

40 Days Of Purpose

**Restoring The Joy
2026**

**Prayer and Fasting Guide
By Pastor Donald**

INTRODUCTION

I have prepared this devotional guide for the forty days leading up to Resurrection Sunday. This guide has been laid out in a specific order, based on the readings from both Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer (found in Matthew 6:9-13). Each week, there is a verse or passage from Psalm 23, the Lord's Prayer, the Gospels, the New Testament, the Book of Psalms and the Book of Proverbs.

Each day you will first recite the day's scripture aloud. As you speak the scripture for that day loud enough that you can hear yourself speaking—I believe that God will do a work of illumination and transformation in your life.

Then, you will record what you are fasting that day. Here is a partial list of the many things we have fasted over the years:

Coffee/Tea

Soft drinks

Social Media

Eating out/Fast food

Television/Movies

Sweets/Desserts

Online Shopping

You can use this list as a guide for ideas about what to fast, or as an inspiration that will lead you to other ideas.

Fasting serves notice on your body and your soul that they cannot have unlimited access to whatever they want: your spirit is in charge. Your spirit, under God's direction, now has the ability and the authority to restrain the soulish cravings and fleshly impulses of the soul and the body.

Fasting will also heighten your sensitivity to spiritual things, including God's instruction and direction. Fasting will become even more effective when combined with an increased intensity of time and effort in prayer.

Then, lastly, the page contains an area for you to record what God is speaking to you from that day's devotional.

It is my prayer that you will become more aware of the connection between Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer, and that correlation will lead you into a deeper relationship with God, and a clearer understanding of the benefits God has prepared for you this Resurrection season.

DAY 1

Psalm 23:1 “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

The term shepherd is not common in today's language. In years past, shepherds were responsible for the care and well-being of all the sheep under their watch or supervision. Good shepherds were watchful over their sheep and guarded them from threats of all kinds: predators, illness, drought, pests, and other hazards.

Sheep that were under the care of a good shepherd would be free from anxiety and stress and consequently, they could flourish, grow, and reach their full potential. When we as believers understand that the Lord is *our* shepherd, we too can flourish, thrive, come alive and fulfill our God-given potential.

Human shepherds are limited in what they could do for their sheep. Our God is unlimited in His foresight, concern, and abundant provision for us as the sheep of His pasture. We don't have to worry, and we shall not lack anything with the Lord as our Shepherd.

DAY 2

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9 “Therefore pray in this manner: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.”

Jesus taught His disciples this prayer as a model to use when addressing our heavenly Father. One thing to notice is that He used the term *our* instead of *my* when addressing God. This tells us that He regards those of us who believe as members of His own family.

Since God is our heavenly Father, we can be sure that there is no end to His provision for us. Earthly fathers who are worthy of that role provide for their families. God is certainly no less responsible than an earthly father. He will surely care for us by providing everything that we could possibly need.

When we address Him as *Father*, we are approaching Him confidently. We are affirming our trust in and dependence upon Him. We can be sure He will respond with abundant provision, supernatural protection, and enduring peace.

DAY 3

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

Few things motivate us the way hunger and thirst do. The need for food and water is normal and natural; it is built into all of us. Jesus mentioned these universal needs as a way of emphasizing that sufficiency in spiritual matters was even more important than obtaining natural bread and water.

In fact, spiritual fullness would lead to natural provision. The dilemma that Jesus often faced was trying to explain spiritual concepts to natural people. He used everyday stories that everyone could understand, but despite His best efforts, some people could not or would not comprehend what He was trying to teach them. After Jesus had miraculously fed the multitude with five loaves and two fish, He declared, “*I am the bread of life*” (John 6:35). Those listening to Him did not understand. Their minds were on natural food instead of spiritual matters.

May God open our eyes to the **reality** that He intends to provide everything we could possibly need in every area of our lives—spirit, soul, and body.

DAY 4

New Testament Reading

3 John 2 “Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, even as your soul is well.”

John, the last of the original disciples included this prayer in a letter to his friends. A prayer we should emulate as we engage in prayer for others as well as for ourselves. John mentions three categories in this verse.

The first one is all-inclusive: “...that all may go well with you...” The King James version uses the term *prosper*. This refers to our material sufficiency.

The second category John mentions is “...that you be in good health...” Of course, this relates to well-being regarding our physical health. The third category John mentions is “...even as your soul is well.”

Financial and physical health are of little consequence if we have no peace in our soul (worry, anxiety, depression and fear (false evidence appearing real). God intends for us to enjoy an abundance in every area of our lives: material blessings, bodily health, and most importantly, perfect soundness in our souls.

DAY 5

First Psalter Reading

Psalm 1:3 “He will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season; its leaf will not wither, and whatever he does will prosper.”

Trees that grow near the river are for the most part immune from drought, since they draw their water from a never-ending supply. Year after year, they bring forth leaves and fruit, regardless of what may be happening in other places.

God wants our lives to reflect this same truth. As believers, we should be flourishing as a result of His provision, even though drought may prevail in other locations. Christians can live fruitfully and productively, with the results of their faith clearly displayed for all to see.

I especially like the last phrase: “...*whatever he does will prosper.*” With God’s provision, we can be successful in whatever we attempt to do. We can flourish, thrive and come alive, in Jesus Name.

DAY 6

Psalms Reading

Psalm 85:12 “Yes, the LORD gives that which is good, and our land shall yield its increase.”

It should come as no surprise to any believer that God gives us good things—after all, He is a good God. Psalm 119:68 says, “*You are good and do good; teach me Your statutes.*” The psalmist has determined that what God does is the consequence of who God is—His acts flow naturally from His nature. Let us settle for all time that we serve a *good* God. This conclusion will enable us to have great confidence every time we approach Him in prayer.

The second part of this verse is a natural result of the first part. In order for our land to yield its increase, we need the blessing of God upon it. This is not just for farmers or gardeners. *Land*, as it is used here, certainly does refer to soil that can be tilled and sown, but it is by no means limited to that. Our land is our life—that part of the world over which we have been given dominion.

God wants every aspect of our lives to increase. This includes our relationships, our intellect, our influence, and the many other categories that make up our lives. We can confidently look for increase rather than decrease, and multiplication instead of division. God is good; He has determined increase for us today!

DAY 7

Reading from Proverbs

Proverbs 3:9-10 “Honor the LORD with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your presses will burst out with new wine.”

One of the characteristics of life in God’s kingdom is overflow. However, as I have said many times, every promise God makes is conditional. God says, “I will do *this* if you will do *that*.” This passage points out one of these conditional promises.

In this case, honor is displayed by offering something of substance. In Old Testament times, it may have been a lamb or other sacrificial animal. Today, our substance usually involves money.

Today, we give God the first portion of our income to let Him know we honor him and hold Him in higher esteem than anyone or anything else.

Symbols of abundance in generations past were barns filled to capacity and vats that were overflowing. In today’s terms, that would mean that wherever we store our possessions will be full and overflowing—when we honor the Lord, and keep Him first place in our hearts.

Week Two

Days 8-14

DAY 8

Psalm 23

Psalm 23:2 “He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters.”

Sheep can find food even in marginal pastures. However, no shepherd wants to risk the well-being of his flocks by feeding them grass that is dry and withered; a shepherd will seek out grass that is green and well-watered so their sheep can obtain the best nutrition.

When grass is scarce, sheep become nervous and anxious. Competition increases, and some sheep have enough while others suffer lack. On the other hand, when grass is abundant, sheep are calm, since there is more than enough for all.

Water resources in many parts of the ancient world were limited. Good shepherds would make sure their flocks had access to all the water they needed, in order to ward off dehydration and disease and maintain the health of the sheep.

In the same way, our Shepherd will always lead us into places that have more than enough food, water, and every other resource that is necessary for our well-being. We can be at peace knowing that as long as we follow Him, we won't have to worry about any need being unmet.

DAY 9

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:10 “Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

The concept of the kingdom of God is sometimes difficult for those who live in western nations to understand, since many have had no experience with living in a kingdom. God is sovereign—that is, He is the ultimate authority in His kingdom. There can be no doubt that His will is the only one that is followed and accomplished in heaven.

When Jesus instructed us to pray regarding God's kingdom coming and His will being done on earth, He was talking about God having absolute authority to reign over every aspect of our lives.

As God's kingdom is demonstrated in us, we realize that we don't have to worry about what we need or want. All we have to do is align ourselves with what He wants, and all will be well. When His will is done in us, we won't have to be concerned with the stock market, or politics, or the economy, or disease, or anything else that causes so many people to anxiously lie awake at night. We can be at peace, knowing that the King is ruling in His kingdom.

DAY 10

Gospel Reading

John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

Jesus once again used the imagery of a shepherd in this verse, referring to Himself as the Good Shepherd. He went on to say that the Good Shepherd offers his life as a sacrifice to insure the safety and security of the sheep. The Bible clearly records that Jesus did just that on that cruel, and rugged cross.

As you know, that was not the end of the story. He was resurrected on the third day, and He arose victorious over the power of death to make sure the sheep of His pasture would receive all the benefits and blessings He died and rose again to give us.

The Good Shepherd is mentioned in this passage in contrast to others known as hired hands—those who did not care for the sheep, but who only cared for themselves.

They proved this by abandoning the sheep when danger came near. Jesus did not do so. Death ruled over us all, but Jesus came to destroy the power of death and grant eternal life to everyone who believes in Him as Savior—to everyone who receives Him as their Good Shepherd. Jesus died for us. Will we live for Him?

DAY 11

New Testament Reading

Philippians 4:19 “But my God shall supply your every need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

The supply chain issues have become regular news topic lately. A shortage or lack of raw materials or component parts, and other factors have led to certain items having either limited availability or no availability at all. Even large warehouse stores that were once overstocked now have empty shelves, waiting lists, or limits on the number of items that one customer can purchase.

Thankfully, that is not and never will be an issue in the kingdom of God. He is an endless source of supply, regardless of what is going on in the world. His supply chain is secure, and the stockpiles of His blessings will never be depleted. Even in the midst of an extreme drought, God supplied the prophet Elijah, a widow, and her son with food and water every day until the crisis was over (See 1 Kings 17.)

The measure of God’s supply is “...*His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*” His measure is a just measure, freely distributed to all who come to Him.

DAY 12

Reading from Psalms

Psalm 34:9-10 “Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints; for the ones who fear Him will not be in need. The young lions are in want and suffer hunger, but the ones who seek the LORD will not lack any good thing.”

The psalmist here uses the imagery of a lion to extol the surpassing greatness of our God. There was likely no wild animal in ancient Israel that inspired as much fear as the lion.

Those who have hunted and studied lions affirm that their prowess as the king of beasts is well-known and well-deserved. If there is any animal that is well-suited to pursuing and capturing sufficient prey, it is the lion. And yet, in this passage, the psalmist says that even young, strong lions may come to the point where they are weak from lack of food.

Even in such an extremity, those who seek God will not be in want. Job 5:22 says, *“You will laugh at devastation and famine....”* There is no circumstance in this world that could possibly cause God to cease supplying our needs and desires. He is enough—and more than enough—to cause abundance to flow to us and through us. As we seek Him, we will not lack any good thing!

DAY 13

Reading from Psalms

Psalm 103:2, 5 “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits...who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

This psalm not only admonishes us to bless the Lord, but it gives us a reason for doing so: all the benefits He gives to us. These benefits are covenant promises—they don’t have to be negotiated as add-ons. The psalmist goes on to specify what some of those benefits are.

In verse 5, he says that God “satisfies your mouth with good things.” God’s role as a heavenly provider is a theme that is repeated in the Bible over and over again. He has promised to provide for His people, and He is ready and willing to do so.

In addition, this verse points out that those who receive God’s benefits will have their youth renewed. The psalmist refers to an eagle, due to its habit of molting and growing new feathers, making it appear ageless. God has promised to renew us so that we will not grow old before our time, nor will we become infirm and frail with age. God wants us to experience long life and abundant health, and He wants us to be fruitful and productive all our days.

DAY 14

Reading from Proverbs

Proverbs 10:22 “The blessing of the LORD makes rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.”

Solomon, credited with the authorship of Proverbs, was familiar with both the blessing and the burden of great wealth. He understood, perhaps better than anyone before or since, that having money does not always translate into having happiness. If we need proof of this, all we have to do is take a glance at the headlines on the tabloids. We can read story after story about people who have achieved a great measure of wealth, but who have obviously not achieved the same measure of happiness, regardless of the value of their material possessions.

God’s blessings do not have any such limitations. His blessings cause not just happiness, but joy. His benefits are not just good for the body, but they are satisfying to the soul and the spirit. The world can never provide true satisfaction and fulfillment. Those things are from the domain of a gracious and generous God, who gives us good things that do not cause sorrow or shame.

Week Three

Days 15-21

DAY 15

Psalm 23

Psalm 23:3 “He restores my soul; He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”

The care of our soul—our mind (intellect), our will, our imagination and our emotions—is often neglected or overlooked in a world that emphasizes material things.

It is no secret that our bodies need rest and recuperation after a period of intense physical activity. Athletes understand this, giving themselves time off to recover between episodes of peak performance.

In the same way, our minds, our emotions, and even our decision-making capabilities cannot function at their maximum all the time. From time to time, we need to pull back from the stresses of life and be refreshed and recharged. That is one reason God commanded men to work only six days and rest one day every week—so we could enjoy restoration in our souls as well as in our bodies. Remember the Sabbath day and to keep it Holy (Exodus 20:8-11).

As we pull back from the stresses of life, we will find our Shepherd leading us along paths we may have never found without His guidance. He will always lead us in righteousness and truth, and He will do it so that we can be the examples of good and honest living that the world so desperately needs to see.

DAY 16

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:12 “And forgive us our sin, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.”

In this portion of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus gives us the key to forgiveness: we can expect forgiveness ourselves as we forgive others. This is the law of sowing and reaping at work. Jesus said, “*For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured again for you*” (Matthew 7:2).

I have been involved in ministry for over thirty-five years. I have encountered many people who had recurring problems in their lives because of their unwillingness to forgive others who had wronged them. These problems could have been resolved by simply obeying the instructions given in the ten simple words referenced above. The message is simple: forgive, so that you will be positioned to experience an abundance of forgiveness yourself.

DAY 17

Gospel Reading

Luke 6:38 “Give, and it will be given to you: Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will men give unto you. For with the measure you use, it will be measured unto you.”

This is one of the most dramatic statements Jesus made about giving. The basis for His statement is that everything about His kingdom is completely opposes and mutually exclusive of the world’s kingdom.

We are now in God’s kingdom, not the world’s. It should come as no surprise that God has established a different set of principles. The world says, “If you want to receive, you have to grab all you can for yourself.” God says, “If you want to receive, you must give.” God’s principles make no sense to the carnal mind, but they make perfect sense to those who walk by faith and not by sight.

When we give, God has promised that we will receive in proportion to our giving. If we give a teaspoon, we will gain a cup. If we give a cup, we will gain a gallon. If we give a gallon, we will gain a bucket. The more we give, the more He is able to multiply our giving. As we look for ways to give, God looks for ways to give back to us.

DAY 18

New Testament Reading

Ephesians 3:20 “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that works in us....”

Our God is not wasteful, but He is extravagant. Everything about His nature and character is excellent. Pastor Sumrall once said it this way: “There are more acorns produced every year than all the squirrels in the world could possibly eat.” If God will provide for squirrels with such abundance, what do we suppose He will do for us?

Many in the body of Christ have been satisfied with only enough, or in some cases, not enough. However, we serve a God of more than enough, a God of the overflow, and double for our trouble. The world may have limited resources, but God’s resources are limitless. Trusting Him for more does not mean that someone else will have less.

This verse says: “...*beyond all that we can ask or imagine...*” He is the one who gave us right to ask and the ability to imagine, so let’s ask and imagine all the ways God wants to bless us today and in the days ahead! If your prayers don’t scare you, you haven’t prayed yet.

DAY 19

Reading from Psalms

Psalm 35:27 “May those who favor my righteous cause shout for joy and be glad; may they say continually, ‘The LORD be magnified, who delights in the peace of His servant.’”

The word “peace” in this verse is translated by other versions of the Bible as welfare, prosperity, success, well-being, and other similar concepts. Regardless of the translation, the idea is clear: God wants us to be blessed, and He is delighted when we receive His blessings.

Here is another thought carried by this verse: those around us should see the blessing and favor of God on our lives. I don’t mean to imply that we should flaunt our good fortune or try to make our neighbors jealous.

What I am talking about is that we should be so abundantly blessed that others will not be able to avoid noticing it without us saying a word. This will inevitably lead them to ask us about it, giving us a wonderful opportunity to tell them about a God who saves, who heals, who delivers, and who abounds in blessing. Our peace, our prosperity, our success, and our well-being should cause others to shout for joy and magnify the Lord. Restoring the joy!

DAY 20

Reading from Psalms

Psalm 107:9 “For He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness.”

The proof of desire is pursuit. What we want the most, we will pursue with the greatest determination. If we are already full, nothing on the menu or in the refrigerator will seem appealing. But if we are desperately hungry, any kind of food will be welcome, and we will overcome any obstacle we encounter to get it.

I believe that one of the main reasons people are not satisfied in our hurry-up, convenience-driven, pleasure-seeking culture is that they have settled for cheap substitutes instead of waiting for the benefits that can only come from God. It is hard for people to appreciate life-giving manna from heaven when they are continually full of the empty preservatives that this world has to offer.

We must refuse the world’s frivolities, regardless of how attractive they may appear, and we must cultivate within our hearts a deep desire for the things of God. By doing so, we give Him the opportunity to satisfy the longing of our souls with the things that only He can provide. He will fill us— and fulfill us—as nothing else can.

DAY 21

Reading from Proverbs

Proverbs 13:22 “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, and the wealth of the sinner is laid up (stored) for the just (righteous).”

We think of an inheritance in terms of material things, and that is what is seen in the first part of this verse. A financial inheritance that is available to grandchildren involves at least three generations— ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren. God wants us to have such an abundance that we can bless our grandchildren as well as our children, regardless of how many there are in our family. What a blessing!

The other aspect of this portion of Proverbs is the same thought that is carried in Ecclesiastes 2:26: “*For to a man who is pleasing before Him, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting to give him who is pleasing before God.*”

Our upright behavior before God will result in an inheritance for us and for (our seed) those who follow after us. It will come from unexpected places and in supernatural ways. In Christ, we are positioned to receive it!

Week Four

Days 22-28

DAY 22

Psalm 23

Psalm 23:4 “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

Comfort and deliverance are the themes of this verse and its counterpart in the Lord’s Prayer. We may think that walking through the valley of the shadow of death is rather the opposite of comfort. But God never promised us that we would not experience opposition and difficulty in this life. However, He did promise us that He would lead us beyond every opposing force and through every difficult time into absolute victory.

Why be afraid of the dark when the light of the world lives inside of us? How can we fear evil when the author of all that is good is with us? The wolf is no threat to a sheep who has a good shepherd who is armed and vigilant —as ours surely is.

We have no need to fear. Our enemies are the ones who are afraid. Let them rage and howl as they fail to fulfill every one of their assignments. We are following Jesus as He leads us all the way to our destination. He is with us, and by His rod and staff, He protects and supports us along the way!

DAY 23

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:13 “**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**”

This verse as it is translated here may seem misleading, since God never leads anyone into temptation, as James 1:13 makes clear. I like to think of it this way: “Don’t let us fall into temptation.” In other words, help us not to yield to temptation, in whatever form it may manifest itself.

As long as we live in this fallen world, we will be faced with a multitude of temptations. It has been a part of the human condition since the fall of man in Genesis 3.

However, Jesus died and rose again to give us back our power of choice. We can successfully and steadfastly resist temptation and its author, Satan himself. James 4:7 says, “*Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*” First Peter 5:8-9 says, “*Be sober and watchful, because your adversary the devil walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him firmly in the faith....*”

We can trust God to not only assist us in staying free from the power of temptation, but to deliver us on a daily basis from the evil strategies of our adversary, the devil.

DAY 24

Gospel Reading

Mark 10:29-30 “Jesus answered, ‘Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left a house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, who shall not receive a hundred times as much now in this age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecution, and in the age to come, eternal life.’”

Jesus told His disciples that because they had left everything to follow Him, He would return it to them a hundred-fold, “*now in this age.*”

I intend to say it plainly, without stuttering or stammering: God does not want His people to be poor. He has abundance, and He is not bashful or hesitant about sharing His abundance with those who do His will. God intends for His people to do good, to be generous, and to bless those who don’t have enough by sharing the abundance He provides.

And to top this off, we can expect to enjoy eternal life in the age to come because of faith in the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on the cross. We have blessings in this life, and eternity in heaven in the life to come. We truly have everything to gain by following Christ!

DAY 25

New Testament Reading

Galatians 6:7 “Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.”

Sowing and reaping is such a universal principle that it is referred to and regarded as a law—the *law of sowing and reaping*. A law will work for anyone who applies it. In fact, many have put the principles of this law to work without even realizing it.

This type of sowing and reaping applies to more than a natural planting of seed and a harvesting of produce. Paul uses this language when receiving an offering (see 2 Corinthians 9) and Jesus said in Luke 6:37: “*Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*”

If we want to reap a harvest of forgiveness, we must sow forgiveness. If we want to receive mercy, we have to give mercy. Conversely, if we have been harvesting a crop of anger or hatred, we need to check up on what we have been sowing.

God will multiply our seed sown. What we are reaping now is a result of seeds sown in days gone by. Let’s keep sowing good seeds in the good soil of God’s kingdom—an abundant harvest awaits us.

DAY 26

Reading from Psalms

Psalm 37:4 “Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

What does it mean to “*delight yourself in the Lord*”? Here are some questions that may help us clarify this concept: Do we look forward to reading our Bible, spending time in prayer, and worshipping God, or do we look for ways to avoid these things? Does the thought of meeting with God or being in His presence fill us with joy or with dread?

If we cannot answer these questions positively, it is time for a change of perspective. That perspective is simple: God looks forward to meeting with us—for the purpose of blessing us! Every encounter we have with Him will result in increase and spiritual growth.

And, when we have joy about our interactions with God, He will give us the desires of our heart. This has two meanings. First, God will give us what we have desired and longed to obtain. But I am convinced that the primary way we should interpret this text is that God will implant within us the very desires that we have, so that our desires align with His. When His desires become our desires, we cannot help but have a life filled with love, joy, peace, and fulfillment.

DAY 27

Second Psalter Reading

Psalm 112:1-3 “Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments. His offspring shall be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.”

The term *the fear of the Lord* is a recurring theme in the Bible. It refers to a reverential respect for the person of God and the things of God. A natural consequence of the fear of the Lord is a determination to follow His directions and obey His commands. There are three and arguably four outcomes to fearing and following God.

The first two have to do with our children. The promise is that our children will be successful (mighty) and blessed.

The next promise involves the promise of the acquisition of wealth and riches. The fourth result is that the ultimate and everlasting home of the righteous will be in heaven, where there will be no want of any good thing. Until we arrive there, God intends to bless us and provide for us here.

DAY 28

Reading from Proverbs

Proverbs 22:4 “By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honor, and life.”

There are three wonderful benefits that come from humility and the fear of the Lord. Humility—the opposite of pride and arrogance—is related to the fruit of the Spirit called meekness. Here are two biblical examples:

The first is Moses. Numbers 12:3 says, “...*Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all the men on the face of the earth...*”

The other example is the Lord Jesus Christ, who said in Matthew 11:29: “*Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*”

Moses was humble. Jesus was meek. We are in good company when we seek to develop these characteristics in our lives.

Riches, of course, speak of our material wealth. Honor is even more important; it reflects our reputation in the community. The last one—life—is the most crucial. Without life, neither of the other two would be possible, much less necessary. God wants to provide us with an abundance of these three important features, and He will, if we will walk humbly and in reverence toward Him.

Week Five

Days 29-35

DAY 29

Psalm 23

Psalm 23:5 “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.”

This verse speaks specifically of abundant provision. God does not just prepare a meal—He prepares a table. There is not just enough for us, there is more than enough for us and for others. What is more, the table God spreads for us is in the presence of our enemies—those who have tried to kill us, steal from us, and destroy us.

Anointing the head has both a literal and a symbolic meaning. On one hand, shepherds would put oil on the sheep’s heads to protect them from cuts they might sustain while feeding in stony pastures. On the other hand, anointing with oil was used in the ceremony of a person ascending to an office such as prophet, priest, or king.

Then, and now, anointing with oil symbolizes the empowering of the Holy Spirit, who will equip and enable the one being anointed to do all that God has called them to do. When we realize that we have already been given everything we need to do all that He asks, we will join the psalmist in saying, “My cup runs over!”

DAY 30

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:11 “Give us this day our daily bread.”

Regardless of the country or culture, bread is nearly universal in the world. It may be made of wheat, corn, rice, millet, cassava root, or some other type of grain, and it may be in loaves, slices, buns, rolls, or sheets, but bread is found around the world. It is a staple in most cultures, and it has represented food for centuries.

Also, for most of human history, people were unable to store very much food for very long. This meant they had to prepare their food every day, which is why Jesus spoke about *daily* bread.

There is another reason this statement is so significant. Jesus told us to ask God for daily provision—that is, we should trust Him every day— not only for bread, but for everything we would need to do His will each day. Asking implies trusting—why would we ask anyone for something we did not think they could provide?

If we can trust God to give us our daily bread— the most fundamental need we have—we can be assured that He will provide all we require to fulfill His plan and purpose for our lives.

DAY 31

Gospel Reading

Matthew 6:33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you.”

Anything that interferes with or distracts us from our primary purpose has the potential to keep us from fulfilling it. In this verse, Jesus admonishes us to keep the most important thing in mind at all times. As you can imagine, the most important thing for a believer has nothing to do with this material world.

The world is involved in a frenzied pursuit of more and more material and temporal things. In contrast to this, believers should be more concerned with seeing the kingdom of God fulfilled in their lives and in the world around them.

This is not to say that we cannot make plans for the future, or that we should never acquire anything for ourselves. What we eat, what we drink, and what we wear are important—but the decisions we make about them and the consequences of those decisions will only last for a short time. Many people think more carefully about what they are going to have for dinner than they do about the condition of their eternal soul.

We must at all times regard spiritual and eternal things as superior to natural and earthly things. As we do, Jesus said God would provide all the material necessities that would enable us to fulfill His will.

DAY 32

New Testament Reading

Galatians 3:13-14 “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us—as it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’—so that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

The curse of the law is the inability to fulfill it. Romans 3:20 makes it clear: “*Therefore by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.*” What a dilemma! The law of God must be fulfilled, but it is impossible for any of us to meet its righteous demands. What is man to do in such a case?

God answered that question by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and fulfill the demands of the law once for all. Now, because of Christ’s sacrifice, those who believe in Him as Savior are free from the penalty of the broken law. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are set free from the curse of the law, and we become partakers of the promise.

DAY 33

Reading from Psalms

Psalm 66:12 “You have allowed people to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but You brought us out into a well- watered place.”

Here the psalmist acknowledges that God allows us to go through some difficult circumstances. We may have times when we feel like we are not going to make it. We may feel as though we are passing through both fire and water.

Think about when Jesus was laid in the borrowed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. It seemed as though death had won. His hands were still; His eyes were closed; His voice was silent. Hope was extinguished. The author of life was dead, but that was not the end of the story.

On the third day, the stone was rolled away, and life triumphed over death. God vetoed the crucifixion with the resurrection. Jesus was alive and victorious over death, hell, and the grave!

Don't write the story on Friday night, because Sunday is on the way. It may look dark now, but morning is coming. Here is the end of the matter: God is about to deliver us into “*a well-watered place,*” a place of abundance, refreshing, rest and joy.

DAY 34

Second Psalm Reading

Psalm 128:1-2 “Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways. For you shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you will be happy, and it shall be well with you.”

The word *fear* as it is used here does not mean *to be afraid*. God does not want us to be afraid of Him, as though we would be in danger when we approached Him. The word *fear* here means to have reverence or respect for the Lord, or to be in awe of Him. Far too many people today regard God casually instead of respectfully. He is our Father; He is good and loving and compassionate, but He is still *God*.

There is a threefold blessing for giving God the respect He deserves. First, we will be rewarded by our work. Work is supposed to be rewarding. The reason some people are not rewarded by their work is that they are either doing something they were not designed to do, or they are not walking in God's ways.

Next, we will be happy. Happiness and contentment should be a natural product of walking in God's ways. If we are not happy, we should check whose ways we are following.

Finally, it shall be well with us. That covers anything that is not included in the two other categories. God intends for our lives to be filled with His blessing.

DAY 35

Reading from Proverbs

Proverbs 24:3-4 “Through wisdom is a house built, and by understanding it is established....”

Solomon is traditionally credited with compiling the book of Proverbs. He may have been thinking about the construction of the Temple, one of the wonders of the ancient world, when he uttered this saying. Indeed, it took a great deal of wisdom and understanding to build and establish the magnificent edifice that was dedicated to the worship of the Almighty God.

Our houses are not as elaborate or expensive as Solomon’s Temple, but they do require wisdom and understanding to build and establish. It also takes wisdom and understanding to maintain them after they are built. If a house is neglected, before much time passes it will begin to fall apart.

God will give us the wisdom to protect everything He has given us so that it will remain usable for a long time. The Bible tells us that if we lack wisdom, we can ask God for it (see James 1:5). We don’t have to let the blessings of God in our lives fall into disrepair. We can ask Him for the wisdom and understanding we need to continue to experience His blessing in our lives.

Week Six
Days 36-40

DAY 36

Psalm 23

Psalm 23:6 “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

Here we come to the last verse of Psalm 23, and it is fitting that the psalmist should include a benediction that looks forward to not only God’s daily presence, but to spending eternity in His house as a part of His family.

There is no question that spending eternity with God will be far greater than we could ever imagine. For a thorough treatment of what heaven will be like, we can study the end of the story in Revelation chapters 21 and 22.

Until then, the psalmist maintains that goodness and mercy will be our constant companions during all the days of our earthly endeavor. With companions such as that, how can we be bitter or complain about fulfilling our daily assignments? Let us use this verse to help us maintain a different perspective on the value and promise of our days, as we anticipate something even greater in the days to come. Our lives have great significance because of God, and our eternal reward is secure with God. What could be better than that?

DAY 37

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:13 “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

In the last half of the last verse of the Lord's Prayer, we have a relevant closing statement as Jesus anticipates not only the *here*, but the *hereafter*.

In verse ten, Jesus had said, “*Your kingdom come; your will be done....*” In verse 13, Jesus speaks again of the kingdom of God. The emphasis once more is on God's sovereignty and authority over all that He has created. That, of course, includes each and every one of us.

Jesus is emphasizing the omnipotence of God. God is all-powerful, and He acts according to His good pleasure. He can do what He wills, and no power in the universe can withstand Him.

Finally, Jesus maintains that all glory belongs to God, both now and throughout eternity.

Praying this verse as Jesus instructed us to do will help us gain a fresh point of view. As we grapple with the problems and pressures of our lives, we will not be overcome by them as we consider God's authority, His magnificent power, and His ultimate glory. Let us do all we can to see to it that He is glorified by our lives here on earth, and for eternity in heaven.

DAY 38

Gospel Reading

Matthew 7:11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

Jesus was comparing and contrasting the nature of earthly fathers with the nature of God, our heavenly Father, in this statement. He had just given them three examples of how people will give their children what they have asked for and what they need without hesitation. Surely God would do at least as much for them!

As I have said many times, every promise of God is conditional. And here is the condition: we must ask. There are those who object to this, thinking that if God knows what we need, there is no reason to ask. However, asking implies faith, and God is not moved by our need, but by our faith (Matthew 9:29).

One of the main reasons people fail to receive from God is that they don't ask Him for what they need or want. And if they do ask, they may still fail to receive because they don't ask in faith, or they may ask for selfish motives (see James 4:3.)

God is good, and He wants to give us good things. Let us ask in faith, so that we might receive from Him.

DAY 39

New Testament Reading

2 Corinthians 9:10-11 “Now He who supplies seed to the sower and supplies bread for your food will also multiply your seed sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness. So you will be enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which makes us give thanks to God.”

Some people, when presented with the choice to give to God’s work, think only in terms of what they will have left. They regard giving in terms of loss.

Paul uses in this verse, especially the words *seed* and *sower*, refers to farming. When a farmer sows his fields, he never thinks in terms of what he has given away. He is thinking about how much will be coming back to him in the harvest.

Every seed has the capacity for increase, especially when the blessing of God is on it. Paul said God would provide bread for today and seed for tomorrow—and He would multiply our seed sown by giving us a harvest.

God will also increase the fruits of our righteousness. That means our acts of kindness and obedience will yield an abundant harvest as well. Let’s prepare for increase naturally, spiritually, and in every way—today and in the days to come. As we always say, the seed may leave my hand but it doesn’t leave my life.

DAY 40

Final Thought

Matthew 6:5-15 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread, 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

And so let us finish as we began: with the ultimate prayer of faith that Jesus teaches us to pray - His kingdom come! As we've seen, faith is never just for us. The fruit of our faith brings heaven to earth; bridging the gap between God's beautiful, precious kingdom and our lost and broken world. As the people of God, we can live boldly and sacrificially knowing that while we are in this world, we are no longer of this world. We are ambassadors for Christ, making His appeal to a world that desperately needs Him. As you step out in faith, you step into your God-given purpose and continue your journey to becoming everything you were created to be. Pray today as Jesus taught us to pray. Pray boldly. Pray confidently. Pray passionately. Let's believe God is going to do a miraculous work in our generation, awakening His people and reviving us by faith and restoring the Joy!

