through their own ability.

All ten receive cleansing. The passage does not tell us why the other nine do not return, and we should not invent their thoughts or motives. Yet Jesus draws attention to the fact that only one returns to give praise to God.

One man returns to praise God and thank Jesus.

When the man sees that he is healed, he returns, praising God in a loud voice. He falls at Jesus' feet and thanks Him. Luke also tells us that this man is a Samaritan. That detail matters: the person who returns to give thanks is someone whom many of Jesus' Jewish hearers might not have expected to be held up as an example.

The man does not simply acknowledge that something good happened. He responds directly to Jesus with gratitude and gives glory to God. His actions make visible the difference between receiving mercy and responding to it with praise.

Jesus draws attention to faith, not a formula for receiving blessings.

Jesus asks where the other nine are and observes that this foreigner has returned to give praise to God. Then He tells the man to rise and go, speaking of his faith making him well. The wording in verse 19 can also carry the sense of being saved. We should not treat the account as if a spoken thank-you earned the cleansing: all ten had already been cleansed. Nor should we reduce Jesus' final words to a promise that every expression of gratitude results in physical healing.

This account calls attention to Jesus' mercy, the grateful response of the Samaritan, and the importance of faith. As we reflect on it, we can learn to acknowledge the Lord with thanksgiving rather than rushing past His kindness.

REFLECT

- When I receive something I have prayed for, do I take time to thank God?
- Am I more attentive to what I still need than to the ways God has already shown mercy and care?
- What does the Samaritan's return teach me about gratitude that is expressed, not merely felt?
- Are there ordinary provisions or kindnesses I tend to overlook?
- How can I cultivate gratitude without assuming that every circumstance will be easy or that every request will be answered as I expect?

APPLY

Take a moment today to remember a specific way God has shown you mercy or provided for you. Thank Him plainly and sincerely. You might choose to pause at several ordinary moments during the day—in the morning, during a break, or before resting—to acknowledge His care.

The Samaritan's gratitude followed the mercy he had already received. Take time to recognize God's goodness and respond with praise, even while bringing your needs and sorrows honestly before Him.

One mercy or provision I want to thank God for:

One ordinary blessing I often overlook:

A simple way I can practice thanksgiving this week:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your mercy and all You have provided. Help me respond with the gratitude and praise shown by the man who returned to Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Notice Contrasts Without Assuming Hidden Motives

Biblical narratives often highlight a contrast so we will notice what matters. In Luke 17:11–19, all ten men are cleansed, but only one returns to praise God and thank Jesus. That difference is stated clearly. The reasons the other nine do not return are not given.

When you read a narrative, ask what each person actually says or does, what the writer emphasizes, and what remains unstated. Let the contrast teach what Scripture reveals without filling gaps with imagined thoughts or motives.

This habit will help you distinguish careful observation from speculation.

TAKEAWAY

I want to remember the mercy God has shown me and respond with genuine gratitude. Like the Samaritan who returned to Jesus, I can pause to give God praise rather than moving so quickly through life that I overlook His kindness.

Thanksgiving is not something I offer to earn His favor; it is a fitting response to His grace.

Luke 17:11–19

DAY 28 | Ready to Explain the Hope We Have

Today's Scripture: 1 Peter 3:13–17 • Focus: 1 Peter 3:15–16

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Because Christ is Lord, believers can grow in understanding the hope they have in Him and be prepared to explain that hope with gentleness, respect, and a clear conscience.

READ

Open your Bible to 1 Peter 3:13–17. Read the whole passage slowly. Peter is addressing believers who want to do what is right, even when others question or oppose them. Notice how his instructions about hope, speech, and conduct belong together.

As you read, consider:

- What does Peter say about doing good and about suffering for what is right?
- What are believers told to do in their hearts before giving an answer?
- What kind of answer should they be ready to give?
- How should their answer be delivered?
- Why does Peter connect a clear conscience with good behavior in Christ?

Read verses 15–16 again. Notice that preparing an answer is not separate from honoring Christ as Lord and treating other people respectfully.

UNDERSTAND

Peter writes to believers who may face opposition.

Peter asks who will harm believers who are eager to do good, then acknowledges that they may suffer for doing what is right. He calls them blessed and tells them not to give in to fear. His emphasis is not a guarantee of protection from every hardship; it is an encouragement to remain faithful to Christ when doing right draws criticism. That is the setting for his instruction about giving an answer for Christian hope.

Honor Christ as Lord in your heart.

Before speaking about their hope, believers are instructed to revere Christ as Lord in their hearts. Their answer should arise from allegiance to Jesus, not a desire to win an argument or appear knowledgeable. What we say about Him should reflect the One we claim to follow.

Understand the reason for your hope.

Peter tells believers to be ready to explain the reason for their hope. Earlier in the letter, he speaks of a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3). Together these passages help us recognize the foundation of Christian hope and prepare a clear, humble answer when someone asks about it.

Growing in readiness includes reading Scripture carefully, considering what it teaches about Jesus, and learning to express those truths in ordinary words. A personal testimony may help explain how faith has shaped our lives, but the reason for Christian hope should point beyond our experiences to Christ Himself.

Explain your hope with gentleness and respect.

Peter explicitly connects the substance of the answer with the manner of the answer. Gentleness does not mean avoiding biblical truth, and respect does not mean agreeing with every opinion. It means listening carefully, responding with humility, and treating the person asking as someone worthy of dignity. Even when a question is challenging, believers are not called to respond with contempt or aggression.

It is appropriate to say, “I do not know, but I would like to study that more carefully.” Preparing to speak faithfully includes knowing the difference between what Scripture clearly teaches and what we have not yet learned.

Let your conduct support your words.

Peter also urges believers to keep a clear conscience and maintain good conduct in Christ, even if others speak maliciously against them. He does not say that faithful behavior will prevent false accusations. Rather, he calls believers to live consistently with the hope they profess. Our conversations about Christ and the way we treat people should not contradict one another. A clear conscience is not a claim to sinless perfection; it calls us to sincere conduct and a willingness to repent when we do wrong.

REFLECT

- If someone asked why I have hope in Jesus Christ, what would I say?
- Can I point to what Scripture teaches about Jesus as the foundation of that hope?

- Do I listen with patience when another person asks difficult questions about faith?
- Have I confused explaining my faith with needing to win an argument?
- How might my conduct make my explanation of Christian hope more credible—or less credible?

APPLY

Read 1 Peter 1:3–9 alongside 1 Peter 3:13–17. Notice what Peter says about the resurrection of Jesus and the hope of believers. Then write two or three sentences explaining, in your own words, why you place your hope in Christ. You do not need a polished speech. Aim for a truthful, understandable answer grounded in Scripture.

Practice responding to a sincere question with gentleness and respect. Listen before answering, avoid assumptions about the other person, and acknowledge honestly when you need to study further. Ask God to help your words and actions agree with what you believe.

A biblical truth that gives me hope in Christ:

How I would explain that hope to someone who asks:

One way I can practice gentleness and respect in conversation:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for our living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. Help me honor Christ as Lord and explain my hope with gentleness, respect, and a clear conscience. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Trace an Important Theme Within the Same Letter

When a biblical writer uses an important word or theme, see whether the writer explains it elsewhere in the same letter. In 1 Peter 3:15, believers are asked to explain their hope. Read 1 Peter 1:3–9 to learn more about the living hope Peter has already described. The resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promised inheritance help clarify what this hope means.

As you study, first read the passage in its immediate context. Then look for related teaching from the same author, compare the passages carefully, and ask how they illuminate one another. Do not pull a word from one passage into another without considering who is speaking and what each passage is teaching.

This habit can help you explain biblical truths more accurately, using Scripture to clarify Scripture.

TAKEAWAY

My hope is rooted in Jesus Christ and His resurrection. I want to grow in understanding that hope so I can explain it when someone asks—not with pride or pressure to know everything, but with gentleness, respect, and a life that seeks to honor Him.

1 Peter 3:13–17

DAY 29 | Encouraging One Another to Keep Going

Today's Scripture: Hebrews 10:19–25 • Focus: Hebrews 10:23–25

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Because Jesus has opened the way for us to draw near to God, we can hold firmly to the hope we profess and intentionally encourage one another toward love and good deeds.

READ

Open your Bible to Hebrews 10:19–25. Notice how the writer moves from what Jesus has accomplished to the response believers are called to make. Read verses 22–25 once more and observe the linked invitations: draw near, hold firmly, and consider one another.

- Why can believers approach God with confidence?
- What does it mean to draw near with sincere faith?
- Why does the writer call believers to hold firmly to hope?
- How can we spur one another toward love and good deeds?
- Why is meeting together connected with encouragement?

UNDERSTAND

Jesus has opened the way to God.

Hebrews begins this section with the foundation for everything that follows. Through the blood of Jesus, believers have confidence to enter God's presence. Jesus is the great priest over the house of God. The writer draws on the language of priesthood and access to God familiar from the Old Testament, but grounds the believer's access in Christ's sacrifice. Confidence before God is not earned through our achievements.

Draw near with a sincere heart.

Verse 22 invites believers to approach God sincerely and with the assurance of faith. Its language of hearts cleansed from a guilty conscience and bodies washed with pure water reflects purification and is often associated with baptism, although

Christians differ about that connection. The main point here is the confident approach made possible through Jesus—not the claim that believers have achieved perfection by themselves.

Hold firmly because God is faithful.

The writer urges believers to hold unswervingly to the hope they profess and immediately explains why: the One who promised is faithful. The emphasis is not on admiring our own resolve but on trusting God’s faithfulness. Remembering His promises helps us remain grounded and gives us something truthful to share when encouraging another believer.

Consider how to encourage one another.

Verse 24 asks believers to think about how to spur one another toward love and good deeds. Such encouragement can include listening, praying, sharing Scripture with care, and offering practical help. It is not a way to control another person’s spiritual life. The writer calls the community to help one another pursue faithful love and action, while remaining willing to receive encouragement as well as offer it.

Meeting together makes room for encouragement.

Verse 25 warns against neglecting meeting together and urges believers to encourage one another. The gathering has a purpose beyond attendance: believers can strengthen and support one another. The approaching Day adds seriousness to that calling. Rather than speculate about dates, the passage directs our attention to continued fellowship and faithfulness in light of Christ’s coming.

REFLECT

- Do I look for specific ways to encourage fellow believers, or mostly wait for someone to reach out?
- How does Christ’s sacrifice change the way I approach God?
- Am I willing to receive help and encouragement when I need it?
- Do my conversations encourage love and good deeds?
- Who in my Christian community might benefit from listening, prayer, or practical support?

APPLY

Think of one fellow believer you could encourage this week. Consider what may genuinely help that person: a thoughtful conversation, a prayer together, a relevant Scripture passage read in context, or practical assistance.

If you need support, reach out to a trusted fellow believer. Christian fellowship gives us opportunities to receive encouragement as well as offer it.

One fellow believer I can encourage this week:

One thoughtful way I can support that person:

One step toward more intentional Christian fellowship:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You that Jesus opens the way for believers to draw near to You. Teach me to encourage others toward love and good deeds and to value gathering with fellow believers. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Notice How Commands Connect to Their Reasons

A biblical instruction often comes with a reason. In Hebrews 10:19–25, the writer first explains what Jesus has accomplished and then gives connected invitations to draw near, hold firmly, and consider one another. The commands are not isolated tasks; they flow from Christ's work and God's faithfulness.

When reading another passage, identify the command and ask how the surrounding verses explain its foundation and purpose. This helps us understand not only what Scripture calls us to do, but why.

- What commands appear in the passage?
- What reasons or promises support those commands?
- How does the context shape a faithful response?

TAKEAWAY

Because of Jesus Christ, I can approach God with confidence and hold firmly to my hope. I want to give and receive encouragement within Christian fellowship, intentionally helping others grow in love and good deeds.

Hebrews 10:19–25

DAY 30 | God Is Still at Work

Today's Scripture: Philippians 1:3–11 • Focus: Philippians 1:6, 9–11

TODAY'S CENTRAL TRUTH

God continues His work in those who belong to Christ. As believers grow in love, knowledge, and discernment, their lives can bear the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

READ

Open your Bible to Philippians 1:3–11. Notice Paul's gratitude for the Philippian believers, his confidence in God's work, and his prayer for their growth. Read verses 9–11 again, paying special attention to the connection between love, knowledge, discernment, and righteous fruit.

- Why is Paul thankful for the Philippian believers?
- What gives Paul confidence that God will complete His work?
- How does Paul describe his affection for them?
- What does he pray will grow in their lives?
- Whose glory is the purpose of the fruit described in verse 11?

UNDERSTAND

Paul gives thanks for partnership in the gospel.

Paul thanks God whenever he remembers the Philippians and prays with joy because of their partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. He recognizes the work of God among fellow believers and responds with gratitude. Their participation in the gospel has joined them together in a shared purpose.

God will bring His work to completion.

In verse 6, Paul expresses confidence that the One who began a good work among the Philippians will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus. This confidence rests on God's faithfulness, not merely on human determination. The surrounding verses connect God's work with their gospel partnership and their growing lives in Christ. Paul is not promising the success of every personal ambition. His hope reaches toward God's final work in His people when Christ returns.

Paul's affection is rooted in Christ.

Paul holds the Philippians in his heart and says that they share in God's grace with him, including through his imprisonment and ministry in defense of the gospel. He longs for them with the affection of Christ Jesus. Their bond is not merely social; their partnership and affection are connected to Christ and His gospel.

Love grows together with knowledge and discernment.

Paul prays that their love will abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight. Growing discernment helps believers recognize what is best and live with sincerity as they await the day of Christ. This is a fitting goal for continued study: letting biblical truth shape faithful love and wise choices.

Righteous fruit comes through Jesus Christ.

Paul desires that believers be filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Righteous living is not described as an achievement independent of Jesus, nor is spiritual growth a competition for recognition. The passage directs attention to Christ as the source and God as the One who receives glory.

REFLECT

- What have I learned about God during these 30 days?
- Which Scripture passage has most challenged or deepened my understanding?
- How has my understanding of Jesus and the hope found in Him developed?
- Where do I want to grow in love, knowledge, and discernment?
- How will I continue studying Scripture after this workbook is complete?

APPLY

Look back over the passages and reflections from these 30 days. Identify truths that have shaped your understanding and questions you still want to explore. You do not have to claim that you have mastered every lesson.

Choose a realistic next step: study a book of the Bible in context, return to a challenging passage, establish regular Scripture reading and prayer, or study with

another believer. A workbook may guide you, but it cannot replace continued engagement with God's Word.

One truth about God I want to remember:

One area where I want to keep growing:

My next step in studying Scripture:

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for what I have learned through Your Word. Keep growing my love, knowledge, and discernment, and help me continue studying Scripture and following Jesus beyond these thirty days. In Jesus' name, amen.

My personal prayer:

BIBLE-STUDY HABIT

Continue Studying One Passage at a Time

As this devotional journey ends, the pattern you practiced remains useful without a workbook: **READ** a passage in context; **UNDERSTAND** what its writer teaches; **REFLECT** on its truth; **APPLY** what follows from its meaning; and **PRAY** about what you are learning.

Remember to observe the original audience, important repeated words, and the verses before and after a passage. Distinguish the passage's meaning from your own application. If a text is difficult, study it patiently and seek trustworthy guidance rather than forcing a quick conclusion.

The goal is not to move through Scripture as quickly as possible. It is to keep learning God's Word and responding faithfully.

TAKEAWAY

These 30 days are not the end of my journey with God. I thank Him for what I have learned, and I want to continue growing in love, knowledge, and discernment. My confidence rests in God's faithful work through Jesus Christ, not in completing a program. As I keep studying His Word, may my life bear fruit that brings glory and praise to God.

Philippians 1:3–11