

DAY 1: HIDE & SEEK -- YOU'RE IT!

When you were a child, were you ever the seeker in a game of hide and seek? After counting to ten, did you ever open your eyes and see the one you were looking for immediately? That might have seemed like a let down because you didn't get the satisfaction of seeking and finding the one hiding. The Bible says in *Jeremiah 29:13*, "If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me." God wants to engage us in seeking Him. We sometimes wonder, "Where are you God?" Often the reality is that God is very near. What we don't realize is that it is not God who has left us, but our heart that has distanced itself from Him.

Isaiah 45:19 says, "I publicly proclaim bold promises, I do not whisper obscurities in some dark corner. I would not have told the people of Israel to seek me if I could not be found..."

Can you hear Him proclaiming His promises to you? He is near. Where is your heart?

"Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world."
(*James 4:8*)

We let the pleasures and the cares of this world divert our hearts from seeking Him.

Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."

Close your eyes, and think of ten things in your life that are drawing your heart away from God. In Christ, there is no condemnation for our sin (Romans 8:1). Apologize, and draw near to His mercy and grace with all of your heart. Open your eyes, and see that the Lord is near! It will be a relief to see he is in plain view!

Use the space below to write down the things that are drawing your heart away from God.

DAY 2: GOD IS "IT" FIRST

The parable of the lost coin in *Luke 15:8-10* talks about a woman who has ten coins and loses one. She lights a lamp and searches her home carefully everywhere until she finds it. She rejoices with her friends once it is found. In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents.

Did you know that before you turned to follow Jesus, that God was seeking your heart like this treasure? You are precious to Him! He sought you out first. Our love for God can grow in the knowledge that He first loved us by sending His own son to die for our sins. Where were you hiding when he found you? Do you remember giving your heart to Him? That is the day the angels rejoiced, and your name was written in the Lamb's book of Life. Take a moment to thank God for finding you and bathing you in His love. If you have not yet believed in Jesus, God is seeking your heart today. In fact, according to *Revelation 3:20 (NLT)*, He is saying to you right now, "*Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.*"

You can make the decision right now to open the door, and come out from hiding! Heaven will rejoice with you today!

Use the space below to write down your testimony of when you were saved and how your name came to be written down in the Lamb's book of life.

DAY 3: THE PAUPER IS A PRINCE

What do the words humble, unpretentious, meager, lacking, and barren, have in common? They all describe the word poor. If someone's financial status is poor, they may be living in a state of poverty. If someone's mental state is poor, they may be in a state of humility, and they may have an unpretentious attitude meaning, they aren't out trying to impress anyone. The word poor has a negative connotation to most people. Many don't want to associate with the poor paupers (beggars) for the fear of "those paupers" making them look bad. People also seem to associate the word poor with sadness, suffering, discomfort, or depression. The kingdom of God is different though. *James 4:6* says that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. *Matthew 5:3* says, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

Grace and the kingdom of heaven are quite a wealthy inheritance! Those paupers are princes! They have mourned for the sins they've committed. They have seen themselves before God as beggars who have nothing--even if they have all they appear to want or need. They have come to Him seeing Him as their master and their provider. This is the condition of our heart that pleases God!

The rich may cast their money into an offering for God. The retired may devote their time, a poor person may even give all they have, but anyone who wants to honor God must first come poor in spirit. David says this of God,

"The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God." (Psalm 51:17) The word broken in *Psalm 51:17* refers to being quieted and reflective to the point of being submissive and willing to obey.

Are you poor in spirit by seeing yourself as depending on God for everything just like a pauper? Are you broken and repentant at heart?

Read *Luke 16:19-31*.

What is your inheritance from God? Write your answer below.

DAY 4: CEMENT STATUES

Have you ever had the satisfaction of leaving a print in wet cement? Once the cement hardened, your mark was set, and the print could not be changed. When we are set in our ways, we can develop a false sense of confidence in our knowledge and in our strength. Like the hardened cement, our heart becomes unteachable. *Genesis 2:7* says, *"Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature."*

When God created man, he didn't create statues of cement. He breathed His living breath into us. He has not finished shaping us. We are like clay in the potter's hands. We cannot be shaped if we become hardened or set in our ways. Read *Isaiah 64:8*.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (*Ephesians 2:10*)

We can be confident in God's strength and in His knowledge.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts." (*Isaiah 55:8-9*)

Are you set in your ways like a statue, or are you allowing God to shape you through the Holy Spirit?

Psalm 37:23 says, "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and he delights in his ways."

Read Mark 8:17.

What two things couldn't the disciples do because their hearts were hardened?

Ask God to soften you, and give you a teachable heart so that you may perceive and understand God. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you read God's Word today.

DAY 5: CLUMPY SOIL

"Pride is the greatest of all evils that beset us, and of all our enemies it is that which dies the slowest and hardest."
J.N. Darby

Pride is one of the toughest things for us to monitor within ourselves, and it acts like a hardening agent in the soil of our hearts. Consider self righteousness, and self confidence for example. Neither of these two things look bad on the outside when they produce right behaviors and achievements that are favorable to yourself and those around you. We don't realize they are products of our own efforts and not of God. *2 Corinthians 10:17-18* says, "*But, let the one who boast, boast in the Lord. For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.*"

Another example is unforgiveness. We feel entitled to hold a grudge when we are hurt, but God's word says in *Leviticus 19:17*, "*Do not bear a grudge against others, but settle your differences with them, so that you will not commit a sin because of them.*" Even if your efforts to settle the dispute are in vain, ask God to help you forgive.

Can you see otherwise, how unforgiveness is rooted in pride? It hardens your heart, and it's toxic to you.

Hardened soil is a difficult place to grow a healthy plant. Think of the attributes of self righteousness, trusting in oneself, and unforgiveness as clumps of soil that need

tilling. They literally need to be crushed and broken up so that you can grow strong and healthy in the Lord. The process can be painful at times, but it's necessary if we are at enmity with God because of pride. God will allow difficult circumstances in our lives to help us to see the areas where pride is ruling us so that we can turn those areas over to Him. We get angry and impatient with hardships, but if we seek God in them, and observe our own actions through them, we can often see who we really are during them.

This is why *James 1:2-4* says, "*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing the testing of your faith produces patience. But let the patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*"

Let God use his trowel today to break up the hardened soil of pridefulness within your heart, and you will find joy and thankfulness to be produced in you as the fruit of softened soil and true brokenness for Him.

Read the following verses:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Nehemiah 8:10

What trial are you facing today, and how are you being tested?

DAY 6: SOIL SAMPLES

Soil is often tested before gardening in order to discern the acidic levels and pH levels necessary for various plants to grow. The Bible compares the condition of our heart to the various conditions of soil. One example would be the parable of the seed and the sower. (*Matthew 13*)

David, in *Psalms 139:23-24*, said, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.*”

When we enter into God’s presence, it is good to ask God to show us a sample of what the soil in our heart looks like. In our last devotional, we observed some of the hardened clumps of pridefulness such as self-righteousness, boasting in one’s self, and unforgiveness. The following questions are designed to be a litmus test to see if you can detect any of these or any other acidic clumps of pride in your heart.

1. Are you driven to be recognized and appreciated for your efforts, or are you broken in the healthy sense that you are aware of your own unworthiness and thrilled that God would use you at all?
2. Are you confident in how much you know, or are you broken in the healthy sense that you are humbled by how much you still have to learn in life?
3. Are you worried about what others think of you, or are you broken in the healthy sense that you are free in the knowledge of what God thinks of you?
4. Are you quick to blame others, or are you broken in the healthy sense that you can acknowledge when you are wrong in a situation?

5. Do you need others to say they are sorry to you, or are you broken in a healthy sense that you can be the first to humbly apologize, and seek restoration?
6. Are you keeping a record of anyone's wrongs and easily offended by them, or are you broken in a healthy sense that you are quick to forgive and truly forget their wrongs?
7. Are you defensive when corrected, or are you broken in a healthy sense that you receive corrections with a humble attitude and are thankful for them?
8. Do you want to hide your sin so nobody finds out, or are you broken in a healthy sense that you are willing to be exposed because you have nothing to lose?
9. Do you desire to be served, or are you broken in a healthy sense and desire instead to serve others?

Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"

God knows! Invite Him to humble your spirit, and receive His loving correction today.

Circle the numbers from the list that are areas you feel the most vulnerable. Write in the space below, a prayer asking God to help you to correct your thinking in these areas, and to help your actions flow from His love, grace, and humility.

DAY 7: STUDENTS OF GRACE

God's amazing grace is abundant, powerful, and so far reaching towards mankind. Personally, nobody can comprehend the magnitude of God's grace in their own life.

Each can, however, live day to day in the light of His glory and grace. The same grace that saved us from eternal death, has the power to uphold us.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. (*Titus 2:11-12*)

Living a self-controlled, upright, and godly life in this present age is especially difficult!

If you have been set free eternally by God's saving grace, let grace now continue to thrive in your life. Paul teaches us this truth about how grace continues to work as it reigns in us. *Romans 5:17* "Much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." Paul shares the reason for this in *Romans 5:20* "Where sin abounds, grace abounds much more."

If the question you have in your mind is like those who heard this radical teaching about grace, then you too are asking, "Shall we go on sinning so grace can abound more?" (*Romans 6:1*)

When your heart is for Christ, then you, like Christ, will also hate sin. You will desire to serve Christ as your master. But His grace is sufficient for you when you do sin just as God's word tells us in *2 Corinthians 12:9* but *"He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."*

Are you trampling God's grace by letting sin be your teacher and master?

Are you living in bondage to being perfect by letting the law be your teacher and master?

Let God's grace set you free from the bondage of either of these lifestyles, and become a student of grace. In this way you can rest in the knowledge that it is no longer about what you can do, but what Christ can do in you and through you.

Ask God to show you how to be a student of His amazing grace.

Read *Timothy 1:9* and scan the QR code to listen to, "*Call it Grace*" by Unspoken.



DAY 8: TWO HEARTS

Imprisoned behind bars, two men sat fearfully contemplating their fate. Both men were caught that very day in their transgression of the law. Both men would remain in jail until their bail was paid or their sentence was complete--whichever came first. One man feared what his wife would think if she found out what he did. He used his only phone call to plead his case with the woman listening on the other line. The second man had no one he could call, but the guilt and shame he felt was like an anvil on his back. He prayed a sincere prayer to God for forgiveness through Jesus Christ, and he pleaded for God's help to make a much needed change in his life.

The next morning, the cell was unlocked and the man who made a call was released. His personal possessions were returned--some clothes, a cross necklace, a watch, and a wallet full of cash. A woman greeted him with a kiss that made the officers in the room blush. The man thanked God for good fortune. His wife would never know what took place.

The second man in the cell remained and completed his sentence. He went into prison with nothing, and he came out with a heart full of gladness and hope restored. The man thanked God for forgiveness and grace granted to him through Christ. He knew he didn't deserve a second chance.

Only one man in the story above was truly set free. He displayed a heart of David as in *Psalms 51*. It was the man

who changed his mind (repented) about sin and believed in Christ. Not only were his present transgressions forgiven, but his past and future can no longer be held against him in God's eternal justice system. *"For, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* (Romans 8:1)

"Who the son sets free is free indeed!" (John 8:36)

The other man has not been set free from God's eternal justice system. Unless he turns his heart to Christ, he will reap an eternal consequence of death and hell. If there is any fate to fear, it is Hell.

Proverbs 28:13 "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."

"But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in transgressions." (Ephesians 2:4-5)

It is good to remember who we are in Christ and what we are saved from. If you are free today, thank God for how He saved you. Know that even as you battle sin, you are alive in Christ and free!

Read Psalm 51 today and remember David is a man after God's own heart.

How do you think the prisoner with the cross necklace viewed Jesus? What do you think the watch and the money symbolized in this story? Who do you think the woman in this story represents? (Proverbs 5:3-5)

DAY 9: BROKEN ARROWS

If you have ever played with a cheap bow and arrow set, chances are you have experienced some broken bows and some crooked arrows. It's pretty tough to hit a target with arrows that either break or just don't fly straight.

While the enemy of our soul is a fierce warrior with thousands of years of experience in battle, imagine him equipped with a cheap bow and arrow set. No matter how powerful his weapons truly are, they will not have their intended effect on you.

Isaiah 54:17 says, "But in that coming day, no weapon turned against you will succeed. You will silence every voice raised up to accuse you. These benefits are enjoyed by the servants of the LORD; their vindication will come from me. I, the Lord, have spoken!" God has cleared your name!

We may be hit with temptation, fear, anger, worry, anxiety, unforgiveness, sickness, disease, heartache, persecution, shameful accusations, and a host of other weapons fashioned against us. More times than not, the enemy's weapons are either bouncing off of our shield of faith or hitting the ground in front of us. Even when we are struck, according to *Genesis 50:20*, God can take what the enemy intended to harm us with, and turn it around to accomplish His greater purpose of saving many lives.

For this reason we do not need to fear the danger by night or an arrow during the day. You will not be afraid of

the diseases that come in the dark or sickness that strikes at noon. At your side one thousand people may die, or even ten thousand right beside you, but you will not be hurt. (*Psalm 91:5-7*)

No matter what happens to you, your soul will not perish. Your eternity will not go down. Your life will go on forever in glory with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Your justification in Christ has rendered the enemy's weapons useless! He might as well be fighting against you with broken arrows!

Read the following scripture verses. In the space below, write about what arrows listed above you have been hit by. Using the scriptures below, write some things that will help you surrender in each battle, and let the Lord fight for you?

Romans 12:19-21
1 Corinthians 10:13
Isaiah 41:13

Philippians 4:8
2 Corinthians 10:4

DAY 10: LIDS OFF!

Anyone who cooks knows that the herbs and spices in a spice rack are useless until they are open and poured out. The contents within the jars are dehydrated. A few comparisons can be made between our lives in Christ to these herbs and spices in their jars. For today, let's observe removing the lids to be like opening ourselves up to the Lord. Unless we want to remain withered and dry, we need the Holy Spirit to saturate us. Water and oil are used to rehydrate spices. They come alive in fragrance and flavor. We too come alive in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Water is symbolic of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. We were literally born first of water (the womb) then of Spirit. (*John 3:5*)

The Holy Spirit is also represented in the Bible as oil used for anointing. In *Zechariah 4:14*, the "Two anointed ones" translates as sons of fresh oil.

Let's remain open to God in our walk with Him. This means we are allowing ourselves to be transparent (in honest communication) and accessible to God's fullness. Listen to Paul's prayer for the Ephesians.

"I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have the power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide, and long, and high, and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

When we walk in the fullness of God's love, *2 Corinthians 2:15* says, "Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God..."

Read the following verses, and let the Holy Spirit fill your heart with God's love today.

Ephesians 5:18

Acts 13:52

1 Corinthians 6:19

Ephesians 4:30

DAY 11: POURED OUT

Think of entering your kitchen when fragrant foods are cooking. Whether it's a pumpkin pie or a lasagna, often what you are smelling includes the many herbs and spices that are used to enhance the flavor. Have you ever heard the phrase, "Cinnamon and spice and everything nice!"?

As the body of Christ, we are to come together like these fragrant and delicious herbs and spices, but all too often we sit like glass jars on a shelf. We don't let our fragrance or our flavor blend with others.

We may be shy or we may not feel like we fit in. We may not know what we have to offer that is of worth to anyone else. Maybe you are too busy, or you just don't feel like getting to know anyone else. As you open your lid to let God's love pour in by the power of the Holy Spirit, you will grow in the freedom to be yourself around others. We need God and each other. Imagine a church full of people who are like unopened spice jars—closed off to God and others. What good could come of a church like this? How would that church smell to God and others? How would those people get along? They might look shiny and pretty on the outside, but they would be dried up and useless if they are not open and poured out, just like Jesus for us!

Whatever your excuse may be for not getting involved with other Christians in your life, know that you are depriving yourself and others of your wonderful fragrance and your flavor. You are deprived of theirs too!

Basil alone is great, but it must have its partners, oregano and thyme, to create the most delectable Italian cuisine. In the same way, *“Behold, how good and pleasant it is for the brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like precious oil poured...!”* (Psalm 133:1-2) Oil represents God’s anointing.

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, *“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”*

Read Ephesians 4:9-12.

Using our devotional and all of the scriptures above, list the reasons why it is important to be involved in the body of Christ.

DAY 12: UNDENIABLE

Have you ever been denied access to an exciting place that was posted with signs that said, "No Trespassing!"? The Holy of Holies was once a place that could only be accessed by high priests who were prepared with sacred garments, sacrificial rituals, and sanctification to be without sin before the Lord. It was a treacherous place that would bring instant death for anyone else and even the priests if they didn't carry out their duties reverently before God. God's holiness is so pure that sin and the sinner are immediately extinguished in His presence. Our God is a consuming fire. (*Hebrews 12:29*) Jesus made a way for all to enter into God's presence by his atonement for our sin. According to *Hebrews 2:17*, 'He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in all things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.' It was as though a no trespassing sign came down when the temple veil was torn upon Jesus' death. 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*)

When we come before God, He is no less holy, and we are no less unholy on our own. It is right that we should tremble a bit to think of being in the presence of His majesty!

But by His doing, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

There are many ways to enter into the presence of God. On some days you may enter His gates with thanksgiving in your heart and full of praise as in *Psalm 100:4*. On other days you may feel like Isaiah when he said “*Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips...*” (*Isaiah 6:5*)

In either case, humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you. (*James 4:10*)

Jesus is undeniably our High Priest, and He will not deny His children access to the throne of grace.

Read Isaiah 6:6-8 and scan the QR code to listen to the song, "Take Me In", by Petra.



DAY 13: BUILDING THE TEMPLE

The Israelites may not have realized what the wealth of treasures they were amassing on their journey to the holy land would be used for, but it is likely they could imagine all kinds of ways to use them for their own personal gain. When they came together to build the tabernacle, however, the Israelites united and gave generously of what they had not only from their riches, but of their time and energy. They knew that all they had was from God first and for God ultimately, and they worshiped Him in their work and giving. They gave so much that Moses had to tell them to stop! (*Exodus 36:6-7*)

David prayed with a similar heart. *“Everything comes from You, and we have given you only what comes from Your hand, and we give You only what You first gave us!”* (*1 Chronicles 29:14*)

This is what it looks like to surrender all to the Lord. We can trust God that there is a greater purpose that He has for our time, our abilities, and our possessions. You might not be permitted to see on this side of eternity what your work has amounted to for God’s kingdom, but when you *“...do all heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men...”* (*Colossians 3:23*) you can be sure that your true treasure is what you store up in Heaven. (see *Matthew 6:19-34*)

Your work environment and school environment may be difficult to endure. At home, it may seem like your parents, guardians, or siblings don’t understand you. At church you

may not know how to fit in. Whether you are struggling in any of these areas to make it through each day or not, look to the Lord, and do all your hands have been given to do for Him. Let your actions flow from your heart of worship to God. He loves you, and He sees you. He knows it can be difficult, and He sympathizes with your hardships. In fact, He is acquainted with all of your struggles. (*Hebrews 4:15*) He came to earth so He could be.

Read *Hebrews 4:15*.

For a deeper study, read *Mark 3:20-35*.

Have you ever felt rejected? Did anyone ever look at you like you were crazy? In the space below, write about your experiences, and pray for God to heal your heart. Pray for His wisdom to guide your future actions.

DAY 14: PERFECT TIMING

Stop and consider just a few of the miraculous ways in which we can see that God's timing is perfect. The major events of Christ's life were perfectly timed according to prophecies, but also in the fulfillment of the Feasts of the Tabernacle. These ceremonial feasts were appointed by Yahweh through Moses and carried out for over a thousands of years for the express purpose of foreshadowing the plan for our Salvation in Christ. (*Leviticus 23*) One example is the Passover Feast. *1 Corinthians 5:7* says, "Christ, our Passover has been sacrificed." Jesus is the sacrificial lamb of the passover meal. His death happened during the time of the Passover Feast.

What does that say about the importance of Christ and His timing in our lives today? The people who carried out these ceremonies throughout the years couldn't have known how important their actions were to usher in the Messiah. They were (and are still) just living out their daily lives and ceremonial duties.

Another example of God's perfect timing is the gestation period of a baby in the womb. It also miraculously mirrors the timing of the 7 Feasts of the Tabernacle, and the ceremonies are symbolic of the different developmental stages of a fetus. A Jewish man named Zola Levitt discovered this, and you can read more about what he discovered in this fascinating article by scanning the QR code.



What does that say about your own arrival into this world? *Jeremiah 1:5* says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you..." God knew each of us too.

The timing of the events in our lives are not random. According to *Ephesians 2:10*, we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Your life is not an accident. It is not meaningless. It is purposeful for such a time as this for God and those He has given in your life to live and grow with.

Don't worry or strive to be anyone else or to do anything but be yourself in the Love of the Lord. He created you to be right where you are to do just what you were fashioned for.

The Bible says that the steps of a righteous man are ordered of the Lord. (*Psalms 37:23*) Seek God, and He will guide you on your path each day. Just like the Israelites, you may not be aware of the impact your life is making. Isn't it better that way? Then God gets all of the glory. God's timing in your life is perfect just as it is perfect in His. Your future is secure in Christ.

Read *Leviticus 23*. List some of the ways you see Christ's plan for our salvation foreshadowed through the Feasts of the Tabernacle. What feast is yet to be fulfilled? Do you think the Israelites thought some of the things they were asked to do seemed odd? While you are about the Father's business here, look up, for your redemption is near, and listen for His trumpet to call you home.

DAY 15: TRUE BREAD

Bread can be found all over the world in every culture as one of the most basic yet satisfying daily provisions for all of mankind. Could this be an intentional symbol to the world in every generation from God to point us to Jesus for our daily provision in Him? The Bible says the disciples began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of bread.

(Luke 24:35)

Jesus came for all of mankind. *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* *(John 6:51)*

Taking communion in remembrance of our Saviour's body which was broken for us is one way in which we honor the Lord's sacrifice. But God sustains us daily by His Word. Remember, He is the Word that became flesh. *(John 1:14)*

"Man cannot live by bread alone. Rather, he lives on every word that comes from the mouth of the Eternal One." *(Matthew 4:4)*

The Israelites daily needs were supplied in the wilderness, and the manna is a type of Christ in the Old Testament to show us that we too can depend on the Lord, who is our True Bread, and on our daily provisions from our Lord. His word is to sustain us spiritually each day, and His promise is that we do not need to worry about what we will eat or drink or wear. *(Matthew 6:25)*

Just like the Israelites, you may think you need more, and you may wish you had other things, but God supplies just what you need when you need it.

Paul shows us that we can be content in all circumstances whether we are well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. (*Philippians 4:19*)

Would it surprise you to know that Jesus did not come to make us happy, but to make sinners holy? He is always about the work of sanctifying our hearts. We may not always be happy about our situations, but we will find peace that passes understanding and joy in our journey with the Lord. Peace and joy are the fruit of the Holy Spirit. What treasures He bestows on us in our hardships!

Do you have bread each day? Before you eat it, take in the word of God too. Write *Philippians 4:19* below. Do a scripture search for the Lord's prayer. Read it, and use it to help you pray today.

DAY 16: WISDOM

Few people actually take time to read the Bible. Even fewer people study the Bible. While some say it's too hard to understand, others say it's boring, and they can't relate. The reality is that most of the events and messages in the Bible are written in a simple and clear enough way for just about anyone to understand. The Bible is relatable in that, *"All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Are you a servant of God?

Jesus moved the mountain of Satan's kingdom out of your way. You are still battling the foothills of sin and the crooked paths of unrighteousness. God's word is alive through the Holy Spirit and is designed to equip you for the battles you face each day. That is why it's important for you to hide God's word in your heart that you might not sin against Him. (Psalm 119:11)

One of the main struggles we have as Christians is laziness. We desire what our flesh wants. We want more time to play and more time to sleep. We entertain distractions and struggle to stay focused. When we go against what our flesh wants, it is literally like climbing a foothill. It is laborious and unpleasant.

Proverbs chapter 8 is the voice of Wisdom (said to be Christ) calling out to us. In *verses 10-11*, Wisdom says,

“Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than Gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.”

Nothing we desire is of more value than the teachings of Christ. Gaining wisdom and understanding from the Word of God is a discipline well worth the effort. Let God’s grace guide you through the challenge, and don’t get hung up making this a work that either earns or costs you His favor. God sees the intent of your heart. If you are seeking to know Him more and understand Him better, He won’t deny you the pleasure or reward of wisdom!

Read *Proverbs 8*. Wisdom in the Latin language is a feminine word. Solomon wrote this passage in poetic style and as a riddle for us.

Read *1 Corinthians 1:24*. For a deeper study, read *1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16*. Then read *Proverbs 9*.

**Who has gone to prepare a place for you?
What great feast is being prepared for you?
(*Revelation 19:7-9*)**

DAY 17: SOJOURNERS

It may be hard to understand how the Psalmist could say, *"My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."* (Psalm 84:2) If we continue to read further in Psalm 84, however, we get a glimpse of how we too can partake in experiencing a true relationship with the Living God! Verse 5 says, *"Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage."*

A pilgrimage is a long journey. When we dare to count the cost and are willing to follow Jesus for the long haul, unconditionally, our love is sustained in Christ who is able to keep us from falling. (Jude 1:24) He helps us to grow from strength to strength. (Psalm 84:7)

Some seek after signs and wonders. They follow Jesus for what He can do for them. Their relationship is conditional. It is not founded "in Christ". The love for God, for them, will grow cold, and their hope in Christ will fade with hardships.

As sojourners we can agree together with the Psalmist that it's better to spend one day in the Lord's courts than a thousand elsewhere; we too can count it a privilege to be a doorkeeper in the house of our God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked. (Psalm 84:10)

As ones who are set on pilgrimage, we will share in Christ's suffering, and we will become acquainted with His sorrows.

God's people passed through the valley of Baka which was a place near Jerusalem. The name means place of weeping. But the Psalmist says they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. The Israelites were blessed!

Weeping comes to those in Christ for various reasons, but the most painful is surprisingly over sin. Even greater than physical pain that can happen to one in Christ, is the pain of sinning against the Lord or the pain of seeing our loved ones living in sin. There is nothing more painful to our Lord either! That is why He was willing to go through what He did for us to be rescued!

If you have not counted the cost of following Christ, would you join the great pilgrimage today?

There is no greater joy for those in Christ than to see their loved ones and fellow brothers and sisters following the truth!

Read 3 John 1-4. What would be the hardest thing for you to lose? What is the most rewarding thing you could gain? Write your thoughts below.
Scan the QR code to listen to the song, "Better is One Day", by Kutlass.



DAY 18: KEEP THE FAITH

Why do you believe what you believe about Jesus? How has your faith grown since you first believed? What has been the most recent truth you've learned that has had an impact on growing your faith today?

We have so much information available to us to help our unbelief if we should ever find that we are struggling in our faith. The important thing is that we remain open to knowledge.

About a thousand years before Christ, and long before the Israelites would have ever seen a crucifixion, *Psalm 22* was written. We can see the perfect depiction of Christ suffering, and the psalmist writes from the voice of our Lord. *"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is turned to wax; it has melted within me (like a candle, it has been burned down until nothing is left)." (Psalm 22:14)*

"Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."
(*Psalm 22:16-17*)

Those who read these words at the time they were written, might have wondered who the psalmist was talking about and why this person's hands and feet were pierced. But when the Israelites came under Roman authority and witnessed people being nailed to posts or crosses by their

hands and feet, *Psalm 22* should have come to their mind. They, of all people, were the ones who would have also known over three hundred other prophetic words pertaining to Christ's life, death, and mission on earth. They didn't have an excuse for not recognizing Jesus as their Savior. But the very ones Jesus came to save despised and rejected Him.

*John 1:11 "He came to His own, and His own did not receive him. This was also the pattern of the Israelites."
Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children."*

Not only had the Israelites been buying and selling in the temple, they had made it a den of robbers. (*Mark 11:13*) Their lives were too busy with religious rituals, and false Gods, and so full of the world that they had no room in their hearts for their long awaited Savior. When Jesus came, they were only interested in signs and wonders. The Bible holds over a thousand prophecies. At least five hundred have already come to pass.

Does it excite you to know that you are living in the last days foretold in the Bible? We too are waiting for Christ to come! Prophetic words are being fulfilled in this day and age with 100% accuracy right before our eyes! Let's not reject the knowledge we have in the written word of God. Make room for the Lord in your heart today. We don't want to miss his second coming, nor do we want to miss what He is up to in our lives today.

What is cluttering the place where you gather for prayer, worship, and the word of God?

DAY 19: WE BELONG!

One of the deepest needs we have is to belong.
Jesus was pierced for our transgressions. (*Isaiah 53:5*)

In Christ, you are marked for Him too. Like a bond-servant whose ear was pierced for his master, you belong to Him! And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit (your seal) whom he promised long ago. (*Ephesians 1:13*)

According to *Jeremiah 31:3*, the Lord's love is an everlasting love! The Holy Spirit is a witness within us of a love so deep and everlasting, it will never lose its power. Dear child, have you believed in your Savior's work on the cross to forgive you? Have you made a decision in your heart to turn from sin and pursue Him? Your confidence in salvation can rest in the Lord's everlasting Love for you that does not fade and in His covenant that He will not break. (*Psalms 89:34*)

While we must hold fast to the confession of our faith, we must not view our salvation as resting on the strength we have to cling. Know that the Father has you in His grasp. He's got you!

"There are two kinds of freedoms—the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; and the true, where a man is free to do what he ought." Charles Kingsley

When you let go and rest in the Father's grasp and in His Love, His loving kindness leads you to shed your old ways. (Romans 2:4) You will desire to do what you should.

Don't worry if you don't know how to love God yet. Have you ever seen a parent try to hold a fussy, wiggly baby? The parent wants what is best for the child. While the baby is uncomfortable, he doesn't understand his parents' love or how they will provide his needs. He doesn't know how to love them yet.

The parent speaks softly, "Shh, shh, shhh. It's ok." You're no baby, but you can know that the Father would have you put your head on His shoulder and rest. It's going to be ok.

2 Corinthians 1:22 says, "He has set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." We belong to Him!

Read 1 Peter 1:4-5. In what ways might you be clinging to your salvation by works instead of holding tight to your faith in what Christ has done and is doing to keep you securely saved? Write your answers below.

DAY 20: DANGEROUS PRAYERS

Do you desire to walk in the fruit of the Spirit? Have you been seeking God to show you how to have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control? (*Galatians 5:22-23*)

How do you think the answer to any one of your prayers for these attributes might look?

The good thing is that you can count on God's guidance. Your prayers are according to His will. We may, however, not recognize how God is answering them. In fact, your prayers for these attributes can be dangerous in that the answers can appear to be exactly the opposite of what you want.

Need love? God may allow an encounter with an enemy to love.

Need joy? God may allow a sorrowful situation which magnifies His joy within you.

Need patience? What do you think he may allow to help you develop patience?

Need kindness? Isn't true kindness best displayed when it is in return for unkindness towards you?

Need peace? God showed the disciples His peace in the midst of a storm.

Need self control? Expect more situations that cause you to want to blow your top!

Don't think God is up in Heaven snickering at you or delighting in your struggles. Yes, He is on the throne, and

yes, He is in control. (*Hebrews 8:1*) That is exactly where we want and need Him to be! But, He is also there beside you. The Holy Spirit is within you to guide you, and He is literally experiencing your trials with you!

The Holy Spirit is the first one to exemplify *Romans 12:15*, Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Hopefully you and the Holy Spirit can get a good laugh over some of the reactions you may have had in a couple of the situations you have faced. Laughter is a good medicine. (*Proverbs 17:22*) One of the best ways to disarm pridefulness is laughter in a time of embarrassment. God also gave us our brothers and sisters in Christ to carry each other's burdens. (*Galatians 6:2*) Talk to your trustworthy friends, leaders, and parents. Be open with them about your struggles.

Jesus is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (*Proverbs 18:24*) Fellowship in His company will naturally help you mature in all of the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

How have you seen God answering your prayers to walk in the fruit of the Spirit? What attributes do you struggle with the most? Can you laugh today at how foolish you have been in some past incidents? How might God help you with gentleness, faithfulness, and goodness? Write your answers below.

DAY 21: THE GREAT I AM

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses (those who have walked in faith even before Christ came) let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and the perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (*Hebrews 12:1-2*)
Who is Jesus that we should keep our eyes fixed on Him? Underline each work He has done for us in the verses above.

Who but Jesus could set your feet on the rock of your salvation? Who but Jesus could perfect your faith? Who but Jesus could count it all joy to have suffered for the reward of rescuing you, His child from certain death, and restoring you to a relationship with Him. Who but Jesus could be seated at the right hand of the throne of God? All glory and honor belongs to Jesus!

Who do you say that He is?

Here is who Jesus says He is:

Jesus answers Philip in *John 14:9*, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

John 10:30, "I and the Father are one."

Just like God in the Old Testament, Jesus made "I am" statements that clearly identify him to be our God.

"Before Abraham was born, I AM!" (John 8:58)

"I am The Bread of Life." (John 6:35)

"I am The Light of the World." (John 8:12)

"I am The Door." (John 10:7)

"I am The Good Shepherd." (John 10:11,14)

"I am The Resurrection and The Life." (John 11:25)

Will you bow before Jesus today, and offer Him your sacrifice of praise and obedience? Give all you are and all you have to Him for His good purpose.

Look up the following scriptures:

John 14:6

John 15:1

John 18:4-5

List below who you can clearly see Jesus is!

Scan the QR code to listen to the song,

"The Great I Am".

