

## Week 12: “Our God Who Overcomes Our Fears”

### Wk 12 - Day 1: Genesis 12

**Explanation:** Going when and where God asks us to can be hard. Sometimes He directs us to physically go somewhere, but more often we’re simply called to go into the world with His love and His Word. It’s likely that Abram had lived in the same place for his first seventy-five years of life. He was comfortable and prosperous, and then God asked him to leave behind all that was familiar and go to the unknown. Of course, with God’s instruction to go comes a promise of blessing. God gives Abram a series of promises: He will make him into a great nation, bless him, make his name great, and use him to be a blessing to all families of the earth. These promises are foundational to the rest of the Bible. What stands out is his response: **“So Abram went.”** There is no recorded hesitation, even though the call would have naturally raised fear. He leaves security for uncertainty, trusting God’s Word over what he can see. The proof of our faith is always in our obedience. Abram was an idolater when God called him, but he turned from his vain idols to walk with the Lord, and all this was by God’s grace. However, later in the chapter, we see Abram’s humanity. A famine drives him to Egypt, and out of fear, he tells Sarai to say she is his sister to protect himself. This decision shows that even someone walking in faith can still struggle with fear. God intervenes and protects Sarai, demonstrating that His faithfulness does not depend on Abram’s perfection. The Lord kept His promise even when Abram acted like a fool. And God went even further. God used Abram’s foolishness to enrich him with a lot of Pharaoh’s stuff. Even when we foolishly act out of fear instead of faith, God always remains faithful to His promises. Genesis 12 holds together both bold trust and real fear, showing that God meets us in the tension and works through both as He leads His people forward.

**Application:** Genesis 12 reminds us that faith is not the absence of fear, it is choosing to trust God in the middle of it. Abram’s fear in Egypt wasn’t completely irrational. There was a logic to it. Real danger, real risk, real consequences. That’s true for us too, most of what we fear is rooted in real circumstances. The issue isn’t that fear exists, but what we do with it. Abram began “running the numbers.” Egypt + a beautiful wife = danger. But what’s missing is any consideration of God’s promise. Fear didn’t just inform his thinking, it drove it. And when fear takes the lead, faith takes a back seat. There is a kind of caution that is wise, but there is also a kind that is driven by self-protection and control. The difference often comes down to focus. The less we fix our eyes on God, the more fear begins to shape our decisions. Fear-centered living is ultimately self-focused. It fixates on what we might lose instead of what God has already promised. It pushes us toward control, comfort, and safety, even at the cost of obedience. Like Abram, fear can lead us to compromise what we know is right. But this chapter also reminds us that even weak faith can cling to a strong Savior. God did not abandon Abram in his failure. His promises remained secure. God does not call us to a life of comfort or complete safety, but He does promise His presence and His peace.

### Wk 12 - Day 2: Matthew 12

**Explanation:** Matthew 12 reveals both the authority of Jesus and the heart of God, especially in contrast to the fear-driven religion of the Pharisees. The chapter begins with conflict over the Sabbath. The Pharisees accuse Jesus’ disciples of breaking the law, but Jesus responds by showing that God’s law was never meant to be a burden rooted in fear. Instead, it was given for the good of His people. When Jesus quotes **Hosea 6:6, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice,”** He exposes their misunderstanding, God values compassion over empty ritual. Jesus then heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, demonstrating that doing good should never be restricted by tradition. In doing so, He shows that God’s law is compassionate, meant to serve people and grow their faith, not trap them in fear of failure. When Jesus declares, **“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath,”** He is claiming authority over even the most sacred traditions. This is an invitation to trust Him rather than cling to rigid systems. As the chapter continues, Jesus casts out demons and heals the oppressed, showing His authority over spiritual darkness. Yet the Pharisees, threatened by Him, accuse Him of working by Satan. Their fear of losing control blinds them to truth. Matthew 12 shows that Jesus is not only powerful, but He is also compassionate, and His authority invites trust rather than fear.

**Application:** Matthew 12 challenges us to examine what is driving our relationship with God — fear or trust. It is easy to fall into a mindset where faith becomes about rules, performance, and avoiding failure. But Jesus makes it clear that God’s heart is not to burden us, but to grow us. His law was never meant to create fear, but to lead us into life and relationship. This chapter also calls us to live with compassion. Jesus showed that doing good should never be delayed or restricted. Opportunities to love and serve others are always worth taking. Fear often leads us to control, protect, and perform. But faith calls us to trust the One who is in authority over everything. When our identity is rooted in Him, we no longer have to live under the pressure of fear. God is not calling us to a fearful life of rule-keeping, but to a confident life of trust, mercy, and surrender.

- *Abram’s fear had logic behind it. What are some fears in your life that feel “reasonable”?*
- *What’s the difference between being aware of danger and being controlled by it?*
- *Why do we often trust what we can see more than what God has said?*
- *What does it look like practically to bring God’s promises into your decision-making?*

- *Why do people often turn God’s commands into something fear-based instead of life-giving?*
- *How can we tell when our faith has become more about rules than relationship?*
- *What “systems” or routines make you feel safe but may actually limit your trust in God?*
- *Are there any areas where you are holding rules up higher than the compassion of Christ?*

# OUR MIGHTY 2026 BIBLE READING GUIDE

God

## Wk 12 - Day 3: Nehemiah 2

**Explanation:** Nehemiah 2 moves from prayer to action. After hearing about Jerusalem's broken condition and seeking God in prayer, Nehemiah now faces a critical moment. As cupbearer, appearing sad before the king could be dangerous. When the king notices and asks what is wrong, Nehemiah admits, **"I was very much afraid."** This is real, human fear. The kind that comes when the outcome is uncertain and the risk is high. Instead of retreating, Nehemiah offers a quick prayer and then speaks boldly. He asks not only to go to Jerusalem, but also for protection and provision. The king grants his requests, and Nehemiah recognizes why: **"the good hand of my God was upon me."** This moment didn't come out of nowhere. Nehemiah had waited, prayed, and faithfully served for months. He did not rush ahead, but trusted God's timing. When the opportunity came, he was ready. Once in Jerusalem, Nehemiah moves with wisdom. He inspects the walls quietly at night, keeping his plans guarded. He understands there is opposition, so he acts carefully. Then he shares the vision, pointing the people to God's hand at work. They respond, **"Let us rise up and build."** Even when opposition arises, Nehemiah stands firm, confident that God will give success. Nehemiah 2 shows that fear is real, but it does not have to be final. God meets us in it and leads us forward.

**Application:** Nehemiah 2 reminds us that fear often tries to keep us stuck. Moving forward can feel risky. Whether it's a decision, a step of obedience, or a calling from God, it's often easier to stay where we are than to step into the unknown. Fear tells us it's not worth the risk. But faith calls us forward. Nehemiah shows us that overcoming fear doesn't mean acting impulsively. He waited, prayed, and prepared. Waiting can feel harder than acting, but it is not wasted time, it is where God prepares both us and our circumstances. However, when the moment comes to act, faith requires that we step forward without delay. This chapter also shows the balance between trust and wisdom. Prayer is not a substitute for planning, and faith is not reckless. Nehemiah thought carefully, organized wisely, and took precautions. In the same way, we are called to trust God while also using discernment. Like Nehemiah, there are times to move quietly, protect the vision, and stay focused despite potential opposition.

## Wk 12 - Day 4: Acts 12

**Explanation:** Acts 12 places us in a moment of intense fear and pressure. King Herod begins persecuting the church, executing James and imprisoning Peter. The situation is serious! This is not inconvenience, it is life and death. So how does the church respond? They pray. Verse 5 says the church was praying **"earnestly"** for Peter. That word carries the idea of intense, continual, fervent prayer. This wasn't casual or routine, it was desperate, persistent crying out to God in the middle of fear. They had no political power, no influence, no strategy — all they had was prayer. And that was enough. God answers in a powerful way. An angel appears, Peter's chains fall off, and he is led out of prison. Doors open, guards are passed, and what seemed impossible becomes reality. Meanwhile, the church is still praying, even struggling to believe the answer when it comes. This shows both the power of God and the weakness of human faith. Even imperfect faith, when placed in a powerful God, is enough. The chapter then shifts to Herod. While God rescues Peter, Herod exalts himself, accepting praise as if he were a god. Immediately, he is struck down. The contrast is clear: God delivers the humble and brings down the proud. Acts 12 ends with this statement: **"But the word of God increased and multiplied."** Fear, opposition, and power could not stop what God was doing.

**Application:** Acts 12 reminds us that the antidote to fear is prayer. When pressure increases, we all respond somehow. Some worry, some try to control, some withdraw. But the early church prayed. And they did so not casually, but earnestly. They brought their fear directly to God instead of letting it control them. Prayer is not a last resort, it is our greatest resource. This chapter also reminds us that God still breaks chains. Whether those chains are physical, emotional, or spiritual (addiction, anxiety, fear, old patterns, or even empty religion), nothing is too strong for Him. What feels impossible to us is not a barrier to God. This story also challenges our expectations. The church was praying, yet they were surprised when God answered. It's possible to pray without expecting. But God invites us to pray with boldness, bringing even the impossible before Him. Finally, Acts 12 warns us about pride. While Peter depended on God, Herod elevated himself. Fear can push us inward, but pride lifts us upward in our own eyes. Both pull us away from God. True security is found not in control or recognition, but in humility before Him. God overcomes fear not by removing every difficulty, but by reminding us that He is greater than all of it.

- *Why does fear often make staying where we are feel safer?*
- *Why is waiting on God often harder than acting?*
- *How can waiting actually prepare us for what God has ahead?*
- *How do we know when it's time to stop waiting and start acting?*
- *Where in your life are you feeling hesitant or afraid to move forward? What would it look like to trust God in that situation?*

- *Why is prayer not always our first reaction when we are faced with fear and pressure?*
- *What "chains" do you see people facing today that feel impossible to break?*
- *Why is it important to keep praying even when nothing seems to be changing?*
- *Where in your life do you struggle to believe God will actually answer?*

# OUR MIGHTY

2026 BIBLE READING GUIDE

God

## Wk 12 - Day 5: Psalm 56

**Explanation:** Psalm 56 is written by David during a time of real fear, when he was surrounded by enemies and unsure of what would happen next. This is not theoretical fear; it is personal, pressing, and constant. Right in the middle of that fear, David makes a defining statement: **“When I am afraid, I put my trust in You.”** Not *if* I am afraid — *when*. Fear is assumed, but so is the response. David doesn’t deny his fear, he redirects it. He repeatedly anchors himself in God’s Word: **“In God, whose word I praise...”** His confidence is not based on changing circumstances, but on unchanging promises. He doesn’t pray vague hopes, he clings to specific truth. Instead of dwelling on the threats around him, he fills his mind with what God has said. The louder voice of truth begins to drown out the noise of fear. One of the most tender moments comes in verse 8: **“You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in Your bottle.”** God not only sees our pain, He records it. He retains every tear. None are wasted. Every moment of fear, every night of struggle, every tear shed in faith is known by Him and will one day be transformed into something beautiful for His glory. David also reminds himself of who God is. God is not powerless — His strength is immeasurable. He is not indifferent — He cares deeply for His people. And He is not distant — He is near to those who call on Him. Yet in fear, He can feel far away, especially when we drift from His Word. The psalm ends with confidence: **“For You have delivered my soul from death... that I may walk before God in the light of life.”** God’s deliverance is not just about escape, it is about walking with Him.

**Application:** Psalm 56 reminds us that fear must be met with trust, not avoidance, not control, but trust. Terror and tears are real, but they are not meant to drive us away from God, instead they are meant to draw us toward Him. And not just for relief, but for relationship. God delivers us not simply so we can feel better, but so we can delight in Him, trust Him more deeply, and live for His glory. It also reminds us where to turn. When fear rises, the battle is often in the mind. What voice are we listening to? David chose to anchor himself in God’s Word. He replaced fear-filled thinking with truth-filled thinking. When we fix our minds on what God has said, fear begins to lose its grip. This chapter also comforts us deeply, because we are reminded that God sees every tear. Nothing you walk through is unnoticed. Nothing is wasted. Even your hardest moments are being held by a faithful God who will one day redeem them. Fear will come, but when it does, we know where to turn. Not inward, not to control, but to the voice of God that brings peace in the middle of the storm.

- *What voice tends to be louder in your life — fear or truth?*
- *Why can God feel distant even when we know He is near?*
- *How does remembering God’s power, care, and nearness help us to overcome fear?*
- *Why is it important to anchor our thoughts in Scripture during times of fear or worry?*
- *What are some promises of God you can hold to when you are afraid?*

## Week 13: “Our God Who Calls Us To His Work”

### Wk 13 - Day 1: Genesis 13

**Explanation:** Genesis 13 picks up after Abram’s misstep in Egypt in the previous chapter. Despite Abram’s failure, God has not abandoned His call on his life. Abram returns to the place where he first built an altar, signaling a return to worship and dependence on God. Before anything else happens, Abram re-centers his life on the Lord. That’s where God’s work always begins. As Abram and Lot prosper, their growing wealth creates tension. Their herdsman begin to quarrel because the land cannot sustain them both. Instead of allowing conflict to escalate, Abram takes the initiative to pursue peace. Though he is the one God called and the elder in the relationship, Abram humbly gives Lot the first choice of land. This is striking because it shows that Abram trusts God enough that he doesn’t need to grasp for control. Lot chooses based on what he sees. The Jordan Valley looks “well watered... like the garden of the LORD” (v. 10). But appearances are deceiving. The text quietly warns that the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked. Lot’s decision is driven by sight, not by spiritual discernment. In contrast, Abram remains where God has him, even if it seems less appealing. After Lot separates, God reaffirms His promise to Abram. God tells Abram to “lift up your eyes,” a contrast to Lot lifting up his eyes earlier. Abram’s future is not determined by what he chooses, but by what God promises.

**Application:** God’s work in your life doesn’t stop because of your past failures. Like Abram, you may have moments where you take matters into your own hands, step outside of God’s will, or act out of fear. But God’s call is bigger than your mistakes. The question is—will you return to the altar? Sometimes the greatest test of your calling isn’t opportunity, it’s opposition. When tension rises, when people misunderstand you, when things feel unfair, your response reveals whether you’re trusting God or protecting yourself. Abram could have demanded his rights, but he chose humility. That kind of surrender shows a heart that believes God is in control. We often make decisions like Lot, based on what looks best, feels easiest, or promises quick results. But not everything that looks like blessing is truly a blessing. If you’re not careful, you can drift toward things that slowly pull your heart away from God. Walking in God’s calling means trusting Him enough to let go of control. It means choosing peace over pride, faith over fear, and obedience over appearances. And when you do, you’ll find that God is still faithful to guide, provide, and fulfill His promises.

### Wk 13 - Day 2: Matthew 13

**Explanation:** In Matthew 13, Jesus Christ teaches several parables. These stories both reveal truth to receptive hearts and conceal it from hardened ones. The issue is not clarity, it’s the condition of the heart. The Parable of the Sower sets the tone. The seed is the Word of God, but the soils represent different heart responses. Some reject it outright, some receive it shallowly, others are choked by life’s distractions, and some truly receive it and bear fruit. The focus isn’t on the seed, it’s on the soil. The Parable of the Weeds reminds us that good and evil will coexist in this world until final judgment. God is patient, allowing time for repentance, but there will be a day of separation. The mustard seed and leaven highlight how God’s kingdom often starts small but grows powerfully and quietly. What seems insignificant now can have eternal impact. The hidden treasure and pearl reveal the surpassing worth of the kingdom, something worth giving up everything to gain. The net story echoes the coming judgment, reinforcing that not all who are gathered are truly His. Jesus ends by describing a disciple as one who brings out “treasures new and old,” someone who understands and lives out truth. In all this we see that, God’s call goes out to many, but only those with receptive hearts truly enter and bear fruit in His work.

**Application:** The question this chapter presses is simple but searching: What kind of soil am I? It’s easy to hear God’s Word regularly but remain unchanged. A hard heart resists it. A shallow heart gets excited but fades when life gets difficult. A crowded heart is too busy, distracted, or consumed with worries and desires to let truth take root. Only a surrendered heart produces lasting fruit. God’s work in your life isn’t just about hearing truth, it’s about responding to it. You can sit under good teaching, know the right answers, and still miss what God is doing if your heart isn’t open. The kingdom often grows in ways that feel small and unnoticed. Faithfulness in the ordinary things, whether it be time in the Word, quiet obedience, unseen sacrifice, is never wasted. God is building something far greater than you can see. Following God’s call means valuing His kingdom above everything else. When you truly see its worth, obedience stops feeling like loss and starts looking like gain.

- *In what ways are you tempted to make decisions based only on what you can see?*
- *How do you typically respond when conflict arises—do you fight for your rights or pursue peace?*
- *Is there an area in your life where pride is making it hard to trust God?*
- *Where might God be calling you to trust Him instead of taking control?*
- *How does this passage challenge your view of what it means to follow God’s call?*

- *What are some “thorns” in your life that could be choking out spiritual growth?*
- *Where might God be asking you to be faithful in something small right now?*
- *Is there anything in your life you are unwilling to give up for the sake of God’s kingdom?*
- *If someone looked at your life, what would they say you value most?*
- *If your heart were a garden, what would it currently look like, and what needs to be removed or cultivated?*

# OUR MIGHTY God

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## Wk 13 - Day 3: Nehemiah 3

**Explanation:** Nehemiah 3 may seem like just a long list of names and sections of a wall, but it reveals something powerful about how God accomplishes His work. The chapter records the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall, piece by piece, person by person. What stands out immediately is the variety of people involved. Priests, goldsmiths, merchants, rulers, and families all take part. This wasn't just the work of leaders, it was the work of everyone. God's mission wasn't reserved for a select few; it required the participation of ordinary people willing to step in. There is also a clear sense of unity and organization. The phrase "next to him" appears repeatedly, showing how each person worked alongside others. No one rebuilt the entire wall alone, instead they each took responsibility for their section. Some even repaired the portion opposite their house, meaning they started right where they were. However, not everyone responded the same way. Verse 5 notes that the nobles of Tekoa "would not stoop to serve their Lord." While many stepped forward, some resisted the call due to pride or unwillingness. Despite that, the work moved forward. God's work is accomplished when ordinary people respond to His call with willing, faithful obedience, right where they are.

**Application:** God's call to His work isn't just for pastors, leaders, or "spiritual" people, it's for everyone, including you. Nehemiah 3 reminds us that everyone has a place, a role, and a responsibility in what God is doing. It's easy to feel like what you do doesn't matter. Maybe your role seems small, unnoticed, or behind the scenes. But this chapter shows that every section of the wall was necessary. If one part was neglected, the entire structure would be vulnerable. Faithfulness in your part matters more than recognition from others. There's also a challenge here about proximity. Many rebuilt the wall right in front of their own homes. Sometimes we're looking for a big, impressive way to serve God, while ignoring the clear opportunities right in front of us, like our family, our church, our daily influence. Walking in God's calling means showing up, taking responsibility for your part, and serving faithfully alongside others. You don't have to do everything, you just need to do your part.

## Wk 13 - Day 4: Acts 13

**Explanation:** Acts 13 marks a major turning point in the early church, the intentional sending of missionaries. In the church at Antioch, leaders are worshiping, fasting, and seeking God when the Holy Spirit speaks: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (v. 2). God initiates the call, but the church affirms and sends them. Calling is both divine and communal. Barnabas and Paul are sent out, and immediately they face spiritual opposition. On Cyprus, a false prophet named Elymas tries to turn a leader away from the faith, but Paul boldly confronts him, and God demonstrates His power (vv. 6-12). From the beginning, God's work encounters resistance, but it also advances through His authority. As they continue, Paul preaches in a synagogue (vv. 16-41), giving a sweeping overview of Israel's history, showing how it all points to Jesus. He emphasizes that forgiveness of sins and justification come through Christ, which was something the law could never fully accomplish. The message is clear: salvation is by grace through Jesus alone. The response is mixed. Some are eager to hear more, while others grow jealous and oppose them. When rejection comes, Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles, fulfilling God's broader plan of God. The chapter ends with both persecution and joy. God calls, sends, and sustains His people in His work—even through opposition and rejection.

**Application:** God's call is not random, rather it flows out of relationship with Him. The leaders in Antioch weren't strategizing, they were worshiping! If you want to clearly hear God's direction, it often begins with a heart that is already surrendered and seeking Him. But when God calls you, it also will require action. Barnabas and Paul didn't just receive a word, they were sent out. God's work is not meant to stay in the realm of intention; it moves into obedience. But obedience doesn't mean ease. As soon as they step out, opposition comes. That's often where we hesitate. We assume that if something is hard, it must not be God's will. Acts 13 shows the opposite. Difficulty is often confirmation that you're stepping into meaningful kingdom work. Rejection can be one of the hardest parts of following God's call. Not everyone will respond positively. Some may resist, misunderstand, or even oppose you. But your responsibility is not the outcome, it's faithfulness to the message and the mission. God's work is bigger than any one response. When one door closes, He opens another. And even in the middle of resistance, you can walk in joy because your calling is anchored in Him, not in people's approval.

- *Where has God placed you right now that could be your "section of the wall"?*
- *Do you ever feel like your role in serving God is too small to matter? Why?*
- *What keeps you from fully stepping into what God has called you to do?*
- *What are some areas of service that often get overlooked because they seem ordinary?*
- *What is something right in front of you that you know God wants you to address, but you've been putting off?*

- *If God asked you to leave something comfortable to follow His call, what would be hardest to let go of?*
- *Have you ever allowed fear of rejection to keep you from obeying God?*
- *What role does worship and seeking God play in your decision-making?*
- *Are you more likely to hesitate because of fear of failure or fear of rejection? Why?*

# OUR MIGHTY

2026 BIBLE READING GUIDE

God

## Wk 13 - Day 5: Psalm 96

**Explanation:** Psalm 96 is a call to worship, but not quiet, private worship alone. It is a global, outward, joyful declaration of who God is. The psalm repeatedly urges us to “sing,” “declare,” and “proclaim” (vv. 1–3). Worship here is not meant to stay contained, rather it’s meant to be shared. The focus quickly expands beyond Israel: “Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all peoples!”. God’s greatness is not just for one group — it is for the whole world. This connects directly to God’s mission, that all people would know Him. The psalm contrasts the Lord with idols (vv. 4–6). Idols are powerless and man made, but the Lord is the Creator of the heavens. He alone is worthy of glory, strength, and honor. Worship is not just emotional, it is rooted in truth about who God actually is. Verses 7–9 call all people to give God the glory due His name and to worship Him in holiness and reverence. Then the message turns outward again: “Say among the nations, ‘The LORD reigns!’” (v. 10). This is both a declaration and a mission. God’s rule must be proclaimed! The psalm ends with a picture of creation itself rejoicing because the Lord is coming to judge the earth (vv. 11–13). His judgment is not something to fear for those who know Him, it’s something to celebrate. It means everything will be made right. God’s call is not only to worship Him, but to make Him known to the world.

**Application:** Worship was never meant to stop with you. If you truly see God’s greatness, it will overflow into declaration. Silence about God often reveals a heart that has grown familiar rather than filled with wonder. It’s easy to treat worship as something that happens in a service or a quiet moment, but Psalm 96 pushes us outward. God’s work includes making His name known, whether that’s to your family, your community, or beyond. And good news, you don’t need a platform to do that; you just need a heart that is captivated by Him. We live in a world full of modern “idols,” which are things people look to for identity, security, and satisfaction. But those things cannot compare to the living God. Part of stepping into God’s work is gently and faithfully pointing people to what is true. There is also a call to live with urgency and hope. God reigns now, and He is coming again. That truth gives both purpose and perspective. You are not just called to admire God, you are called to represent Him.

- *When was the last time you shared something about God with someone else?*
- *What makes it difficult for you to speak about God openly?*
- *Why do you think worship and evangelism are so closely connected in this psalm?*
- *What are some practical ways believers can “declare His glory” in today’s culture?*
- *Why do people often feel uncomfortable talking about God, even if they believe strongly?*
- *What “idols” compete for your attention, trust, or affection?*

## Week 14: “Our God Who Is Always Working”

### Wk 14 - Day 1: Genesis 14

**Explanation:** Genesis 14 introduces the first recorded war in Scripture. A coalition of kings goes to battle, and in the chaos, Lot (Abram’s nephew) is taken captive (vv. 1–12). What began as a political conflict quickly becomes personal for Abram. When Abram hears that Lot has been captured, he immediately acts. He gathers a small group of trained men and pursues the invading kings (vv. 13–16). Against all odds, Abram defeats them and rescues Lot, along with the people and possessions that were taken. This victory is not explained by military strength, it points to God’s unseen hand at work. After the battle, Abram is met by Melchizedek, a mysterious figure described as both king and priest. He blesses Abram and gives glory to “God Most High,” recognizing that it was God who delivered Abram’s enemies into his hand (vv. 18–20). Abram responds by giving a tenth of everything, which was a sign of worship and acknowledgment that the victory belonged to God. In contrast, the king of Sodom offers Abram the spoils of war. Abram refuses, making it clear that he will not allow anyone to say that man made him rich (vv. 21–24). He trusts God alone as his provider and source. Throughout the chapter, God is never quoted speaking, but He is clearly working. Behind the scenes, through conflict, rescue, and provision, God is actively accomplishing His purposes.

**Application:** There are seasons when God feels quiet, when you don’t see clear direction, or don’t hear obvious answers, and wonder what He’s doing. Genesis 14 reminds us that God is still working, even when He’s not visibly speaking. God was working through the conflict, through Abram’s response, and through the outcome. In the same way, God is often at work in the very situations we wish we could avoid. The challenge is trusting that His hand is present, even when it’s not obvious. Abram didn’t sit back, he stepped in. Sometimes God’s work in your life involves action, courage, and stepping into difficult situations. But even then, the victory doesn’t come from you, remember it comes from Him. There’s also a warning about where you look for provision and validation. The king of Sodom offered something immediate and tangible, but Abram refused it. Why? Because he didn’t want to confuse the source of blessing. We don’t need to take shortcuts to claim what is already ours in Him.

### Wk 14 - Day 2: Matthew 14

**Explanation:** Matthew 14 is a chapter filled with contrast. We see grief and miracles, fear and faith, limitation and provision, and through it all, God is actively working! The chapter begins with the tragic death of John the Baptist (vv. 1–12). His faithfulness leads to suffering, not deliverance. This reminds us that God’s work is not always visible in the way we expect. Even in loss, God is still moving His greater plan forward. After hearing the news, Jesus Christ withdraws to a desolate place, but the crowds follow Him. Instead of turning them away, He has compassion and heals them. Then comes the feeding of the five thousand. With just five loaves and two fish, Jesus provides abundantly. What seems insufficient in human hands becomes more than enough in His. Later, Jesus sends His disciples across the sea while He goes to pray. During the night, a storm arises, and the disciples are terrified. Jesus comes to them walking on the water, revealing His authority over nature. Peter steps out in faith, walks on water briefly, but begins to sink when he shifts his focus from Jesus to the storm and Jesus immediately reaches out and saves him. Throughout all these moments—grief, need, fear, and weakness—Jesus is present and working. His power is not limited by circumstances, and His care is constant. God is always providing, strengthening, and revealing Himself, even in the middle of life’s most uncertain moments.

**Application:** Life doesn’t always unfold the way we expect. John the Baptist’s story reminds us that faithfulness doesn’t guarantee ease. There will be moments when things feel confusing or even unfair. But God is still working, even when the outcome doesn’t make sense to us. In the feeding of the five thousand, the disciples saw lack but Jesus saw opportunity. We often look at what we don’t have and feel inadequate. But God isn’t asking you to have everything; He’s asking you to bring what you have and trust Him with it. He is still a God who multiplies. The storm reveals another struggle, fear. The disciples were exactly where Jesus told them to be, yet they still faced difficulty. Being in God’s will doesn’t mean avoiding storms, it means trusting Him in the middle of them. Living with the awareness that God is always working means trusting Him in grief, offering Him your insufficiency, and keeping your eyes on Him in the storm. Every crisis we encounter is another opportunity to lean in and trust Him more, to wait and watch His glory, and reach again for His hand that is always reaching back out for us!

- Are there areas in your life where you are tempted to take a “shortcut” instead of trusting God?
- How can you guard your heart from giving credit to the wrong source for your blessings?
- What is one situation in your life right now where you need to remind yourself, “God is still working”?

#### Reflection Questions

- What are some “storms” in your life right now that are testing your faith?
- What tends to shift your focus away from Jesus and onto your fears?
- Why do you think Jesus allowed the disciples to face the storm instead of preventing it?
- What does the feeding of the five thousand teach us about how God uses what we bring to Him?
- Are you more likely to stay in the boat (play it safe) or step out and risk failure? Why?

## Wk 14 - Day 3: Nehemiah 4

**Explanation:** As the rebuilding continues, Nehemiah 4 is yet another reminder that progress in God's work often brings opposition. When Sanballat and Tobiah hear about the wall being rebuilt, they respond with anger and mockery. They ridicule the work and the people, hoping to discourage them before the wall is ever completed. Nehemiah's response is not retaliation, it's prayer! He immediately brings the situation before God! Instead of being distracted by criticism, the people keep building. Verse 6 says, "the people had a mind to work." The word "mind" carries the idea of heart, will, and determination. This wasn't just physical labor, it was a unified, inward commitment to the task. As the wall progresses, the opposition intensifies. The enemies begin plotting actual attacks. Again, Nehemiah leads with both prayer and action: "We prayed to our God and set a guard" (v. 9). Trusting God did not mean neglecting responsibility, they did both. Fear, however, begins to creep in among the workers. The threats feel real, and the task seems overwhelming. Nehemiah responds by reminding them of who God is: "Do not be afraid... remember the Lord, who is great and awesome" (v. 14). Their focus shifts from the threat to the greatness of God. From that point on, the work continues with vigilance. Half the people build while the other half stand guard. We are challenged to remember that while God is working, He is also calling His people to pray, persevere, and press forward in His strength.

**Application:** If you are walking in what God has called you to do, opposition should not surprise you. In fact, resistance often shows that the work matters. The enemy rarely attacks what isn't making a difference. One of the enemy's primary tools is discouragement. Words, criticism, and doubt can slowly wear you down if you let them. That's why your first response must be like Nehemiah's...take it to God. Prayer keeps your focus where it belongs. But prayer doesn't replace action, rather it fuels it. Nehemiah prayed and set a guard. Trusting God doesn't mean passivity; it means dependence while you keep moving forward. When the people focused on the threats, they became overwhelmed. When they remembered who God is, courage returned. What you focus on will shape how you respond. God is always working, even when the pressure rises. Your role is to stay faithful, keep building, stay alert, and trust that God is strengthening you in the process.

- *What kinds of opposition or discouragement have you faced while trying to follow God?*
- *How do you usually respond to criticism or negative voices?*
- *Why is prayer sometimes our last resort when challenges arise?*
- *If the enemy wanted to discourage you from God's work, what strategy would be most effective—and is it already happening?*

## Wk 14 - Day 4: Acts 14

**Explanation:** Acts 14 continues the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas, and it reveals a repeated pattern: bold preaching, mixed responses, and God working through it all. In Iconium, many believe, but opposition quickly rises. Despite threats, they remain for a time, "speaking boldly for the Lord," and God confirms their message with signs and wonders. The city becomes divided, some respond in faith, others in hostility. God is working, but not everyone receives it the same way. In Lystra, Paul heals a man who had been crippled from birth. The crowd responds by trying to worship Paul and Barnabas as gods, calling them Zeus and Hermes. This reveals how easily people can misunderstand God's work. Paul and Barnabas immediately reject the praise and redirect the attention to the living God. Even then, the people struggle to grasp the truth. The situation quickly shifts. The same crowd that tried to worship them is persuaded to stone Paul. He is dragged out of the city and left for dead. Yet, remarkably, Paul gets up and continues on). God's work is not stopped by suffering, it continues through it. As they revisit the churches they planted, they strengthen believers with this message: "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God". A key phrase appears in verse 27: God had "opened a door of faith." This reminds us that ultimately, it is God who opens hearts and advances His work.

**Application:** Following God's call does not lead to a straight, easy path. Acts 14 shows highs and lows, acceptance and rejection, miracles and suffering...all woven together in God's work. One moment, people may celebrate you, the next, they may oppose you. If your identity is tied to people's reactions, you'll constantly feel unstable. Paul and Barnabas stayed grounded because their focus was on God, not the crowd. There's also a reminder to be careful with praise. It can be just as dangerous as criticism if it shifts your focus. When things go well, it's easy to subtly take credit. But like Paul and Barnabas, we must redirect glory back to God. The reality of hardship is unavoidable. It is not a possibility, it's a promise. But difficulty does not mean God has stopped working. Often, it's the very place where He is doing some of His deepest work in you and through you. Your role is to remain faithful, trusting that He is accomplishing more than you can see.

- *What role has hardship played in your spiritual growth?*
- *What are some modern examples of misinterpreting God's work?*
- *Why is it important to prepare believers for hardship rather than promise ease?*
- *If your faithfulness led to suffering instead of comfort, would you keep going? Why or why not?*

## Wk 14 - Day 5: Psalm 73

**Explanation:** Psalm 73 is a deeply honest look into the struggle of understanding God's work in a world that often seems unfair. Written by Asaph, the psalm begins with a confident truth: "God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart" (v. 1). But immediately, Asaph admits that his experience didn't seem to match that truth. He confesses that he nearly lost his footing because he envied the prosperity of the wicked. He observes their ease, health, pride, and apparent success. From his perspective, it looks like they thrive while living without regard for God. This creates a crisis in his heart where he begins to question whether his own faithfulness has been pointless. The turning point comes in verse 17: "until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end." In God's presence, his perspective shifts. The word "discerned" carries the idea of understanding or seeing clearly. What once seemed confusing now becomes clear. God is still working, even if the full picture isn't immediately visible. Asaph realizes that the prosperity of the wicked is temporary and unstable. Their end is not secure, no matter how it appears now. At the same time, he recognizes his own misplaced focus and admits his bitterness. The psalm ends with renewed clarity and confidence. Asaph declares that God is continually with him, guiding him and ultimately receiving him into glory. He concludes with one of the most powerful statements of devotion: "Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides You" (v. 25). Even when life seems unfair, God is still working; shaping your perspective, securing your future, and drawing you closer to Himself.

**Application:** There are moments when following God feels confusing. You try to live faithfully, but life doesn't seem to go the way you expected. Meanwhile, others who ignore God seem to thrive. If you're honest, that can stir frustration, doubt, or even envy. Psalm 73 reminds you that those thoughts don't disqualify you, they reveal where you need to go. Asaph didn't stay stuck in his confusion; he brought it into God's presence. That's where clarity comes. Your perspective is shaped by what you focus on. When you fixate on what others have, you can lose sight of what God is doing in you. But when you step into God's presence, your vision changes. You begin to see beyond the temporary and trust in what is eternal. God's work is not always immediate or obvious. He is working beneath the surface, shaping your heart, refining your desires, and securing your future. The greatest gift is not what He gives—it's Himself. When you truly see that, comparison loses its grip, and contentment begins to grow.

- *What are you most tempted to compare your life to?*
- *How does comparison affect your joy and trust in God?*
- *Why do you think God allows the wicked to prosper, at least temporarily?*
- *Why is being in God's presence so key to gaining the right perspective?*
- *Are you more focused on what God is doing for you—or what He is doing in you?*
- *If everything else was taken away, would God still be enough for you?*

## Week 15: “Our God Who Is Our Great Reward”

### Wk 15 - Day 1: Genesis 15

**Explanation:** Genesis 15 opens with God speaking directly to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great” (v. 1). Before addressing anything else, God reveals Himself as both protector and provider. The word “reward” carries the idea of wages or compensation, yet God is not just giving a reward; He is saying that He Himself is the reward. Abram, however, is still wrestling. God has promised descendants, but Abram remains childless. His question is honest...what good are promises if they seem unfulfilled? God responds not with rebuke, but reassurance. He brings Abram outside and tells him to look at the stars: “So shall your offspring be” (v. 5). What Abram cannot see in his circumstances, God shows him through His promise. Verse 6 is a key moment: “And he believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness.” The word “believed” means to trust, rely on, or place confidence in. Abram is declared righteous not because of what he does, but because of where he places his trust. This becomes a foundational truth throughout Scripture. God then formalizes His promise through a covenant. In an ancient covenant ceremony, animals are cut in half, and typically both parties would walk between them, symbolizing mutual commitment. But here, something remarkable happens—only God passes through, represented by a smoking fire pot and flaming torch). Abram does not walk through. This shows that the fulfillment of the promise rests entirely on God, not on Abram’s ability to uphold it. His plan includes both delay and difficulty, yet it remains certain. God Himself is the greatest reward, and His promises are secured not by our performance, but by His faithfulness.

**Application:** It’s possible to follow God and still wrestle with questions. Abram had seen God work, yet he still struggled with doubt. Sometimes we will wrestle with the tension of believing God while not yet seeing the fulfillment. Faith doesn’t mean the absence of questions; it means choosing to trust God in the middle of them. We often look to God for what He can give, whether that be answers, provision, direction. But Genesis 15 shifts that focus. The greatest reward is not what God gives, it’s God Himself! When that truth settles in your heart, it changes how you view waiting, uncertainty, and even unanswered prayers. Even when nothing seems to be happening, He is preparing, aligning, and fulfilling His purposes in ways you cannot yet see. There’s also deep security in knowing that God’s promises don’t rest on you. If they did, they would constantly feel uncertain. But because they rest on Him, you can trust that what He has said, He will do.

- *What does it mean to you personally that God Himself is your reward?*
- *Why do you think God allows seasons of waiting in our lives?*
- *What are some practical ways to keep your focus on God instead of just His promises?*
- *How does understanding that God secures the covenant change the way we view our relationship with Him?*

### Wk 15 - Day 2: Matthew 15

**Explanation:** In Matthew 15, Jesus Christ confronts outward religion and reveals what truly matters to God. The chapter begins with religious leaders criticizing Jesus’ disciples for not following traditional handwashing rituals. Jesus responds by exposing their hypocrisy. They had elevated man made traditions above God’s commands. He quotes Isaiah to show that their worship is empty because their hearts are far from God. Jesus then shifts the focus inward. He teaches that defilement doesn’t come from what enters a person, but from what comes out of the heart. The word “defile” carries the idea of making something unclean or impure. Sin is not merely external behavior, it flows from a corrupted heart. Next, a Canaanite woman approaches Jesus, pleading for her daughter to be healed. At first, Jesus’ response seems distant, even challenging. But her persistent, humble faith stands out. She acknowledges her unworthiness yet trusts in His mercy. Jesus commends her faith and grants her request. This moment reveals that access to God is not based on status, but on faith. The chapter closes with more healing and another miraculous feeding. Once again, Jesus provides abundantly. The people are left in awe, glorifying God. Throughout the chapter, Jesus exposes empty religion and elevates genuine faith. The emphasis is clear... God desires hearts that are truly turned toward Him. Our greatest reward is not religious appearance or external success, it’s a genuine relationship with God through a transformed heart of faith.

**Application:** It’s possible to look right on the outside while being far from God on the inside. That’s the warning of this chapter. You can know the right habits, say the right things, and still miss the heart of what God desires. God is not impressed by performance, He is after your heart. The question is not just what are you doing, but why are you doing it? Are you going through the motions, or are you genuinely pursuing Him? The struggles you face—anger, pride, fear, selfishness—don’t just need behavior management; they need heart transformation. And that’s something only God can do. When God becomes your greatest reward, your focus shifts. You stop trying to impress and start pursuing. You stop relying on appearance and start depending on Him.

- *What would you say most motivates your spiritual habits—routine, pressure, or genuine desire for God?*
- *Are there “heart issues” that you’ve been trying to manage externally instead of bringing to God?*
- *Why is it easier to focus on external behavior than internal transformation?*
- *How can we cultivate a faith like the Canaanite woman—persistent and humble?*
- *What would change if everyone truly believed God valued their heart more than their performance?*

## Wk 15 - Day 3: Nehemiah 5

**Explanation:** Nehemiah 5 shifts from external opposition to internal conflict. While the wall is being rebuilt, a crisis arises among the people themselves. Some are suffering greatly, facing famine, heavy taxes, and even forced to sell their children into slavery just to survive. What makes it worse is that this injustice is coming from their own fellow Jews. When Nehemiah hears about it, he becomes righteously angry. But instead of reacting impulsively, he “took counsel with himself, meaning he carefully considers the situation before responding. He then confronts the nobles and officials for charging interest and exploiting their own people. Nehemiah reminds them that their actions contradict the fear of God. The word “fear” here carries the idea of reverence and awe, which means living with an awareness of who God is. Their behavior showed that they valued gain over God. In response, the leaders repent and restore what they had taken. Nehemiah goes further by modeling generosity himself. As governor, he refuses the food allowance typically given to him. Why? Because he feared God and did not want to burden the people. His leadership is marked by sacrifice, not self-interest. The chapter ends with Nehemiah’s simple prayer: “Remember for my good... all that I have done for this people” (v. 19). He doesn’t seek reward from people—he looks to God. When God is your greatest reward, you are freed from selfish gain and able to live with integrity, generosity, and reverence.

- *What does “fearing God” look like in your everyday decisions?*
- *Are you using what God has given you to serve others or to benefit yourself?*
- *Is there anyone you may have wronged or taken advantage of, even subtly?*
- *How can we create a culture of honesty, accountability, and repentance?*

**Application:** It’s possible to be involved in God’s work outwardly while living selfishly inwardly. That’s what was happening here with the wall was going up, but hearts were out of line. God cares not just about what you do, but how you treat people along the way. When God is not your greatest reward, you’ll look for gain elsewhere. (status, money, control, recognition) And if you’re not careful, you can begin to justify actions that harm others in order to benefit yourself. Nehemiah shows a different way. He didn’t use his position for personal advantage, he used it to serve. That kind of leadership flows from a heart that truly fears God. There’s also a challenge about how you handle conviction. When confronted, the leaders responded with repentance and change. That’s not always easy, but it’s necessary for real growth. Living like God is your reward means you don’t have to take advantage of others to get ahead. You can live with open hands, integrity, and a clear conscience—trusting that God sees and honors faithfulness.

## Wk 15 - Day 4: Acts 15

**Explanation:** Acts 15 addresses a critical question in the early church: What is required for salvation? Some believers from a Jewish background begin teaching that Gentiles must be circumcised and follow the law of Moses to be saved. This creates sharp disagreement with Paul and Barnabas, leading to a gathering of church leaders in Jerusalem. At this council, Peter speaks, reminding everyone that God already gave the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles apart from the law. He makes a powerful statement: “We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.” Salvation is not earned, it is received by grace. Paul and Barnabas then share how God has been working among the Gentiles, confirming His acceptance of them. Finally, James affirms from Scripture that God’s plan has always included the nations. The conclusion is clear: Gentiles are not to be burdened with the full weight of the law, but are encouraged to live in a way that promotes unity and holiness. Our greatest reward is not found in what we achieve or earn, but in the grace of God that welcomes us into His work and His family.

**Application:** There is a constant pull to add something to grace. We may not say it out loud, but it shows up in how we think, feeling like we have to earn God’s approval or measure up to be accepted. Acts 15 confronts that directly. Salvation is not about what you do for God, it’s about what God has done for you. When you start to believe that your standing with God depends on your performance, your joy fades and your faith becomes heavy. But when you rest in grace, there is freedom. You don’t obey to earn God’s love, you obey because you already have it. When God is your greatest reward, you stop striving to prove yourself and start resting in what He has already accomplished.

- *Do you ever feel like you have to earn God’s approval? In what ways?*
- *Are there areas where you’ve added unnecessary “requirements” to your faith? Do you see this happening anywhere else among believers?*
- *Why is it so easy for people to drift toward performance-based thinking?*
- *Are you more likely to struggle with pride (feeling like you’ve earned something) or insecurity (feeling like you’ll never measure up)? Why?*

# OUR MIGHTY

2026 BIBLE READING GUIDE

God

## Wk 15 - Day 5: Psalm 16

**Explanation:** Psalm 16 is a declaration of trust, contentment, and joy in God. Written by David, it begins with a simple plea: “Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge”. David anchors his security not in circumstances, but in God Himself. In verse 2, David makes a profound statement: “I have no good apart from you.” This sets the tone for the entire psalm — God is not just a source of blessing; He is the blessing. Everything good ultimately flows from Him. David contrasts those who chase after other gods with those who delight in the Lord. He refuses to participate in idolatry, recognizing that pursuing anything apart from God only multiplies sorrow. What you run after will shape your life. In verses 5–6, David uses the language of inheritance: “The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup.” The word “portion” refers to an allotted share or inheritance. David is saying that God Himself is his portion—his satisfaction, security, and reward. His contentment is not based on what he has, but on who he has. David goes on to describe the stability and guidance he finds in God. Because the Lord is always before him, he is not shaken. This leads to deep joy and confidence, even beyond this life. Verses 9–11 point to a hope that extends past death. Ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, this passage speaks of resurrection and eternal life. “In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore”. The greatest reward is not temporary—it is eternal, found fully in God’s presence. God Himself is our portion, our joy, and our eternal reward—nothing else compares to having Him.

**Application:** It’s easy to say that God is enough, but life often reveals what we truly believe. When something is taken away, when circumstances shift, or when desires go unmet, it exposes where our confidence really lies. David’s words challenge us to examine what we’re depending on. Are you looking to God as your portion, or are you quietly relying on other things like success, relationships, comfort, or security to satisfy you? The truth is, anything you chase apart from God will eventually leave you empty. It may promise fulfillment, but it cannot deliver lasting joy. Only God can be your true portion. There is also incredible freedom here. When God is your reward, you don’t have to constantly chase more. You can live with contentment, knowing that you already have what matters most. And this isn’t just about the future, it’s about now. God’s presence brings joy, guidance, and stability today. Even in uncertainty, you can stand firm because your foundation isn’t shifting. Living this out means daily choosing to fix your eyes on God, reminding your heart that He is enough, and finding your deepest satisfaction in Him.

- *What are you currently looking to for satisfaction or security?*
- *How can you tell if something has become more important to you than God?*
- *When do you find it hardest to believe that God is enough?*
- *What is one way you can intentionally seek God’s presence this week?*
- *If God is your greatest reward, what are you still chasing that you don’t need?*

## Week 16: “Our God Who Cares For Us”

### Wk 16 - Day 1: Genesis 16

**Explanation:** Genesis 16 shows what happens when waiting turns into striving. God had promised Abram a child, but time passed and nothing seemed to change. Instead of continuing to trust, Sarai takes matters into her own hands and gives her servant Hagar to Abram so they can have a child through her. Abram agrees, and what follows is tension, jealousy, and broken relationships. Hagar, now pregnant, begins to look down on Sarai, and Sarai responds harshly. The situation spirals quickly. What was meant to “help” fulfill God’s promise only creates pain. Hagar eventually flees into the wilderness, alone and mistreated. But this is where the heart of the chapter is revealed—God meets Hagar in her distress. The Angel of the Lord finds her by a spring in the wilderness. This is the first time in Scripture that God specifically seeks out and speaks to someone in such a personal, direct way in their suffering. God calls her by name and asks, “Where have you come from and where are you going?”. Not because He lacks information, but because He is drawing her into awareness and trust. He instructs her to return and promises to multiply her offspring. Hagar responds by giving God a name: “You are a God of seeing” (v. 13). The phrase often translated “You see me” comes from the Hebrew idea of being fully seen, known, and understood. In a moment where she felt invisible and forgotten, she realizes that God has been watching and caring all along. She calls the place Beer-lahai-roi, meaning “the well of the Living One who sees me.” Her encounter transforms her perspective—God is not distant; He is attentive. Even in our mess, our mistakes, and our moments of feeling unseen, God is actively caring for us—seeing, pursuing, and providing.

**Application:** Waiting can be one of the hardest parts of following God. When things don’t happen on your timeline, it’s tempting to take control, force outcomes, or “figure it out” on your own. But Genesis 16 reminds us that stepping ahead of God often leads to unnecessary pain. Still, even when we make mistakes, God doesn’t walk away. He meets us in the middle of the consequences. Hagar wasn’t in an ideal situation, she was hurt, used, and alone, but God saw her. That same truth applies to you. There are moments when you may feel overlooked, misunderstood, or forgotten. Maybe no one else sees what you’re carrying or what you’re going through. But God does. He sees every detail, every struggle, every tear. And not only does He see, He cares enough to meet you there. He speaks, guides, and provides even in places you never expected to encounter Him.

### Wk 16 - Day 2: Matthew 16

**Explanation:** In Matthew 16, Jesus Christ exposes spiritual blindness, reveals His identity, and redefines what it means to follow Him. The chapter begins with the Pharisees and Sadducees demanding a sign. Despite all they had already seen, they refuse to believe. Jesus calls them out for being able to read the weather but not discern the “signs of the times.” Their issue isn’t lack of evidence, it’s a hardened heart. As they leave, Jesus warns His disciples to beware of the “leaven” of the Pharisees and Sadducees. “Leaven” refers to yeast, something small that spreads and influences everything. Here, it represents false teaching and hypocrisy. The disciples initially misunderstand, thinking about bread, but Jesus redirects them to see the deeper spiritual danger. The turning point comes when Jesus asks, “Who do you say that I am?” (v. 15). Peter answers, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v. 16). Jesus affirms that this truth is revealed by God, not human understanding. This confession becomes foundational, everything hinges on rightly knowing who Jesus is. Jesus then begins to reveal that He must suffer, be killed, and be raised. Peter, thinking he is protecting Jesus, rebukes Him. But Jesus responds sharply, showing that Peter’s thinking is centered on human concerns, not God’s plan. Finally, Jesus calls His followers to a life of total surrender: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross” (v. 24). Following Jesus means letting go of self-centered living and trusting Him fully. The paradox is clear...losing your life for Christ is how you truly find it. God’s care is seen not just in meeting our needs, but in revealing truth, correcting our perspective, and calling us into a deeper, life-giving relationship with Him.

**Application:** God’s care for you isn’t always expressed in giving you what you want, it’s often shown in giving you what you need. In this chapter, Jesus corrects, warns, and challenges His disciples. That is His care. We often want clarity, signs, or easy answers. But sometimes the greater need is a softened heart that can recognize what God is already doing. Spiritual blindness isn’t about lack of information, it’s about resistance to truth. The question Jesus asks — “Who do you say that I am?” — is still the most important question you will ever answer. Everything in your life flows from your understanding of Him. If you see Him clearly, you’ll trust Him more deeply. Following Jesus is not about adding Him to your life, it’s about surrendering your life to Him. God cares enough about you to not leave you where you are.

- *Have you ever tried to “help God out” instead of waiting on Him? What happened?*
- *What does it mean to you personally that God sees you?*
- *Why is waiting on God often so difficult?*
- *If God sees everything about you—your struggles, thoughts, and fears—how should that shape your relationship with Him?*

- *Are there areas where you are seeking signs instead of trusting what God has already shown you?*
- *Have you ever resisted something God was doing because it didn’t match your expectations?*
- *How would you personally answer the question, “Who is Jesus to me?”*
- *Why do people often want more signs even when they already have enough evidence?*
- *What areas in your life do you need to work on “denying yourself” and surrendering fully to Him?*

# OUR MIGHTY

2026 BIBLE READING GUIDE

God

## Wk 16 - Day 3: Nehemiah 6

**Explanation:** Nehemiah 6 shows that as God's work nears completion, opposition often becomes more subtle and strategic. The wall is almost finished, and Sanballat, Tobiah, and others shift from open hostility to distraction and deception. They repeatedly invite Nehemiah to meet them in the plain of Ono. On the surface, it seems like a reasonable request, but Nehemiah discerns their true intent: harm. His response is clear and consistent: "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down." He refuses to be pulled away from what God has called him to do. When distraction fails, they try intimidation. An open letter falsely accuses Nehemiah of rebellion, attempting to damage his reputation and create fear. Nehemiah again responds with clarity and prayer, refusing to be shaken by lies. Next comes deception from within. A man named Shemaiah urges Nehemiah to hide in the temple for safety. But this would have been both fearful and disobedient and Nehemiah was not permitted to enter in that way. The word "discerned" (v. 12) is key—it means to recognize or understand. Nehemiah recognizes that this counsel is not from God, but from those trying to trap him. Despite all of this, the wall is completed in just 52 days. The surrounding nations recognize that this work was accomplished "with the help of our God" (v. 16). God's care is evident, not in the absence of opposition, but in sustaining and guiding His people through it. God's care is seen in how He protects, strengthens, and gives discernment so His work in our lives can be completed.

**Application:** Not all opposition looks obvious. Sometimes it comes as distraction like good sounding opportunities that pull you away from what matters most. Other times it comes as criticism, false accusations, or even advice that seems spiritual but is actually misleading. God's care for you includes giving you discernment. Like Nehemiah, you don't have to respond to every voice or every invitation. Knowing what to say "no" to is just as important as knowing what to say "yes" to. There's also a battle for your focus. The enemy would love nothing more than to get you off track, discouraged, or fearful. But when you are confident in what God has called you to do, you can stay steady even when pressure rises. Fear is often used to manipulate decisions. Nehemiah could have justified hiding, but he recognized that fear-driven choices often lead away from obedience. God's care doesn't remove every threat, but it gives you courage to stand firm.

- How do you typically respond to criticism or false assumptions about you?
- Do you struggle more with distraction, discouragement, or fear? Why?
- How can we discern between good opportunities and God's best calling?

## Wk 16 - Day 4: Acts 16

**Explanation:** Acts 16 highlights how God cares by guiding, redirecting, and working through every circumstance. Paul meets Timothy and brings him along, showing God's care in raising up others. As they travel, the Holy Spirit prevents them from going certain places, then redirects them through a vision to Macedonia. God's guidance includes both closed and open doors. In Philippi, Lydia responds to the gospel because "the Lord opened her heart" (v. 14). This shows that God is actively working within people. After casting a spirit out of a slave girl, Paul and Silas are beaten and imprisoned. Yet in prison, they pray and sing. God sends an earthquake that opens the doors, leading to the salvation of the jailer and his household. What seems like interruption or suffering is actually God at work, guiding, saving, and sustaining. God's care is seen in His guidance, His presence in hardship, and His work in ways we don't always expect.

**Application:** God's care doesn't always look like open doors, it often looks like closed ones. When your plans are redirected, it's easy to feel frustrated or confused. But Acts 16 reminds you that God's "no" is not rejection, it's redirection. He sees what you cannot. There are also moments when obedience leads to difficulty, not ease. Paul and Silas followed God's leading, and it led them to prison. But even there, God was working. Sometimes the place you would never choose is the very place where God is doing His greatest work. Your response in those moments matters. Paul and Silas chose worship over worry. That didn't just sustain them, it impacted others around them. Your faith in hard seasons can become a testimony that points others to God. God's care is also deeply personal. He opened Lydia's heart. He reached the jailer in his darkest moment. He sees individuals, not just crowds. When you trust that God cares for you, you can walk forward with confidence—even when the path doesn't make sense, knowing He is guiding, working, and present every step of the way.

- How have you seen God work in unexpected ways in your life?
- What does worship look like in your life during hard seasons?
- Can you think of a time when a "closed door" turned out to be God's guidance?
- How can we support each other when someone is going through a difficult season?
- If God is guiding even your detours, how should that change the way you view your current situation?

# OUR MIGHTY

2026 BIBLE READING GUIDE

God

## Wk 16 - Day 5: Psalm 34

**Explanation:** Psalm 34 is a testimony of God's care in the middle of fear and trouble. Written by David after a dangerous encounter, it begins with a commitment: "I will bless the LORD at all times" (v. 1). David chooses praise not because life is easy, but because God is faithful. He invites others to join him in magnifying the Lord, then shares his experience: "I sought the LORD, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears". Notice, God doesn't just remove danger; He addresses fear. His care reaches the heart. Verse 6 says, "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him." The word "poor" carries the idea of being afflicted or helpless. David acknowledges his need, and God responds with attention and rescue. One of the most powerful promises comes in verse 7: "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him." The word "encamps" paints a picture of surrounding protection, meaning God's care is not distant; it is near and active. David then calls others to "taste and see that the LORD is good" (v. 8). This is an invitation to experience God personally, not just know about Him. The psalm balances promise with reality. God delivers, provides, and is near, but trouble still exists). Verse 18 is especially tender: "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted." God's care is not just seen in rescue, but in His presence with us in pain. God's care is personal, present, and powerful—He hears, delivers, and draws near to those who trust Him.

**Application:** God's care doesn't mean you'll never face trouble, it means you're never alone in it. Psalm 34 doesn't ignore hardship; it shows how God meets you in it. Fear is something we all face. Situations, uncertainty, and pressure can overwhelm your heart. But David reminds us that when you bring your fears to God, He doesn't ignore them, He responds! He may not always remove the situation immediately, but He strengthens you within it. There's also an invitation here to experience God personally. It's possible to know about God's goodness without truly experiencing it. "Taste and see" means stepping into trust, bringing your needs, your fears, and your life before Him. God's care is especially real when you feel broken. When life feels heavy, when your heart is hurting, that's not when God pulls away, it's when He draws near. Living in light of this means choosing praise even when it's hard, bringing your fears honestly to God, and trusting that He is both present and working, even when you don't fully understand.

- *What fears are you currently facing?*
- *How can you choose praise even when life feels hard?*
- *What does it mean to you that God is near when you are hurting?*
- *How can you remind yourself daily of God's care and presence?*
- *If someone listened to your words this week, would they hear more fear or more faith?*
- *Are you more focused on your problems or on God's presence in them? What would change if you truly believed God is near to you right now?*