



Day 22-40

Marshall Road Baptist Church

These devotions are courtesy of **revive our hearts ministry**

Day 22 — REVIVAL STARTS HERE

As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. —Nehemiah 1:4

YOUR CHALLENGE EARNESTLY PRAY FOR REVIVAL

DEVOTIONAL

What do you do when a nation is crumbling around you? Some ignore the situation, selfishly consumed with their own small world. Others seek a political solution. Many talk about the problem but do absolutely nothing to stem the tide of moral and spiritual decay.

But one man did the one thing that brought revival to his nation.

Nehemiah was a servant in captivity. When he asked his brothers what was happening in his native land of Israel, they told him that the nation was in ruins.

What was Nehemiah's response (and what should be ours)?

He prayed.

As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven (Neh. 1:4).

This was not a momentary prayer but rather "day and night" intercession that lasted over the course of four months. The content of his prayer could frame our revival intercession.

Nehemiah began where we must start in our prayers. He looked up at our promise-keeping God.

And I said, "O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants" (Neh. 1:5–6).

As you pray for revival, begin here. Rehearse before God all He has done in the past in turning people and nations back to Him. Remind yourself in prayer of the sovereign power of the ultimate King who holds the heart of every king in His hand (Prov. 21:1).

— DR. BILL ELLIFF

LOOK IN: SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

Nehemiah poured out his soul in confession, honestly admitting that what was happening was not God's fault, but theirs.

"I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses" (Neh. 1:6–7).

There has never been a revival in history that does not begin here. We can spend our time blaming government, entertainment, or cultural forces and we will gain little ground before God. But God promises to hear our prayer when we begin with repentant confession (2 Chron. 7:14).

As you begin to pray for revival, give God time to search your heart. Ask Him what is in you that is aborting His reviving presence. Ask Him to show you the sins of the church and our nation and confess those corporate sins before the Lord.

LOOK OUT: SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Most of us are self-focused in our intercession, but Nehemiah had a larger kingdom vision.

"Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.' They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand" (Neh. 1:8–10).

Nehemiah prayed a Word-based, promise-based prayer, reminding God of what He had already said He would do. We are never on better praying ground than when we pray God's Word back to Him.

But Then . . .

Nehemiah does more, offering himself as an instrument of revival as he went before the King (v. 11). If we are serious about revival, we must do the same.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

- Do you spend time talking or complaining about our nation's condition or praying night and day?
- Are you daily confessing your sins and the sins of our nation, taking responsibility before God for what has happened?
- Are you searching the Scriptures and praying God's promises for revival back to Him?

Day 23 — GRACE FOR THE HUMBLE

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” —Luke 14:11

YOUR CHALLENGE

EMBRACE HUMILITY IN AN ALL-ABOUT-ME WORLD

DEVOTIONAL

We’re born navel gazers, prone to elevate ourselves to the position of most important—every single one of us. Our sin nature comes with a gravitational pull toward pride, the polar opposite of humility. An all-about-me world seems to celebrate the path of pride at every turn. That’s a problem, a big one because . . .

For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly,
but the haughty he knows from afar (Ps. 138:6).

And . . .

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6)

Oh, and . . .

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted”
(Matt. 23:12).

True revival cannot happen without humility, for it is our humble acceptance that we aren’t the most important (and that we aren’t calling the shots) that alerts us to our deep need for Spirit-filled revival.

Several years ago, I parked in Revelation 4 and found myself enrolled in humility boot camp. This chapter describes Jesus in His throne room in heaven, with heart-stopping descriptions like:

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind; the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty
who was and is and is to come!” (vv. 6–8).

As I read and re-read these words over a period of weeks, these questions bubbled up in my heart:

Where is *your* throne?
Who is worshiping *you*?

I’m not even in the throne room. Not a single eye of those four impressive creatures is turned in my direction. **All eyes are on Jesus, the only One truly worthy of worship.**

Humility comes when we see our rightful place before a righteous God. Mercifully, revival is the sweet result. Today, set aside some time to pray, asking the Lord to humble you and to humble His Church so that we might experience revival.

— ERINDAVIS

LOOK UP: SEEKING HIM IN PRAISE

Spend time considering Christ in His throne room as described in Revelation 4. How does seeing Jesus worshiped in this way dethrone your pride?

LOOK IN: SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

How has pride numbed you to your need for God? Ask Him to expose pride in your life and teach you to respond to Him and others in greater humility.

LOOK OUT: SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Boldly ask the Lord to expose areas where pride has a foothold in the Church.

Day 24 — SEEKING HIM FOR HONESTY

*I confess my iniquity;
I am sorry for my sin. . . .
Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation!*
—Psalm 38:18, 22

YOUR CHALLENGE

SEEK THE LORD TO HELP YOU BE TRULY HONEST WITH HIM AND OTHERS.

DEVOTIONAL

“You don’t know what grace is on the other side of confession,” my friend said.

I heard her, and part of me wanted to believe her. But deep down, I wondered: *is God really going to come through if I confess?* I had hidden that sin for years. I didn’t know what it would cost me to speak the truth. I was ashamed. I was terrified.

But God.

He came through as He always does. He gave me the grace to confess, and there was grace—even in the difficulties—on the other side.

Honesty in confession is always accompanied by grace because it puts us in the place of admitting our need for God. He is faithful to make Himself known to us in those moments. You can trust Him.

— HAYLEY MULLINS

LOOK UP:

SEEKING HIM IN PRAISE

Honesty can be hard, but take heart! The Lord is your salvation. He calls you to speak the truth about yourself, but He hasn’t left you to do it in your own strength. The Spirit of Jesus, full of grace and truth, lives within you. He is the One who will open your mouth to say what is real, and **He is the One who will give you grace for whatever is on the other side of your confession.**

LOOK IN: SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

When you saw the word “honesty” at the top of this email, did your heart sink? Did the Holy Spirit convict you of an area where you have not been honest with Him or others? If so, the Psalmist’s prayer can be your prayer today: “I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin.” Honesty is a weighty call; ask Him to help you. Because He will. He is near. He is listening.

LOOK OUT: SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Yes, honesty is difficult. But it is also necessary for seeking the Lord. Could you imagine what your church would look like if everyone was committed to honesty? If everyone took the command to confess their sins and pray for one another (James 5:16) seriously? As you pray for honesty in yourself, ask God to help others in your local church to also confess sin. Pray that the Holy Spirit would convict where needed. Ask Him to help His people respond to His Word with boldly humble, grace-dependent, and true words about their sin.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

- If the Holy Spirit is convicting you, confess your sins to God right now. He is faithful and just to forgive (1 John 1:9).
- Think of someone that you can regularly be honest with about your sin and ask to pray for you, because that is the path to healing (James 5:16). Then, if possible, get in touch with them today.
- Write out a prayer, asking God to shape you into a person others can be honest with—because you’re called to imitate God (Eph. 5:1)—and post it somewhere to remind you to help others speak the truth.

Day 25 — APOLOGIES DON'T EQUAL REPENTANCE

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me. —Psalm 51:10*

YOUR CHALLENGE

RESPOND TO GOD'S CONVICTION WITH GENUINE REPENTANCE.

DEVOTIONAL

I was in seminary when my father retired from the federal government. He counselled three U.S. presidents, leaving D.C. as the administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. Two years later, he and my mother moved to be near family around New York, and he became the executive director of the Newark Transportation Council, Newark, New Jersey. Though he wanted to help Newark because of its desperate need, he quickly tired of politicians. But rather than leave Newark, he took over a rescue mission in center city. It was the hardest job he ever held.

Over lunch one day, Dad contrasted the worlds he had worked in: the pinstriped world of self-absorbed politicians, bureaucrats, and lobbyists who never apologized for anything unless compelled by political expediency or legal jeopardy versus the penniless substance-abusers on the city streets who often sobbed about everything—their failures and their dependencies. The federal buildings of D.C. and the streets of Newark were worlds apart but there was a common thread that laid bare the human heart: *apologies rarely produce change.*

Today, I'm older than my father was when he died, and I can attest to what the Bible makes clear: apologies do not define repentance, however heart-wrenching they might be. In the New Testament, the Greek word for "repentance" is *metanoia*, which is related to our English word "metamorphosis." In other words, true repentance changes the thinking and behavior of people, now and forever: "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death," wrote Paul (2 Cor. 7:10).

God convicts all who encounter Him. We pray for this. But *authentic* repentance transforms us "into [Christ's] likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18 NIV). By this we test ourselves. For this, too, we pray, refusing to settle for less.

— DR. BOB BAKKE

LOOK UP: SEEKING HIM IN PRAISE

In *Seeking Him*, Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth and Tim Grissom wrote:

The very fact that God reveals sin in our lives and urges us to repent is evidence of His great love, mercy, and kindness. . . .

God never asks anything of us that He does not provide the grace to do.¹

God gives us a means to escape from sin's lure and grip, through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us.²

Before you pray for true repentance in your life and the lives of others, take time to thank Him for these truths.

LOOK IN: SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

Repentance is not a one-time act. It is a lifestyle. Ask the Lord to give you that “godly grief [that] produces a repentance” and to transform you into Christ’s likeness more and more each day. Then keep seeking Him for a life that is marked by true repentance and transformation.

LOOK OUT: SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Pray that the leaders of your nation and your city would repent and turn to the Lord. Implore Him to mold their hearts, so that their apologies would give way to God-honoring change. Ask Him to do the same in your church and in the lives of your neighbors—so that our world would be transformed by the repentance of God’s people.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

- Are you willing to commit to seeking authentic repentance? How would it change your thinking and behavior?

Day 26 — GRACE UPON GRACE

For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. —John 1:16

YOUR CHALLENGE

ASK THE LORD TO GIVE YOU A DEEPER AWARENESS OF HIS GRACE
AS YOU SEEK HIM FOR REVIVAL.

DEVOTIONAL

I caught a glimpse of the sparkling blue through the trees. We were less than a minute away from our beach destination, and I could barely keep from bouncing out of my seat with excitement. Once the car stopped, I bounded out, racing until my feet hit the smooth sand and I couldn't hear anything over the roaring waves.

Whether I find myself at the ocean two, twenty, or 200 times, I soak in the vastness like I'm seeing it for the first time. I just can't wrap my mind around the beauty and brilliance.

The same is true of grace—it is brilliant, beautiful, and deep. But am I captivated by it in the same way?

We're all prone to become afflicted with grace amnesia. "Grace" tends to be an overused word, sometimes flippantly. We talk about the goodness of God's grace while yawning on the inside. Have we forgotten that grace is a miracle?

For by grace you have been saved through faith (Eph. 2:8).

Revival begins when we remember our need for grace. We have eternal life because of this grace, freed from the bondage of our sins. It sanctifies us and invades every corner of our lives in the best way.

When we let this grace change us, our yawning hearts are revived with new life.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us (Eph. 1:7–8).

This abundant grace is heaped upon us, "for from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (John 1:16).

Every beaming sunrise.
Every breath you take.
Every restored relationship.
Every sin forgiven.
Wave after wave. It's all grace upon grace.

Are you captivated by God's grace?

— MICAYLA GREATHOUSE

LOOK UP: SEEKING HIM IN PRAISE

Have you been experiencing grace amnesia? Go for a walk around your neighborhood or spend a morning at the coast in "praise of his glorious grace" (Eph. 1:6).

LOOK IN: SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

When grace collides with the darkness of our hearts, we are made new. Are there specific areas of your life in which you need to ask God for grace?

LOOK OUT: SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

A rock thrown in the ocean causes ripples. Let the grace you experience cause ripples in your home and community. Pray for the Lord to help you give others the same grace He has given you.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

- Where do you see evidence of "grace upon grace" in your life?
- What keeps you numb to grace? Self-sufficiency? Forgetfulness? Pride? Desiring control? Ask God to bring to light the areas that hinder you from seeing or experiencing His grace.
- As you seek the Lord, pray for an awareness of His grace in your own life and for Him to spring up revival in the lives of those around you.

Day 27 — IS YOUR HEART HOLY OR HYPOCRITICAL?

Without holiness no one will see the Lord. —Hebrews 12:14 NIV

YOUR CHALLENGE

TAKE AN HONEST ASSESSMENT OF YOUR HEART. IS IT HYPOCRITICAL OR HOLY?

DEVOTIONAL

The Bible calls God holy—more than any other word associated with Him. It's the holiness of God (His "otherness") that separates Him from sinners. Unholy and holy cannot mix. Jesus who saved us to make us holy and blameless before God (Eph. 1:4).

Scripture records the life-altering encounters of sinful men who were overwhelmingly undone at a peep of God's holiness.

- Job was rendered speechless (Job 40:4).
- Isaiah was woefully ruined (Isa. 6:5).
- Habakkuk was rocked to the core (Hab. 3:16).
- John fell down stiff as a board (Rev.1:17).

Are you undone by your sin under the brilliant light of a holy God or are you cozy and comfy with it? Jesus called the religious leaders hypocrites because they loved the *appearance* of being holy more than they loved having a holy heart like His.

Is there hope of revival for a flatlined heart that's casual toward sin? The amazing news is "Yes!" Taking a fresh glimpse of God's holiness can produce the electric jolt for our hearts to:

- Hate the sin we once loved.
- Love righteousness that we once hated.
- Hate hypocrisy and love true godliness.

The more we grow in holiness, the more the world sees Christ in us. Let's live in such a way that the world not only sees Christ but cannot help but worship Him, too. Pray with me . . .

— LESLIE BENNETT

LOOK UP: SEEKING HIM IN PRAISE

Join your voice with the heavenly chorus, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (Rev. 4:8). All creation trembles before Him. Bow down for He alone is holy. Our God is a consuming fire that is worthy of reverence and awe.

LOOK IN: SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

O God, search down into the depths of my being and purge me of sin. I’m tired of living in self-righteous rags and pretending to be something I’m not. Cleanse my heart and give me a right attitude. Grow me in godliness, spiritual zeal and white-hot love for You.

LOOK OUT: SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Take a prayer walk. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world to put off the former way of life, which is corrupted through deceitful desires, and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:22–24). Ask God for a revival of true holiness in His Church.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

- Have you grown comfortable with sin? Take an honest assessment of your heart using the **Put Off . . . Put On Revival Worksheet**. Spend time confessing your sins and receiving His grace to actively pursue holiness.
- Meditate on the God-encounters found in Isaiah 6 or Revelation 1.
- Make a list of the holy habits you want to cultivate.

Day 28 — OBEDIENCE: THE LITMUS TEST OF LOVE

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” —John 14:15

YOUR CHALLENGE

DETERMINE TO OBEY GOD IN EVERY AREA OF YOUR LIFE.

DEVOTIONAL

My youngest son, Ezra, is at the chubby toddler phase. Before you respond with an “Aw, how sweet,” you should also know he’s already a first-class rebel.

Plug-ins are our current battle ground. He’ll reach his tiny fingers toward a cord plugged into the wall, only to hear a stern, “No!” from me or his daddy. Next thing we know, he’s smiling a chubby-faced grin at us while simultaneously reaching for the cord again.

We move him to a different part of the room.
We tap his little hand as a warning.
Our “no’s” get louder, more firm.

And over and over again, he looks at us, grins, and reaches for the cord.

No one has to teach us to disobey. It’s part of our sin nature, inherited from our fallen parents. And yet we cannot fully experience and enjoy God’s love and disobey Him. **Revival and obedience are forever linked.**

Each act of disobedience is a step away from God. Likewise, each act of obedience is a step toward Him . . .

If we were completely honest, many of us would admit that we already know one or more specific steps of obedience we need to take in order to return to the Lord. Perhaps there is something God has told us to do that we’ve not yet done; something we continue to do that we know is not pleasing to Him; or some limit we have placed on what we are willing to do for Him.¹

As you’ve sought the Lord in these days, He likely has exposed a “cord” or two, patterns of thinking or behavior where you’ve resisted God’s instruction and chosen rebellion. Spend time in prayer today telling Him that you know His law is given for your good and you long to obey Him more and more.

— ERINDAVIS

LOOK UP:
SEEKING HIM IN PRAISE

Thank the Lord for being a kind and wise Father. Acknowledge that you want to obey Him more.

LOOK IN:
SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

Confess any areas where you are struggling to obey the Lord in this season.

LOOK OUT:
SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Pray that the Lord would make the Church an obedient church, willing to follow the commands of Scripture regardless of the opinions and shifts of culture.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

- Listen to this episode of the *Revive Our Hearts* podcast: “**Obedience Will Lead to Joy.**”
- Read Psalm 19. According to this passage, what are some of the rewards of knowing and obeying God’s Word?

¹ Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth and Tim Grissom, *Seeking Him: Experiencing the Joy of Personal Revival* (Chicago: Moody, 2004), 70.

Day 29 — SEARCH ME, O GOD!

*Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!*
—Psalm 139:23–24

YOUR CHALLENGE

LET GOD SEARCH YOU AND THEN
FOLLOW HIS LEADING TO LIVE
WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.

DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever looked across the table into the eyes of someone after a confession and seeing that they've seen the worst parts of you and still love you? Or have you enjoyed the embrace of a loved one when you've reconciled after a long estrangement? Or the joy of being fully known in all ways by your spouse when a wall is finally broken down?

What brings the sweetness in those moments? It's the freedom that comes when we are no longer hiding—when we are known and loved and unhindered by shame or fear. It's the joy of having a clear conscience.

— HAYLEY MULLINS

LOOK UP: SEEKING HIM IN PRAISE

Have you ever stopped to ponder the fact that God is the person that knows you best? Not only does the Lord know your favorite color and what you like in your coffee, He knows your history, your thoughts, and your heart. He alone knows you perfectly—without even asking what you're thinking. He also already knows the things that lay heavy on your conscience. But in His love, He also wants to lead you. **He's near, even in the moments you experience deep conviction. Worship Him today for being both beyond your comprehension and intimately near to you.**

LOOK IN: SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

The singer of Psalm 139 gives us a prayer (today's verse) that could be truly comforting—or terrifying. Using this verse as a guide, ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and reveal any areas in your life that are grieving Him. And in whatever He reveals, ask Him to lead you in obedience.

If He's asking you to make restitution, do it. If He's leading you to confess sin to a friend, a spouse, an employer, or others, lean on His grace and obey. If the Word of God and the Spirit are convicting you, follow in the way they direct. It may be hard to live in a way that keeps your conscience clear, but you can trust this: **humbly following God's direction is the way of true joy.**

LOOK OUT: SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Is the Lord leading you to do something difficult in a relationship? If so, praying for the other person or persons involved is a great first step. Ask the Lord to prepare the way as you seek to clear your conscience. Ask Him to use the hard steps you're taking for His glory. Either way, take some time to also pray for others reading this devotional today and for your church. Ask God to work in the hearts of His people so they will live in a way that leaves them with consciences free from guilt of unconfessed sin or unpaid debts to others—and confident in Christ's redemption.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

- Prayerfully ask yourself these questions: Is there anything that God has commanded me to do that I have not been obeying? Is there any sin against the Lord or others that I have been covering up? Is there any way that I have wronged someone and not sought to make it right?
- If the answer to any of the questions above is "yes," stop now and confess that sin to the Lord. Then as James 5:16 encourages us, confess that sin to at least one other believer so that they can pray for you.
- Finally, are there any actions that the Lord is asking you to take because of a past or current sin? Is there anyone that you need to make restitution to or ask forgiveness from? Ask Him for grace, and do it—today if possible.

Day 30 — FORGIVENESS: WHEN WE ARE MOST LIKE CHRIST

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” —John 14:15

YOUR CHALLENGE

ONE OF THE GREATEST ONGOING NEEDS IN THE CHURCH
IS FORGIVENESS. WE MUST PRACTICE IT
AND PRAY FOR IT. ARE YOU?

DEVOTIONAL

Early on in my journey with Christ, I remember reading missionary accounts of the Shantung revival in China in the early 1900s. One thing that caught my attention was that the Spirit of God began to move mightily when the missionaries reconciled relationships among themselves. When the missionaries humbled themselves before each other through reconciliation and forgiveness, God began to move in the whole region. Many were converted. **Revival had begun!**

— LAINE JOHNSON

LOOK UP:

SEEKING HIM IN PRAISE

To think of the cost of what Jesus paid to redeem us is humbling. He who is forgiven much loves much (Luke 7:47). When we understand His forgiveness, we will praise Him and love Him more. **The price tag for our forgiveness was His death.** Let us worship and adore Him!

LOOK IN:

SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

I believe that we are never more like Christ than when we extend forgiveness and never more unlike Him than when we don't. Forgiveness is sometimes complicated due to the strong emotions and hurt and pain that has taken root in our hearts. If we haven't forgiven others then bitterness and anger will keep us in bondage. We must be willing to forgive (Matt. 6:14–15).

LOOK OUT:

SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

As we pray for revival among God's people and awakening among the lost, let us also pray for those obedience's that are sure to take place—which are sometimes a precursor for revival, like in Shantung.

Unforgiveness needs to be repented of and we need to be ready to extend forgiveness towards those who have wounded us. There are many others around us that need to do the same. The church is full of men and women who need forgiveness and need to give forgiveness.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

- Do you love Christ more because of seeing your sin in light of His holiness? Take time on your knees (if physically possible) to express gratitude for the price He paid for your forgiveness.
- Is there anyone in the present or past that you need to forgive? Take those situations and people before the Lord in prayer and release them to Him as the ultimate judge.
- Do you know of family members or others in your realm of influence that need God's forgiveness? Look for opportunities to share the gospel. Do you know of any friends or family who need to forgive others? Pray for them to do so. Maybe the Lord would use you to give a word of encouragement or help. Look for open doors.
- For further help and understanding check out the book *Choosing Forgiveness: Your Journey to Freedom*.

Day 31 — THE MOST AWESOME POWER IN THE WORLD

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. —Galatians 5:16

YOUR CHALLENGE

ASK GOD TO FILL YOU WITH HIS SPIRIT AND THEN RELY ON HIM TO LEAD YOU IN MOMENT-BY-MOMENT OBEDIENCE.

DEVOTIONAL

Although it was retired from service in 1973, the Saturn V remains unsurpassed as the tallest and most powerful rocket ever flown. This mammoth rocket launched thirteen times, including its famous Apollo 11 mission that first landed astronauts on the Moon. The Saturn V stands at 363 feet—taller than the Statue of Liberty—and generated 7.6 million pounds of thrust (power equivalent to eighty-five Hoover Dams!).¹

The sheer force of a space rocket boggles my human mind. And yet **there's an unmatched spiritual force fueled by the Holy Spirit inside each believing Christian.** Romans 8:11 puts it into perspective for us:

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

This awesome power raised Christ from the dead and transforms our lives today.

The Holy Spirit has unlimited ability to fill our daily life with resurrection power!

- He gives us victory over sin and the temptations of the flesh.
- He empowers our worship and witness to the world.
- He reproduces the character and heart of Jesus in us.

Walking with God in full surrender and obedience is the launchpad that releases His power in and through our lives. But Scripture also warns that the Spirit's work is hindered when we say "no" to God and "yes" to sin (1 Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30). Self-reliance and sin diminish the Spirit's power from the magnitude of a Saturn V to a wimpy bottle rocket. When we try to live out God's purpose for our lives without Spirit-empowerment it's like trying to reach the moon with a sparkler.

Friend, let's not settle for a powerless life of defeat and discouragement. Let's start walking in the full-throttle power of the Holy Spirit and seek God for daily revival!

Pray this prayer with me . . .

— LESLIE BENNETT

LOOK UP: SEEKING HIM IN PRAISE

Father, You alone are all-powerful. Your greatness and majesty cannot be fathomed. Who else can scoop up the seas in His hands or measure the sky? Who else is both a mighty King and a gentle Shepherd? There is none like You, so we lift up our hearts in worship.

LOOK IN: SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

Triune God, fill me to overflowing with Your Holy Spirit! Search my heart and point out my sins that are quenching or grieving the Spirit. I surrender my life to You and ask for Your help to continually walk in step with You. Thank You for forgiving me and renewing my spirit.

LOOK OUT: SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Pour out your heart to God for a revival of Spirit-filled, Spirit-led Christians. Gather with a few friends to pray that the work of the Holy Spirit will be powerfully evident in all churches. Using Acts 1:8 as a guide, pray for an army of gospel witnesses to go forth from your community and beyond.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

- In what areas do you most feel weak and in need of the Spirit's power?
- How have you seen sin drain the Spirit's power in your own life?
- Have you fully surrendered your life to the Holy Spirit's control? Pray in faith for a fresh filling of His power and love using Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

¹"What Was the Saturn V?" Nasa. September 17, 2010. <https://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/5-8/features/nasa-knows/what-was-the-saturn-v-58.html>.

Day 32 — REVIVAL AS A WAY OF LIFE

*One thing have I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to inquire in his temple.*

—Psalm 27:4

YOUR CHALLENGE

MAKE YOUR PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL TIME WITH THE LORD A WAY OF LIFE.

DEVOTIONAL

If you only asked the Lord for one thing, what would it be? What's at the forefront of your mind right this moment that you would ask of Him?

Would that one thing be to dwell in God's presence? David's was.

One thing have I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to inquire in his temple (Ps. 27:4).

What if we had the same desire as David: to dwell with God every day, to soak in His beauty, and to discover more of Him? To seek Him simply to be with Him.

Prioritizing a personal devotional life, spending consistent time each day dwelling with the Lord, is the key to revival becoming **a way of life**. He transforms our hearts and minds as we seek Him *all the days of our life*.

— MICAYLA GREATHOUSE

LOOK UP: SEEKING HIM IN PRAISE

Every morning you *get* to spend time with the Creator of the universe. Let that be your thought the next time you reach for the snooze button or stumble out of bed to turn on the coffee. Spend some time praising God for the opportunity to be in His presence.

LOOK IN: SEEKING HIM FOR OUR OWN HEARTS

As you make a habit of dwelling with the Lord each day, pour out your heart before Him in prayer. Dig into His Word. Ask God what He wants to show you in that time. Try journaling or writing down what He reveals to you.

LOOK OUT: SEEKING HIM ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

The more time you spend with Jesus, the more you will become like Him. Look for ways to serve others and bring a deeper awareness of His presence to your home and your community. As Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth has said:

Authentic, effective ministry always, always flows out of union and communion with God. Then, if we're going to be effective servants of the Lord, if we're going to have something to give to others, we have to cultivate and maintain a growing, vital, intimate love relationship with Christ.¹

REFLECT AND RESPOND

- Read Psalm 27 and Psalm 63. Take some time to pause and behold the beauty of the Lord.
- When do you meet with the Lord? Listen to **this podcast** for some practical ways to develop a daily devotional life.

Read John 13:34-35

*“... I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another.”
John 13:34, (HCSB)*

In the Upper Room, Jesus gave some final instructions to His apostles whom He would soon leave. He began that final lecture by challenging His disciples to love one another as He had loved them. Addressing this issue first in the Upper Room, speaks to the importance of it.

Love and unity in the church are critical to revitalization. Jesus stated that all people would know we are His disciples by our love for one another. Some of our churches are stagnate or in decline due to their lack of genuine love for one another and subsequent disunity. A watching world wonders if it can be loved by a group of people who do not seem to love one another.

In *The Mark of the Christian*, Francis Schaffer states that the love of Christ in the lives of believers is what sets them apart from the world. He concludes that the world has a right to judge the authenticity of Christ's claims to be the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God, by what they see in the lives of His followers. Is Jesus the One who can change lives? Are the lives of His followers different than those of the world? Do they truly love one another in difficult times? Do you live in unity and love with other Christians?

Prayer

Ask God to help you love your brothers and sisters in Christ as He has loved you.

Read Acts 11:19-30

“The Lord’s hand was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord”. Acts 11:21 (HCSB)

Are your life, marriage, family, career, and church healthy? The church in Antioch was healthy and strong. News about the church reached Jerusalem. It’s a fact that people talk about the church (good or bad).

Barnabas reported that he saw the “grace of God” when he arrived in Antioch. What are people saying about the church you serve? As people attend your church, do they see the “grace of God” at work?

What signs distinguish a healthy church? A healthy church...

1. Expects commitment. Persecution couldn’t stop the witness of early believers.
2. Shares Jesus. Early believers didn’t talk about the economy, sports, or Hollywood. Jesus was the subject of their conversations.
3. Welcomes change. The church in Antioch saw the Lord change lives, marriages, and families. The church’s message must never change. However, methods need to change as the Lord leads.
4. Serves together. Barnabas needed Saul’s help to teach the believers in Antioch. Healthy churches embrace a “team” approach to ministry.
5. Disciples believers. Barnabas and Saul taught a great number of believers for one year. Healthy churches never separate evangelism and discipleship.
6. Practices generosity. A worldwide famine convicted the early believers to give. Generosity is a must in a healthy church.
7. Trusts leaders. The Antioch church trusted Barnabas and Saul. Leadership trust is essential in healthy churches.

Is the church you serve healthy or unhealthy?

Read Acts 6:1-7

“So the preaching about God flourished, the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith”. Acts 6:7 (HCSB)

Some churches avoid voting on issues of importance in the church because they believe votes divide people and give opportunities for church problems to occur. These people do have plenty of evidence to back up their practice. Many church splits have happened because half of the congregation wanted to go one direction while the other half wanted to go another.

In Acts 6:1-7 there was a different mindset toward congregational decisions and outcomes. The church needed help with its ministry to the widows of the congregation. A solution was proposed by the leadership and the proposal found favor with the congregation (6:5). The result was a unified church that continued to reach out with the gospel and make more disciples for Christ.

How can you aid in congregational agreement regarding upcoming decisions in your church?

Prayer

Please pray that God will give wisdom to your church leaders regarding a plan for church revitalization and that their plan will find favor in the congregation.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:24-25

“and as a result he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, ‘God is really among you.’ ”
1 Corinthians 14:25 (HCSB)

What would you say is the most important thing about your church? For many

people the answer would be this church meets my spiritual, emotional, or relational needs. As you think about your church, who are some of the people that have or are making a difference in your life? What are some of the ministries of your church that deepen your relationship to the Lord?

In my current role, I attend many different churches over the course of a month. I notice some churches are very outward to visitors while others have a harder time approaching strangers.

In the text we read today, we find what I think is the best response to the question “What do you say is important to this church?” First, an unbeliever discovers the truth about a Savior, next accepts Jesus, and finally shouts “God is really among you!” How great if this could be said about every church in our land.

In a healthy church it is easy to see that God is the center of that church.

Prayer

Pray for God to show you how He is moving in your church. Ask God to help you reflect His presence to a lost world

Read Matthew 28:16-20

“Then Jesus came near and said to them, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’”

Matthew 28:18 (HCSB)

In military circles, when a high-ranking officer speaks, people listen and follow directions. Our Commander-in-Chief, Jesus Christ, has spoken and called His church to action. The Great Commission is not optional or suggestive in nature. Jesus expects His followers to obey His marching orders. Our marching orders begin at home and extend to the ends of the earth. The Great Commission is the mission mandate for every church, regardless of the church’s structure, size, or style.

In the act of going, Jesus hasn’t called His people to merely record decisions. He has commanded that His people make disciples. A disciple is a learner and follower of Christ. Is the church you serve intentional about making disciples? What is your strategy for reaching all nations? Our Commander-in-Chief refuses to send His followers into the mission field alone. He promises to always be with us.

You and I have been called to attention and given an assignment that can change lives, marriages, families, churches, and nations. Let’s not disobey our Commander-in-Chief’s marching orders!

Prayer

Reflect on how you've responded to the Great Commission. Have you and your church treated Jesus' command as optional or mandatory? May you allow the Lord to use you to impact the nations for His glory!

Read Revelation 3:14-22

“So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth. Revelation 3:16 (HCSB)

As a result of a bad meal, a curvy road, or a contagious virus, you feel sick at your stomach. Feeling nauseated is uncomfortable. Jesus challenged the Laodicean church on several points. However, the church’s real condition left Him nauseated. A lukewarm church makes Jesus sick to His stomach. What led the Laodicean church to be lukewarm? God’s people thought they were self-sufficient. Jesus wasn’t really needed on a day-to-day basis. In fact, He was standing outside of the church, knocking on the door, and hoping to be invited back in.

Generally not in words, but at least in actions, many churches rely on their structures, staff, and strategies rather than on Christ Jesus. The church’s Redeemer is left standing outside the fellowship, desiring to be welcomed back in. There’s hope for a lukewarm church. Jesus gives His people an opportunity to repent and change directions.

Is the church you serve dependent on the presence and power of Jesus Christ? Is your church’s behavior causing Jesus to be nauseated?

Prayer

Position yourself to discover what Jesus thinks about your church. If you and your faith family are nauseating Jesus, hear His knock, open the door, and invite Him in. He longs to fellowship with you!

Read Revelation 3:1-6

“Be alert and strengthen what remains, which is about to die, for I have not found your works complete before My God.” Revelation 3:2 (HCSB)

After Jesus had evaluated the church at Sardis and given his assessment, He then gave them a divine action plan. Christ said to, “Strengthen the things which remain.” It sounds as if there were some things in the church that were good and pleasing to God but which needed attention before they lost their vitality.

Most churches have one or more areas of strength. Some congregations are great mission churches which go on mission trips and give money to missions. Others are really good at welcoming outsiders in and making them feel loved and valued without feeling judged by people. Some are great worshipping congregations where folks are invited into the presence of God through singing and other means.

Are you able to identify one or more areas of strength for your congregation?

Prayer

Would you pray today that God would reveal to you and others in your church those areas where your congregation is strong. Ask God to help you build on that area of strength for His glory and the good of the church and the community where God has placed you.

Read Revelation 3:1-6

*“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The One who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says: I know your works; you have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead.’”
Revelation 3:1 (HCSB)*

Your church is evaluated every week. The first time guests who visit have an opinion about your church. The senior adults who attend have convictions about the life and ministry of your congregation. The young families have some thoughts as well as the youth. The community in which your church is located also has something that comes to mind when they think of your church.

These opinions are varied and may have some merit. The opinion, or rather judgment, that matters most is the one offered by Jesus, the Head of the church. Jesus has some thoughts concerning your congregation, and the road to revitalization begins with seeking Jesus' view of your church.

How does your congregation's perception of your church's effectiveness differ from the perspective of Jesus?

Prayer

Consider praying today that God will help your congregation understand how He views it and what He wishes to see happen for your church to move into new life and ministry and be an influence for Christ in your community.