

*Awaken*  
**TEXAS**



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**DAY 01**

MONDAY,  
JANUARY 29

*“Ask of me is the one condition God puts in the very advance and triumph of His cause.” —E.M. Bounds*

**“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” Matthew 7:7-8**

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

As a father of 3 children, I am often bombarded with requests. Each of my children asks my wife and I for things regularly. It can often feel never-ending! Dad, can I play outside? Dad, can I go to the game with friends? Dad, can we go get ice cream? Mom, can I get a ride to the mall and go shopping? You get my drift. At times it can be annoying and bothersome but yet this is how our heavenly father wants us to bother him in prayer. He gives us permission to bother him in prayer. We should be encouraged to submit requests to Him daily. All kinds of requests, things that keep you up at night, difficult circumstances that you continue to worry about, and breakthroughs in a particular area of your life.

In Matthew 7, Jesus tells his disciples to 'ask' God, but this 'ask' is a persistent asking. In Philippians 4, Paul writes, Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. This is a reminder that our loving Father longs for us to ask of him. Asking God in prayer strengthens our relationship with him. Be specific about your request. Even though God knows what you want and need. He wants you to ask Him for it. God can answer vague prayers but being specific creates a deeper bond between you and Him.

God wants us to ask and ask again, not simply because he told us to pray, but because when we pray, we open another window for his glory to stream through. Throughout scripture, God invites us to ask of him. What a heavenly invitation! Although parents often ask their children to stop bothering them with requests, our heavenly Father does not operate this way. He is longing to hear from us daily.

When was the last time you asked God in prayer for a specific, bold, and audacious request?

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Lord, may we be people that will bring daily requests to you. I thank you that you love giving good gifts to your children. We repent for our prayerlessness and ask you to give us a passion for prayer. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Contributed by Efrain Cirilo,  
State Administrator | Texas Ministries

**DAY 02**

TUESDAY,  
JANUARY 30

*God mercifully responds when we honestly, humbly, hungrily repent. The wonderful news is that our Lord is a God of mercy, and He responds to repentance. - Billy Graham*

And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. Jonah 3:1-5

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

We are living in a time in our society when we can have a negative reaction to certain words. Words that can be labeled as traditional, outdated, obsolete, or unnecessary. However, there is a word that is still essential to our Christian experience. That word is repentance. Repent means to feel such sorrow for sin or fault as to be disposed to change one's life for the better; be penitent. Repentance is essential for us to establish a personal relationship with God through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the text above we find the people of Nineveh repenting for their sins in order to re-establish a right relationship with God. Sin separates us from God. Repentance restores our relationship with God. What is something that keeps us from repentance? Pride is something that gets in the way of repentance. We often do not want to admit that we have done wrong, and we want to justify our own actions. What should we do to repent? We should humble ourselves and allow God's Word to lead us to repentance. In the text in Jonah chapter three, we see that Jonah delivered the Word of God to the people of Nineveh. The King and the people of Nineveh were humble and repented of their sins in response to God's Word.

Let us learn from the people of Nineveh and experience the great love and mercy of God. God sent His son Jesus to redeem us from our sins. It was the greatest expression of His love for the world. John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Will you respond to God's word today and repent of any sin in your life? God is ready and willing to forgive you if you will humbly repent.

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Dear Heavenly Father, please help convict me of sin and help me accept your mercy without shame. I repent of all sin and anything that is wrong in my life. Thank you for the love you have poured out for me and all of your children. Help me live out of that love today. In Jesus' Name I Pray, Amen.



Contributed by Darius Miller,  
Lead Pastor | Shadydale Church of God



# DAY 03

WEDNESDAY,  
JANUARY 31

*"Prayer at its highest is a two-way conversation - and for me the most important part is listening to God's replies.."* Frank Laubach

**"Be still, and know that I am God; Psalm 46:10**

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

Life's demands can easily consume us in a never-ending cycle of busyness, anxiety, and stress. In a world that often spins in chaos and turmoil, we have to learn how to be still and know that God is still working on our behalf. We may not see it or feel it, but we must trust that He is on our side and working things out for our good.

Be still and quiet in His presence. Listen for His voice and wait for His nudge to direct your path. It's a moment of surrender and a deliberate choice to release our control and hand over our lives to the One who holds all things in His hands.

It is in the silence that we come to understand that the power and authority of our heavenly father far exceeds any challenges that we may face. We come to recognize that no matter how overwhelming our problems may seem, they are small compared to the massiveness of God's love, power, and authority.

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Dear God, in the busy world that we live in, may we learn to silence our hearts and minds so that we can listen intently for your voice. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Contributed by Lisa Pearson,  
Co-Pastor | Divine Destiny Worship Center

**DAY 04**

THURSDAY,  
FEBRUARY 1

*"If I stay I will continue to feel the warmth of the grace that I have but if I go then the world gets to live in the warmth of that grace." - Tim Gould*

**Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. Genesis 12:1**

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

There is a spiritual significance to going. I am already familiar with where I am staying. When I stay I know the people, the geography, the dangers, the back up plans. When I stay I know the culture, I support the culture and most others are perpetuating that culture as well.

When you go there is nothing familiar. There is nothing to be expected. Wherever I go they won't do things the way I did them before. I will always have more questions than answers. There is this strange paradox between the importance of godly family relationships and the need to go away from them when God speaks. But why would God tell me to leave something that is good?

Maybe where I am going needs the good I have—the good that God has given me where I was allowed to stay for a time. If I stay I will continue to feel the warmth of the grace that I have but if I go then the world gets to live in the warmth of that grace.

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Lord, help me to listen with anticipation and respond with faith no matter where you tell me to go. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Contributed by Tim Gould,  
Lead Pastor | Houston First Church of God

**DAY 05**

FRIDAY,  
FEBRUARY 2

*It is wonderful what miracles God works in wills that are utterly surrendered to Him. He turns hard things into easy and bitter things into sweet. - Hannah Whitall Smith*

**For no word from God will ever fail. Luke 1:37**

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

Mary – A Model of Surrender (Luke 1:26-38)

Mary wasn't anyone special. She was young, unknown, relatively poor, from a place no one special lives. And yet, she was special. Gabriel appears and calls her "highly favored." She was greatly troubled by this greeting. Surprisingly, the text remains silent about her shocking exposure to a mighty angel of God. It wasn't the presence of God's messenger that troubled her. She was "greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be." What kind of greeting is this? Highly favored? Evidently, God saw something of great favor in this young lady long before she saw it in herself.

You know the story. She was favored by God – chosen by Him to bear His son. The Savior of the world would grow within her womb, be nurtured in her arms, learn from her song and instruction. Why would God choose one so simple and declare such praise regarding one so young, untried, plain? While God's will often remains a mystery to humans, we are told that the "LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). There was something about her heart that thrilled God. She was soft-hearted, yielded, ready to surrender. Thrilling! Exhilarating to Abba!

Mary had questions. She sought a few clarifications. How can a virgin become pregnant and remain pure to her marriage vows? The questions were real and valid; but the heart never wavered. We see the culmination of Mary's special bending towards God when she declares quietly and resolutely, "I am the Lord's servant.... May your word to me be fulfilled." When Gabriel heard the words, he was satisfied that the message was received, and he left.

Surrender is enough. Surrender is the starting point for the great journey of God and man together. Surrender is the gateway to adventure with Christ. With these simple words, this unknown girl became the mother of our Lord – highly favored among men and God alike.

Surrender resides in humility. The text teaches us that Mary first saw herself as the "Lord's servant." The haughty refuse to surrender. Pride demands control, recognition, justice. Perhaps this is the reason that "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble" (James 4:6). Surrender yields itself for the benefit of another. Surrender sacrifices. It embraces rejection by the crowds and misunderstanding by friends to follow God's surprising plan. It trusts, receives, refuses to demand.

Mary was willing to be inconvenienced by God's plan. She had to know that her life was changing forever and that many would think poorly of her. What about you? Are you ready to serve the Lord this year, however he asks? Are you okay with being lowly; but Highly Favored? Are you surprised when God places His favor on you through the callings he deposits into your heart? Are you ready to risk the "seemingly certain" to traverse the gateway of the "sometimes foggy" plans of God? Mary risked it. The angels gloried with chorus because of it. The Magi traveled and gifted in response to it. Surrender became God's glorious gateway to the supernatural work of salvation. Let 2024 be the year of glory and surrender for you as well.

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Lord, today I come before you in humility. I declare that no promise of God will ever fail. Though I may not always understand your plans and your ways, I fully surrender myself to You. I trust you and ask you to give me the peace and confidence to walk this day in full submission to your will. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Contributed by Ken Merrifield,  
Soul Care Director | Texas Ministries



*"We look upon prayer as a means of getting things for ourselves; the Bible's idea of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself" Oswald Chambers - (Utmost 176)*

## I want to know Christ. Philippians 3:10

### TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:

Prayer has never come easy to me. I understand the value of it, and I've experienced the value of it firsthand! I've read books on prayer, taught about prayer, and know various prayer models. But it's still a mystery and a struggle. Not necessarily praying itself, but keeping it from becoming stale, keeping it from becoming another item on my checklist, keeping it from becoming a religious exercise that has little room for God to move.

A few years ago, I decided to set aside certain times on certain days and dedicate that time to focused prayer (even though it can be a struggle, I know it's vital to my faith). The other day, I had just returned from an out-of-town trip, and I got my days mixed up. The first item on my calendar was to spend 30 minutes in prayer. I had many things that needed to get done, but that only meant I needed to pray more, not less. But as I thought through my day, I realized my mistake: I was thinking about the wrong day. On this particular day, my focused prayer time was at the end of the day, not the beginning. This would allow me to jump right into doing what needed to get done.

As I realized this, a thought bounced around in my head: "I don't have to pray," and it was followed by an emotion, gratitude. I was glad I didn't have to pray. Do you see the problem? In my effort to make prayer central to my life, I had actually made it a chore. Excitement and joy were replaced by the mundane and "this is just one more thing I need to do" attitude.

How's your prayer life? How would you describe it? Is it life-giving? Stale? Exciting? Boring? Have you given up on prayer? I haven't worked this out yet, but here are some things I'm learning:

- Practice silence
- Pray while walking around, sitting, or kneeling
- Balance prayer between supplications, gratitude, worship, confession, and intercession
- Be honest in prayer (don't worry, God can handle it).
- Try something new.

These are some of the questions I've been asking myself. If you find yourself in a similar position with prayer, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you pray because you have to or because you get to (or even want to)?
- Are your prayer times meaningful or meaningless? Why? What needs to change?
- If you spoke to your spouse with the same energy and effort you speak to God, would that relationship be healthy?

Let's get to know the Lord through prayer!

### TODAY'S PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, we come before you with hearts full of gratitude for the precious gift of knowing You. In our lives and hearts, we acknowledge You as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Lord, with all the distractions and noise in this life, help us to know You. May we surrender our calendars, agendas, and ambitions so we can slow down long enough to simply be with You. We can be so caught up in accomplishing tasks that we miss You. Forgive us, Lord.

May we be vessels of Your mercy, instruments of Your peace, and reflections of Your boundless love. In moments of joy, let us give thanks to You. In moments of struggle, let us find strength in You. Lord, help us to know You more intimately each day so that our lives may testify to Your transformative power. In Your holy name, we pray. Amen.



Contributed by Kenneth Spiller,  
Lead Pastor | Parkgate Community Church



**DAY 07**

SUNDAY,  
FEBRUARY 4

*Let us offer our bodies as living sacrifices! -the Apostle Paul*

**"When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." Esther 4:16**

### **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

One of the most famous quotations in all the Old Testament must be from Queen Esther! "If I perish, let me perish, I'm going to see the King!" Esther's was a life of submission! Largely because of her great beauty, Esther was elevated to queen when her predecessor Queen Vashti was deposed.

Many of us find success either by hard work, luck, or serendipity, or as often happens we get elevated, appointed, or selected simply because of who we know, or how we look! In these situations, it's easy to become tempted to convince ourselves that it was our own hard work or availability or education or connections etc. that led us to our achievements. And while that may be true to a certain extent, it is foolish not to consider the hand of God in our successes!

It was only when Esther realized at the urging of Mordecai, that she was not so insulated as she might have believed and that she was uniquely "positioned", she agreed to use her status to bring about justice!

Let us "offer our bodies as living sacrifices" (Rom. 12:1) in total submission to God's purpose, power, and plans! Let us be encouraged to speak truth to power for the cause of justice! Let us remember who the real King is! And like Esther, submit to Him mind, body, and soul!

### **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Lord, thank you for your graciousness, in opening the doors of opportunity to us! And with our successes, please remind us from whence our blessings come, and to whom they belong! May we be willing to approach worldly kings boldly, on behalf of the King of Kings! Amen.



Contributed by Jonathan Mitchell,  
Senior Pastor |

# DAY 08

MONDAY,  
FEBRUARY 5

*"Prayer is a silent surrendering of everything to God"*  
- Soren Kierkegaard

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Matthew 26:36-39

## TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:

If you are like me, there may have been times in your life when your soul was overwhelmed with sorrow. God has a plan and purpose for each of our lives. That plan and purpose fits into his desire to advance his kingdom in the earth. We all have a part to play in kingdom advancement. We may know our assignment. We may know it's beginning and it's ending. The middle of our assignment may not be so clear to us. The challenges in the middle, "the mess in the middle," can cause our souls to become overwhelmed with sorrow. If Jesus felt overwhelmed, we are in good company. Through prayer he had the grace to surrender to God's will.

## TODAY'S PRAYER:

Lord, though sometimes I feel overwhelmed, please give me the grace to fulfill my assignment in your kingdom. If I don't surrender to your will and fulfill my assignment, people in my family, my city, my state, my nation and the world, will be lost! I surrender all, today! Amen



Contributed by Anthony Parrett,  
Pastor Emeritus | Dominion Christian Centre, Houston

**DAY 09**

TUESDAY,  
FEBRUARY 6

*"Of all acts of man repentance is the most divine. The greatest of all faults is to be conscious of none." Thomas Carlyle*

**"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." 2 Corinthians 7:10**

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

Repentance may be hard for us. We don't want to be wrong and we may be hesitant to repent. Maybe embarrassment, fear or pride presents a barrier but I want you to consider the beauty of repentance.

It is beautiful in that it relieves us, cleanses us and releases the move of God in our lives. If you view what you have done as a fatal, disastrous failure, consider the greatness of God's mercy to completely cover the wrong. Rejoice in that.

Repentance is a healing for the sickness of sin. God isn't keeping score or rendering retribution. He forgives repeatedly, completely and enormously.

Repentance is not limited to sorrow for our wrongs. It includes thankfulness for forgiveness. It includes the joy of being washed and refreshed.

Pursue it, embrace it, love it, rejoice in it. Hallelujah!

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, Thank you for the beauty and power of repentance. As we acknowledge our shortcomings, I ask that you allow your Spirit to wash us, refresh us and fill us with your joy and victory. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.



Contributed by Kenneth Meeks,  
Pastor | Kendleton Church of God

**"If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for Me, you will find it."  
Matthew 10:39**

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

I think it is relatively safe to say that most Christians have a desire to live fully surrendered to God. But a desire to surrender, and the actual act of laying down our will in exchange for His, can prove to be a challenge for many of us, whether we will admit it or not. The key to surrender is obedience. It is, as Jesus prayed, "...Nevertheless, not my will, but Yours, be done." [Luke 22:42] What happens when God's desire for our lives stands in stark contrast to the desires we have for ourselves? How do we respond when He begins to pry out of our hands, the things we cling so tightly to? Matthew 10:39 tells us... "If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for Me, you will find it." [Jesus speaking] This stands in stark contrast to how we are wired, doesn't it? Statements like these are, well, ...scary!

The act of surrendering itself is scary. And even risky at times. It is natural for us to "cling" to our desires, our preferences and our comforts. Usually, we don't mind surrendering, but only if it makes sense for us to do so. But, what about when it doesn't make sense? Oddly enough, Matthew's account of Jesus' words is not the first time we are presented with this idea of senseless surrender. There is a story in the book of Jeremiah, Chapter 38, of King Zedekiah, who was faced with a choice to clench and cling, or to senselessly surrender his very life! Just to set it up – the prophet Jeremiah was in trouble. He was thrown into an empty cistern, with a thick layer of mud at the bottom (which, of course, made him sink). He was thrown in the cistern for warning the officials and the people of Jerusalem, that everyone who stayed there would die from war, famine, or disease. But those who would surrender to the Babylonians would live. Their reward for surrendering would be life. [verse 2] Eventually, King Zedekiah had his officials bring Jeremiah to him so he could question Jeremiah about what the LORD had told him. Here's how that conversation went down.

Jeremiah 38:17-18 "Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "This is what the Lord God of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'If you surrender to the Babylonian officers, you and your family will live, and the city will not be burned down. But if you refuse to surrender, you will not escape! This city will be handed over to the Babylonians, and they will burn it to the ground.'" Okay .... then it gets good! Look at the next couple of verses: Jeremiah 38:19-20 "But I am afraid to surrender," the king said, "for the Babylonians may hand me over to the Judeans who have defected to them. And who knows what they will do to me!" Jeremiah replied, "You won't be handed over to them if you choose to obey the Lord. Your life will be spared, and all will go well for you." Sometimes, surrendering feels like a death trap when we consider the possible outcomes that are very much out of our control. It takes courage to surrender. It takes courage and trust, to obey. Incidentally, the prophet Jeremiah told the king that if he chose NOT to surrender, a whole list of other problems awaited. [verses 21-23]

What's the point of all this? Glad you asked! The moral of the story is not that we must surrender to our enemies. It is that we must surrender to the sovereign authority and instruction of God, and choose obedience even when we are terrified of the potential outcome. A surrendered heart is one that trusts God no matter what; come what may. Is that you? If not, what is it that you are clinging to? Is holding on too tightly worth losing your life? Is letting go worth finding it? Tough questions, I know. But, obedience is obedience, pure and simple.

Either we will obey, or we won't. Either we will let Him have all of us, or we won't. This brings us back to Matthew 10:39 when Jesus said, "If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for Me, you will find it." Don't be afraid to surrender completely to God. He has AMAZING blessings for you on the other side of surrender and obedience!

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, I lay down my life before You in full surrender. Help me to walk in obedience to Your will. Forgive me for the times when I have clenched and clung to my desires instead of Yours. I give You permission to pry my hands open, when You are asking me to let go and trust You. Give me the courage to surrender. And an even greater desire to be obedient to You, no matter the cost. I praise You, Lord, because You are all-powerful, and all-knowing. I place my full trust in You, and no one else. May You create in me a heart that always seeks to do Your will, Your way, in Your time. Amen.



Contributed by Cindy Magsig ,  
Lead Pastor | Real Hope Church



**"The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone" John 4:28**

### **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

When the woman from Sychar approached Jacob's Well, an ancient water source essential for survival in the days of Samaria, she carried her water jar—a symbol of life's necessities like drinking, cooking, and cleaning. Little did she know that she would encounter Jesus at the well.

Engaging in a profound conversation covering culture, philosophy, relationships, religion, spirituality, and identity, the woman underwent a transformative experience. Throughout the dialogue, Jesus attentively listened, responding in a way that offered her a new perspective on the world and herself. As their conversation concluded, the woman made a significant gesture— she left her water jar.

Leaving her water jar became an act of repentance. She relinquished dependence on her own abilities and efforts, now relying on the Messiah. The burden of survival was lifted; she embraced life with newfound vigor. No longer traversing her journey alone, she extended invitations to others to join her.

Reflecting on repentance, consider how encountering Jesus has changed your life. Following Jesus should alter the patterns of our existence. When we meet the Messiah, that encounter should be evident to those observing us.

How is your life visibility different as a result of your encounter with Jesus?

### **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, you understand our pursuit of successful and fulfilling lives. Guide us to meaningful encounters with Jesus, revealing that you are our source of life. Lead us to repent from relying solely on ourselves, recognizing that you know us completely and offer the "living water" that satisfies our lives beyond measure. I ask this in the name of Jesus! Amen.



Contributed by Malcolm Tyree,  
Lead Pastor | New Vida Church

**DAY 12**

FRIDAY,  
FEBRUARY 9

*God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil. — E.M. Bounds*

For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.“ 2 Corinthians 1:5-7

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

Have you ever been held together, or have you ever felt the peace that surpasses all understanding in the middle of your valley? If you have, then you have now been equipped with first hand experience about the comfort of God! That comfort became available to you through the prayers of those around you who have been contending for you. So now, we can take the comfort that God poured over us to enable us to bring comfort to others. We now become conduits for the comfort of the almighty God.

My wife and I saw that first hand in 2023. I never fully understood the power of “showing up” before my dad’s funeral. The day of my dad’s funeral, I was broken into a million little pieces, shattered, held together by the prayers of those praying for us. But, seeing people - brothers and sisters from our flock take time off of work and off of school to take a 3 hour trip, not just to simply pay respects or to give any advice, or have the right thing to say but just to show compassion and comfort with their presence, wow. You have no idea what that did for me. That’s what gave me the strength I needed to help lead the service at my dad’s funeral. Man, there is power through the holy spirit in simply showing up. Every person that made that trip holds a special place in my heart that will never go away or be extinguished. They have impacted my life forever and I now understand what showing up means. By showing up, the spirit of the Lord that lives inside of you brings the comfort and the compassion and the strength and the bravery, it brings the Paraclete. You don’t ever have to say anything, you don’t have to put the right words together, God does all of that for you when you take the time to simply show up.

Church, we won’t always have the answer to why we suffer. But just know that when we suffer, the God of all comfort is there to comfort us, and once we experience that comfort we can now turn and comfort someone else who is going through suffering. The suffering you personally endured turns into the fuel and experience you need to bombard the gates of heaven with prayers of all kinds for your brother or sister whose going through it.

What positivity can we pull from suffering, if any? Two fold- empathy and evangelism. When you’re standing in the gap for someone who is suffering you can now understand from a front row perspective what that feels like. So, you can pray in specifics for the strength that you know they’ll need. You can now share about the peace that surpasses all understanding only available through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Lord help me to bring comfort to those who are struggling or suffering through the power of simply showing up. In Jesus Name, Amen.



Contributed by Manny Cirilo,  
Lead Pastor | Crosspointe Church

**Therefore, I urge first of all that petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgiving be made on behalf of all people. 1 Timothy 2:1**

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

Throughout life we all face crises from time to time. Sometimes the crises are severe, threatening the stability and security of our lives. Other times some situations are less critical, but in such times we stand in desperate need of help. The story of Esther gives us a picture of how intercession works. Can you imagine God choose a young woman to save a nation at a critical time in Jewish history? A whole race of people had been decreed by law to be slaughtered and at that time only two people could help them: Mordecai and his daughter Esther. For this very purpose, she had been raised up by God to sit on the throne as intercessor and queen for such a time as this. Esther made the courageous decision and demonstrated a willingness to risk her position and even her life to rescue her people from destruction. As Queen, she stood the best chance of appealing to King Xerxes for mercy. If she perished, then she would perish, but she would have fulfilled God's purpose for her life.

Just like the people in the book of Esther then needed someone to stand in the gap for them before the king, even now, so many people are in need of someone standing before the King of Kings in intercessional prayer. Even though Queen Esther risked going into the king's presence uncalled for, the Lord is calling us to the secret place to intercede for a whole nation of people to be healed. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." [Hebrews 4:16]

Are we willing to relinquish our agendas and busy schedules to God's will and purposes to be fulfilled in others? Are we willing to risk our positions to rescue others from destruction? Are we willing to fight the fight of faith from the place of total surrender? Surrender is a choice, an act of faith and the only way to walk closely with God. A surrendered heart opens the door for God to work in us and bless others around us. Surrendering to God increases our faith because we trust Him to lead our lives through critical situations. And not only our lives but those of our family, our church, and loved ones. We may not understand all that God is doing but let's be faithful to "trust in the Lord with all our heart, and lean not on our own understanding; In all our ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct our paths." [Proverbs 3:5-6]

Choose to relinquish today to what God is asking you to do. It starts with prayer; a surrendered heart and letting Him talk to you. At whatever point God calls us to respond, to be obedient, and to surrender to doing whatever he asks of us, we'll be like Esther to make a courageous decision and act accordingly on behalf of others to be rescued by a loving King.

What beautiful lyrics to the hymn of I Surrender All Hymn by J.W. Van Deventer. All to Jesus I surrender; All to him I freely give; I will ever love and trust him, In his presence daily live. I surrender all, I surrender all, all to thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Thank You, Father, for Jesus, who makes intercession for us. You have poured forth your Spirit of grace and supplication upon me to help me when I don't know how to pray as I should. Heavenly Father, teach me to be an effectual intercessor. My desire is to be able to surrender all and stand courageously in the gap before you lifting up others in prayer. I will stir myself up to call upon your name and take hold of your Word. Until your plans and purposes are fulfilled and your glory covers the earth, as the waters cover the sea, I will pray and travail until Christ is formed in me in Jesus name.



Contributed by Teena Houston,  
Lead Pastor | First Church of God, Corpus Christi



**DAY 14**

SUNDAY,  
FEBRUARY 11

*"Nothing shall be lost that is done for God  
or in obedience to Him." —John Owen*

"But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children." Matthew 14:16-21

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

As a parent of a two-year-old and a six-year-old, one word rings throughout the house frequently as they play together. That word is "mine." Despite all of the disciplining, that word somehow pushes its way to the surface as they hold tightly to the thing they want most. Of course, we know it's due to our fallen nature, yet; the same word creeps in slowly as we labor to advance God's kingdom. The mindset of "mine" is the quickest way to quench the Spirit of God moving through our city.

The story of Jesus feeding the five thousand is no stranger to us. If we aren't careful, the story becomes just a tool to teach people how to be generous or trust God when they have very little. These are great truths, but when was the last time you read this through the lens of your church?

The disciples said, "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish." As they looked upon the great need of the hungry people, they didn't believe what they had was enough. It's easy to look upon the vast city of Houston and think to ourselves, like the disciples did, that what we have isn't enough. However, as we know from the story, something miraculous happened when the disciples released what was in their hands to the people. What once wasn't enough... multiplied and became more than enough. Releasing is challenging. Dying to the notion of "mine" is even more difficult. However, both are necessary to aid a spiritual renewal in our city.

We may feel like we need more people, time, or resources but what's in our hands is enough. We can be part of a multiplying miracle when we release what has been stewarded to us and place it in God's hands. We have a city of people starving for the gospel. God is asking us to rest in His sufficiency and release what's in our hands till every man, woman, and child hears the good news!

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Father, you are so good and full of grace. We thank you that you are sufficient in all things. We long to see you continue to move in our city. Would you help us die to ourselves daily and place your agenda above ours. Help us to operate in bold faith and release the little in our hands so that we might see your kingdom continue to multiply throughout Houston and beyond. In Jesus' Name, amen!



Contributed by Josh Gosney,  
Lead Pastor of Vision & Teaching | Wake Church



**DAY 15**

MONDAY,  
FEBRUARY 12

*Patience is not simply the ability to wait - it's how we behave while we're waiting. Paul Coelho*

**Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. Psalm 27:14**

### **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

In a world where we want everything to happen right now, sometimes the Lord asks us to just be patient and wait for His instructions. Psalm 27:14 encourages us to wait patiently for the Lord, to be strong and take heart. Trust and faith are put on display in our lives when we are patiently waiting on the Lord. Trusting in His plan for our lives not only encourages us but others who may be watching us. Strength can be found in the quiet moments of waiting. Taking heart is an acknowledgment that God's promises are steadfast and unstoppable. As we wait on the Lord, let our hearts be filled with hope, knowing that He is faithful, and His timing is perfect.

### **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Lord give me the wisdom to wait on your timing for my life. Help me to be patient and understand that you are working everything out in your way. In Jesus name, Amen.



Contributed by Venoy Pearson,  
Lead Pastor | Divine Destiny Worship Center

**DAY 16**

TUESDAY,  
FEBRUARY 13

*The Christian Church exists to worship God first of all.  
Everything else must come second or third or fourth or fifth*  
- A.W. Tozer

**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. James 4:10**

### **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

It's interesting how competition has become the way of everyday life for so many. It seems as if everyone is obsessed with being the first in line at the restaurant, being the only one in line at the grocery store check out, In traffic I see people trying to "beat" the yellow light because God forbid we have to wait at the red light and allow others to go before us. I believe the reason our culture values competition is because of the personal benefit we gain namely being "first" in all things. This selfish attitude can cause serious strife especially with those in whom you are in competition.

As Disciples of Christ, we are taught to live a completely different lifestyle as we are commanded to: love one another, to think of others as better than ourselves, to submit to one another. I believe God wants us to live our lives surrendered to Him. Why? Because there we will find the benefit of God's blessing. The Apostle James declares that we should humble ourselves (surrender our will to God) when we do this sincerely by faith, an exchange takes place, the blessing of our Heavenly Father. Think about it. To obtain Salvation we must surrender our heart, and trust in the finished work of the cross and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

When we humble ourselves before the cross He lifts us up unto eternal life! The surrendered posture towards the Lord was never supposed to end after salvation. To experience effective and authentic worship, prayer, and bible study, we must cultivate And highly value a humble and contrite spirit and surrender our hearts to the perfect will of God.

### **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, by faith I surrender my heart, my life, my will, my actions. Help me resist the temptation to take matters into my own hands, I humble myself before you Lord and trust your perfect time to lift me up. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen



Contributed by Ray Hodges,  
Lead Pastor | Resolute Church

Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, "I gave birth to him in pain." Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request. 1 Chronicles 4:9-10

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

There is a very powerful prayer found in 1 Chronicles by a man named Jabez. We learn that there is power in a genuine prayer. In this short prayer, Jabez prayed for four things: blessing, influence, presence, and protection. We need to be praying for the same things. We need to have the same desire as Jabez did. Personally, my favorite part of the prayer was when Jabez prayed, "let your hand be on me." In other words, he prayed for God's Presence in his life. Do you know why you need the hand of God on you? Because you can't do it by yourself.

Last summer I took my family to a waterpark and my 8 year old son, who is autistic, was terrified. He didn't want to go into the water at first. The next day he got a lot more comfortable and played in the splash pad area. But then he saw the slides and he wanted to do it, but was scared. Well, I dragged him up to the kiddie slide, and he was fighting me, but together we went down the slide and he loved it. Then he wanted to do it again so we did. But then I was like, I wonder if he would do the big twisting slide. He watched his brother do it, and his cousins. So I picked him up and together went to the big slide. We climbed all the way to the top and he was nervous. He wasn't letting go of me. I told the lifeguard he was autistic and this was a big deal and she was so sweet to Jace. But together we went down the big boy slide and he loved it and he wanted to do it again. So we did it again and again and then we got up there and I was wondering if he would do it by himself. I placed him on the slide by himself, he was nervous and I was like you can do this Jace. The lifeguard was encouraging him as well and then I put my hand on him and gave him a little push with mom waiting for him at the bottom and he did it! And then he went all the way up the steps again holding me by the hand and he wanted to do it again by himself this time and so he did, over and over and over!

See this is what your father's hand is like. You tell him this is too big for me but then you step out in faith to do it and say things that only come from his hand. Afterwards your spirit is shouting, God did that, nobody else. God carried me, He gave me the words, He gave me the power, He gave me the little push that I needed and it was awesome.

The hand of God can be upon you and you will be able to do things you didn't think were even possible. When we ask for God's mighty presence like Jabez did, you will also see tremendous results that can only be explained as the hand of God.

Where there is no prayer, there is no power.

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Today began to pray for the presence of God in your life. Ask for His hand to be on you.  
In Jesus' Name, Amen.



Contributed by Keith Herrin,  
Lead Pastor | Impact Church

**When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. Jonah 3:10**

### **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

Repentance holds a crucial role in the Christian experience, as illustrated in Jonah chapter 3. This biblical account narrates Jonah's response after God intervenes in his life. Having a second chance, Jonah faced the opportunity to repent and fulfill the task he had initially rejected.

Persisting in His guidance, God instructed Jonah again to proceed to Nineveh, a command he obeyed this time. This narrative resonates with our own journeys, where we might have ignored the divine call. Disobeying God's instructions carries consequences, prompting the need for repentance when we recognize our shortcomings.

Repentance involves acknowledging our deviations from God's expectations and cultivating a sincere desire for His guidance. Wholehearted repentance aligns us with God's will, paving the way for His grace and mercy to envelop our lives.

### **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, give us the strength to turn away from sin and seek your forgiveness. Please help us express genuine remorse and sincerely yearn for you. Guide us back onto the right path, and may your grace and mercy be extended to us as we remain devoted to you. Amen.



Contributed by Albert Wright,  
Lead Pastor | New Life Church of God



*"If my life is surrendered to God, all is well. Let me not grab it back, as though it were in peril in His hand but would be safer in mine!" -- Elisabeth Elliot*

When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" Esther replied to Mordecai: Go, gather together all the Jews....fast for me. When this is done, I will go to the king....If I perish, I perish. Esther 4:12-16

## **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

A most memorable surrender in war was at the end of the Civil War. General Lee and his troops surrendered to General Grant. A few days later, General Lee and his troops walked past Union generals, stacking their rifles one at a time. This is complete surrender. Much greater than this was Queen Esther's complete surrender to her God - the God of all the Hebrews.

Surrender is an act of giving oneself completely to another. Esther did not control the moment; she could only live in the moment. This moment demanded all from her. Yet, she was inadequate for the moment. So she did the only thing she could: She surrendered to her God. Only then could she live into her appointed purpose. Hence, the confession for such a time as this: "If I perish, I perish." The result was the salvation of all her people.

Surrender always leads to salvation, deliverance, and victory! As congregations and Believers in Texas, let's embrace our divine moments this year. Surrender All!

## **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Lord, we choose to surrender to you rather than surrendering all to the powerless idols of this world. Awaken us, dear Lord. Awaken us to all the truths that surrendering to you afford us as Believers and as congregations in the state of Texas. We desire to be divinely "Woke." We choose this day to surrender all to you. In Jesus Name, Amen.



Contributed by James Lewis,  
Lead Pastor | South Park Church of God

**DAY 20**

SATURDAY,  
FEBRUARY 17

*"True repentance does not permit repetition."*

*-Spencer W. Kimball*

**If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14**

### **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

Wow, what an awesome scripture in IIChronicles and this one scripture has a lot to say. We hear alot of teachings, sermons and podcasts about being saved, forgiveness, and the goodness of God but we really don't hear too much on repentance. God wants us to be His people. In John 1:12 we read that if we receive Jesus and believe in his name, we will become sons of God.

Yes it is important and necessary to receive Jesus in our hearts but it is also necessary for us to repent of our sins. Repentance means humbling ourselves, acknowledging that we have sin and then turn away from our sin. Jesus saves us from our sin, not in our sin. When we turn from our wicked ways, that means all the things that we do that is not pleasing to God are not part of our lives anymore.

**WE DO IT NO MORE!!**

IICorinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new Creation**, old things are passed away; behold all things have become **new**. Old things (sin) are passed, all things become new (a new way of life). True repentance will always keep us in step with God. When we truly repent, He always forgives.

### **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, we struggle everyday with the temptation of doing or saying things that are not pleasing to You. Help us to humble ourselves and recognize that we need to repent and allow you to work in our lives. In Jesus' Name I Pray, Amen.



Contributed by Bill Banda,  
Lead Pastor | Love & Grace Church of God

## Jonah 2 - 3

### **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

In the depths of our souls, there lies a longing, a hunger for something greater than ourselves. Like Jonah, we sometimes flee from this desire, seeking to do things our own way. Yet, God's mercy beckons us back, calling us to repentance.

In our brokenness, we cry out, acknowledging our need for God's grace. Just as Jonah cried out for mercy and then preached repentance to Nineveh, let us humble ourselves before the Lord, confessing our waywardness. For it is in our honest surrender that God's mercy finds us.

Despite our shortcomings, God's love remains steadfast. Like the people of Nineveh, when we turn from our wickedness, God responds with compassion and forgiveness. He does not abandon us in our rebellion but extends His hand, offering redemption and restoration.

May we, like Jonah and the people of Nineveh, embrace the call to repentance with fervent hearts. Let us yearn for God's presence above all else, knowing that His mercy awaits those who earnestly seek Him. In our desire for God, may we find the fullness of life He promises, now and forevermore. Amen

### **TODAY'S PRAYER:**

Lord, in our longing for You, grant us humility to repent and receive Your mercy. May our hearts hunger for Your presence. In Jesus name, Amen.

