

PRAYER INITIATIVE

Love THE LOST

28-DAY DEVOTIONAL AND PRAYER JOURNAL

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NKJV

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Hello!

I'm so glad you've decided to embark on this prayer initiative with me. For some of you, this is your first go-round with prayer. Some are seasoned prayers. And many fall somewhere in between.

No matter where you are on your prayer journey, you need to know your prayers are effective. Any time you pray, you release the power of God into this earth and into people's lives. God needs us to pray.

You need to know something. Things happen when you pray that don't happen when you don't pray. Even when you don't see anything right away, even if you don't feel anything when you pray, your prayers count. And we need them.

This devotional is meant to be prayed for the same person/people for 28 days in a row. Mark their names and make a commitment to pray for them all the way through. It will make a difference.

In order to help us pray together every day, we have set up a journal with the following:

1. A scripture (our prayers must be Word-based).
2. A devotional thought.
3. Prayer points to help us grow closer to God.
4. Prayer points for the people on our list.

You can pray in the morning, at night, or anywhere in the middle. Whenever you pray, we encourage you to start your prayer time with this devotional. It will help guide and direct your prayer. And even though we aren't physically together in the same room, we will all be praying the same thing. It's powerful.

This isn't meant to limit your prayer time but to be a starting point. Feel free to pray more detailed as God leads you. And He will lead you. (It's so exciting to grow in hearing His voice and following His promptings.)

Other great scriptures to pray for ourselves and others are the epistle prayers (see the Appendix). These prayers come straight from the Word of God. Read them. Pray them daily for yourself and those on your list and watch what God will do.

As you begin this 28-day journey, pray this:

Father, I ask You to use my life to pray for the people on my list during the next 28 days. You alone hold the power to change lives, and we are thankful that You've given us the avenue of prayer to release Your power into the lives of our friends, family, community and neighbors. I ask You to stretch me, help me grow, and show me how to give myself to prayer. Give me Your eyes and Your heart for the lost. Help me see them as You do — precious fruit. I love You and come to You with great anticipation of what You will do.

In Jesus' Name,
Amen!

This is going to be fun. Let's pray!

Blessings,

Toni Lagaras

Day 1

Waking up isn't usually fun. If we set an alarm, chances are we'll hit the snooze button, maybe even more than once. Then we'll roll out of bed and groggily look longingly back at the soft mattress and warm blankets, wishing for just five more minutes.

Nowadays we buy room darkening curtains to keep the light out. But back in the days before electricity, the farmers knew it was time to get up when the first rays of daylight caused the rooster to crow and crept through the windows of their home. So it is with the light of God coming into our lives. When it comes, it begins to awaken things in our spirits.

I believe this month will be marked by spiritual awakening, both in the lost for whom we're praying and in us. We all have areas in our lives where we're "drowsy" and need the light to shine. It's time to wake up.

For the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light."
Ephesians 5:14 (NLT)

Day 2

Jesus is everything I never knew I needed. Before I came to know Christ, I was lost. I was on a path void of truth and I didn't know where I was going. I didn't know who He was. I didn't know that I needed Him. I didn't know I was lost and in desperate need of being found.

I didn't know until someone prayed for me. And prayed and prayed and prayed. And then I saw it. I saw my need, my absolute necessity of Jesus in my life. And it changed me forever.

The only difference between you and me and the people on your list is that we've seen the need for Jesus and they haven't yet. And that's an easy fix for God.

I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light.

Ephesians 1:18 (NLT)

Day 3

Your heart is the most vulnerable part of who you are, physically and emotionally. Physically, it's one of our most vital organs. If you live to be 80 years old, your heart will have beaten approximately **3,363,840,000** times, pumping blood through your entire body with each beat.

If something were to penetrate it, you would die. It's surrounded by the sternum in the front and the spinal cord in the back, and your ribs wrap around it on all sides, forming a protective barrier against outside attack.

It's the same with our emotional heart. People, situations, and life have hurt us throughout the years, and the natural response is to build a "wall" to protect ourselves. It's true our walls keep the bad stuff out, but it can keep good things out as well, things like love and joy and peace.

We need walls to help protect us against hurtful people. Those are healthy. But God will never hurt us. Quite the opposite. He desires to heal every hurt of the past if we will just let Him penetrate our defenses to get to our heart.

And I will give them one heart [a new heart] and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony [unnaturally hardened] heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh [sensitive and responsive to the touch of their God].

Ezekiel 11:19 (AMPC)

Day 4

They've been saying, "Jesus is coming back soon," for centuries. As the apostles wrote the letters that make up our New Testament, they referred to it as His soon return. That was 2,000 years ago, yet here we still are.

And this is why. God isn't willing that any should perish. He's patiently waiting for the church to do its job of reaping the harvest. Reaping the harvest starts with praying and ends with telling the lost about the love of God.

Keep doing your job. Pray. Share. It will bear fruit for the kingdom. Once the harvest is fully reaped, He will come back and not a moment before. He paid a great price with His blood, and He is patiently waiting to get everything He paid for.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

**PRAYER IS THE MAIN JOB
OF THE CHURCH.**

Day 5

Search me and know my heart. That can be a frightening thing to pray until we realize that He already knows everything. In fact, He knows things about us we don't even know about ourselves, things that are hidden deep in our hearts. And He loves us still.

Sometimes we avoid coming to Him because we're ashamed of those hidden things. That's what happened to Adam and Eve in the Garden in Genesis chapter 3. God's heart was saddened by their sin because it brought a separation between Himself and the creation He loved. They ran away from God in shame instead of running to God in repentance.

But even when they ran, God pursued them. He covered them. And He left them with hope and a promise of restoration. There's nothing we have done, nothing we are doing, nothing we will ever think to do that could separate us from the love of God.

Search me and know my heart.

Psalm 139:23 (NIV)

He reveals things in our hearts to us so that we can clean it out and walk even more closely with Him. That's what He's after, you know, a deeper intimacy with us. Because we know He passionately, recklessly and relentlessly loves us, we can pray this with abandon — search me and know my heart, oh God.

PRAYER POINTS FOR ME

- Father, I trust You with my heart. All of it. The good, the bad and the ugly. I know I'm safe with You.
- Father, Search me. Know me. Help me change to be more like You.
- God, saturate my life with Your love today.

TODAY'S PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE ON MY LIST

- Father, open the eyes of _____. Let them experience Your relentless love and the safety that can be found as they yield their heart to You.

SPACE TO REFLECT

Day 6

Anxiety. Worry. Fear. These are the feelings we get when we're thinking about a situation with a "what if" attached to it. "What if" they leave? "What if" I lose my job? "What if" the test results come back cancerous? It's natural. It's normal. It's awful.

There's nothing pleasant about anxiety. And there's a better way to live.

We feel anxious and overwhelmed when we are more enamored with the problem than we are with the promise. When we live focused on the mountain instead of the Mountain Mover. Worry thrives when we compare the problem to our own lack of ability instead of comparing it to how big our God is.

It's also the feeling we feel when we think of those all around us who are lost, and it steals our peace. God is bigger than anything we will ever face, and He loves our family and friends even more than we do. He longs for them with an everlasting love. And He knows how to reach them.

Test me and point out all my anxious thoughts.

Psalm 139:23 (NIV)

Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.

1 Peter 5:7 (AMPC)

PRAYER POINTS FOR ME

- Father, I choose to remember how powerful You are and I choose to see my problem as it really is, tiny in comparison to my God.
- Father, help me cast this care on You and trust You to work it out.
- Father, I choose to kick worry out and replace it with faith because You are faithful.

TODAY'S PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE ON MY LIST

- Father, give _____ a revelation of who You are and how big You are and let Your peace be tangible every time they hear about You. You know how to reach them. I ask You to move in their life today and draw them towards You.

SPACE TO REFLECT

ENCOUNTERING **GOD'S PRESENCE**
THROUGH PRAYER WILL **BRING**
REST TO YOUR SOUL.

Day 7

My husband worked for several years on the midnight shift at our church as the maintenance man. It was a large church, and there were a lot of rooms, so he had a lot of keys. And when I say a lot of keys, I mean a LOT of keys.

Each key had a different purpose and let him into a different room. Without those keys, he couldn't do his job because they unlocked the door to the rooms he needed to clean. But they didn't work all by themselves. He had to put the key in the lock and turn it for the door to open.

Jesus gave the church some keys. The key of prayer. The key of His Word. The key of authority. And He fully expects that we will use our keys.

The job of the church is prayer, and when we use our keys, they unlock doors into the supernatural realm for God to be able to move on this earth.

“And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.”
Matthew 16:19 (NLT)

Some of our loved ones look too far gone to us. Their situation looks hopeless. But there's nothing so big that God can't intervene if we will ask. He can break off addictions, soften hard hearts, and awaken a soul that refuses to believe if we will put the key into the lock and turn it.

PRAYER POINTS FOR ME

- Father, show me how to use my key of prayer.
- Father, open my eyes to see and understand the authority You've given me in Your Name.
- Father, I believe You are a supernatural God who can still do supernatural things if the church will only ask.

TODAY'S PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE ON MY LIST

- Father, I pray for _____. In Jesus' Name, I ask You to soften their hard heart. Reveal to them an awareness of Your presence. Shine the light of Your goodness in their heart that awakens in them a desire to know You.

SPACE TO REFLECT

Day 8

Since that fateful day in the Garden when Adam and Eve fell and brought us with them into separation from God, He has been single-minded in purpose. In Genesis 3:15, we see the first promise of Jesus and in Revelation 13:8 we find that Jesus was the Lamb slain before the world was ever even formed.

God spent thousands of years preparing for the moment all of humanity would be bought back and brought back to Him. The whole of the Old Testament points to it and the entirety of the New Testament reveals it — God's plan of redemption is Jesus.

God's heart is for the lost. He longs for them. He yearns for them. He wants us to feel the same way He does about them. And when we pray for their salvation, we are joining with His plan and purpose. He listens and He acts every single time we pray.

This is the [remarkable degree of] confidence which we [as believers are entitled to] have before Him: that if we ask anything according to His will, [that is, consistent with His plan and purpose] He hears us. And if we know [for a fact, as indeed we do] that He hears and listens to us in whatever we ask, we [also] know [with settled and absolute knowledge] that we have [granted to us] the requests which we have asked from Him.

1 John 5:14-15 (AMPC)

We have been praying together for a week now, but maybe we haven't seen any evidence of change in the people we're praying for. Don't lose heart. If we pray according to His purpose, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, we know we have granted to us the requests we have asked from Him.

Don't stop praying.

PRAYER POINTS FOR ME

- Father, strengthen my faith today to continue to pray, even if I don't see change yet.
- Father, help me see the lost the way You see them. Give me a burden for their salvation.
- Father, lead me in my prayer for the lost today.

TODAY'S PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE ON MY LIST

- Father, reveal Yourself to _____ today. Send someone to tell them of Your goodness and lead them into Your sweet salvation.

SPACE TO REFLECT

Day 9

Have you ever tried to walk around in the dark? If it's a familiar place, you may be able to make your way through, but you can't see any obstacles or dangers around you. It's easy to bump into things, step on a Lego®, and stumble about. But if you turn on the light, everything changes.

Over and over in scripture we see the contrast of light and darkness. God's realm is light. The devil's is darkness. Period. In fact, 1 John 1:5 says, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."

When we were born again, God turned on the light in our spirit and our soul and we were able to see clearly. And that's exactly what needs to happen in the lives of the lost people on our lists. So that's exactly what we're going to pray today.

For You will light my lamp; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.

Psalm 18:28 (NKJV)

IT IS THROUGH **PRAYER ALONE**
THAT **GOD'S POWER** IS RELEASED
INTO OUR SITUATIONS.

Day 10

Jesus had a massive work to do while He was here on this earth. He was always surrounded by crowds who were pulling on Him. He was fully God, but He was also fully man with the limitations of a human.

Jesus saw the crowds. He didn't look past them. He looked at them. As He looked at the vast multitudes of the lost and broken, He was overwhelmed by the task at hand, and He knew He needed help.

So He recruited His disciples. But before He ever told them to GO to the harvest field, He told them to pray for harvesters. Pray for help. Pray for people to be willing to lay down their lives and go for Him.

It's important to pray for the lost. It's important to go to the lost. But before we do any of that, we need to pray for the harvesters to be filled with such a desperation for the lost that they will be compelled to go.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."

Matthew 9:36-38 (NLT)

Day 11

We lost our daughter one day when she was around 2 years old. I was outside playing with our 3 kids while my husband was inside fixing a window. One minute she was there. When I looked up the next minute, she was gone. I can't tell you the absolute panic that filled my heart.

I ran to my husband, hoping she had gone in with him, but she had not. Then we were both panicked. We ran up and down the street, shouting her name and looking for her. We finally found her, thank God! We didn't know she had learned how to open the door and she let herself into the garage without me seeing her.

I will never forget that hopeless panicked feeling.

That's how God feels about each and every person on your list. About each and every lost soul on this planet. He's calling to them. Reaching for them. He's inviting His church to join Him in His search, and He does it through our prayers.

If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it?

Luke 15:4 (NLT)

Day 12

It's one thing to know about the love of God and it's completely Next Level to experience it.

I used to hear people say, "God loves You." I would hear them quote John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever should believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." I even memorized it. I knew it was true because God's Word said it was true.

But one day, I experienced His love for myself. He touched my heart and revealed His love to me in a personal way. There are no words to describe it. I just knew right then and there that God was real and His love was different than anything I had ever experienced. And I wanted more and more of Him.

Do you remember when you experienced His love for the first time?

His love is the gamechanger.

That you may really come to know practically, through experience for yourselves the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge without experience.

Ephesians 3:19 (AMPC)

Day 13

God hears me when I call. I find Him when I seek Him. These are truths we need to remember daily because they don't always feel true. Our feelings can and will lie to us.

God is not playing hide and seek with us. Sometimes it can feel like that when we pray because we don't "feel" anything. But effective prayer isn't based in how we feel when we pray. It doesn't have anything to do with whether or not we got a goose bump. It's not about how loud we pray or even how long we pray.

Effective prayer is based on faith in God's Word. Maybe you have been praying these past 13 days and wonder if it's working. Do you wonder if God is even listening?

I can tell you for sure He is because His Word says He is. Period. Keep praying whether you feel anything or not. Your prayers are prevailing and releasing God's power into this earth.

In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.
Jeremiah 29:12-13 (NLT)

Day 14

When my kids were little, at times I felt like I could read their minds. For instance, when I was making frosting in the mixer, I would turn around and see three eager little faces staring at me. They didn't even have to ask. What they wanted was obvious. I knew, I mean I just *KNEW* they wanted to lick the beaters and the bowl.

Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

(Matthew 6:8 NIV)

Our heavenly Father sees our lives, every single detail of them. He knows our hearts. He knows even the deepest desires that we haven't shared with a single soul. Nothing escapes His notice. And He loves the people on our list and wants to move in their lives even more than we do.

But we still have to ask.

Many ministers down through time have said, "It seems that God can do nothing on this earth except in response to prayer." And it is true. He may know what we need, but He still needs us to open our mouths and release our faith through prayer.

That's why things happen when we pray that don't happen when we don't pray. If we don't pray, He doesn't move. But every time we pray we open the door for His power to be released into the lives of those on our lists.

That's why we pray. And pray again. And pray always. That's why we never stop praying.

PRAYER POINTS FOR ME

- Father, reveal to me again the importance and power of prayer.
- Father, redeem my time and show me what it means to pray without ceasing.
- Father, I'm so thankful that You not only know what I need but You want me to ask so You can provide it.

TODAY'S PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE ON MY LIST

- Father, You love _____ so much that You already paid for them. I ask you to encounter them with Your tangible love today. Send someone across their path to reach out to them with the pure love of God, and I pray it will draw them to want You. May they respond to You as they begin to understand how much You love them.

SPACE TO REFLECT

Day 15

The Christians James was talking to here were anxiously awaiting the return of the Lord. They wanted Him to come and come now. "What's taking so long?" That was the theme of their thoughts.

James gives them a peek into the heart of God here and answers that question so well. He's waiting for the "precious fruit of the earth." Do you know who that is? It's everyone on your list. It's everyone who has yet to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord. That's a lot of people. The church was being selfish. In essence, they were okay with millions of souls being lost forever as long as it made their life easier. Ouch.

I like how James describes the lost. Precious fruit. Precious. There are a lot of people who don't know Christ that I wouldn't call precious. Many words pop into my mind when I think of them. Frustrating. Wicked. Evil. Vile. Hopeless. But not precious.

There is no rotten fruit in His eyes. What we may call rotten, like a rapist or murderer or someone so lost in addiction we've had to cut them off because they've hurt and betrayed us too many times, God calls precious. He paid a hefty price for them like He did for you and me.

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

James 5:7 (NKJV)

There is nobody so far gone that God's powerful, loving, delivering arm can't reach them if we pray. Do what you need to do in the natural. Draw boundaries if you have to, but never stop praying. Ever. It releases God's power where it's needed the most.

PRAYER POINTS FOR ME

- Father, help me see the harvest as You see them, precious fruit and not rotten.
- Father, help me to be patient in waiting and yet still longing to see Your return.
- Father, help me not be selfish with my time as others continue to be lost but help me always be watching in prayer.

TODAY'S PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE ON MY LIST

- Father, _____ is precious to You. You want them. You long for them to be part of Your family. Send the rain of Your presence into their heart to soften it and I pray they will respond to Your touch and turn to You.

SPACE TO REFLECT

Day 16

Our daughter keeps us on our toes. We learned early on not to say anything we don't mean when it comes to her. She remembers everything and she doesn't let up until we do what we said we would do. If we say we were going to buy her something, she reminds us hourly until we do. She keeps us honest, that's for sure.

Ask. Seek. Knock. These words were written in the present continuous tense. In other words, it could say:

"Ask and keep on asking."

"Seek repeatedly."

"Don't stop knocking."

That's what we're doing during these 28 days for the people on our list. We may not have seen any changes yet, but we aren't going to stop asking until we do. That's what God expects of us. That's what He needs from us. So that's what we'll do.

Ask, and the gift is yours.
Seek, and you'll discover.
Knock, and the door will be opened for you. For every persistent one will get what he asks for. Every persistent seeker will discover what he longs for. And everyone who knocks persistently will one day find an open door.

Matthew 7:7-8 (TPT)

Day 17

Sometimes it's difficult to pray because the mountain we're looking at is so much bigger than we are. We can't see how it will ever change or how they will ever change.

Trust me when I tell you if God says there's no limit to His power, there is no limit to His power. There is no stopping Him. There isn't anything or anyone stronger than He is.

If He could get ahold of my cold, hard heart when I was 20 years old and wanting absolutely nothing to do with Him, He can do it for the people on your list too. The only hindrance He has is if no one is asking.

Don't stop praying. There is no limit to what our God can and will do when we pray.

Is there any limit to My power?

Numbers 11:23 (GNT)

Day 18

One year at Christmas, I had a friend who told me, "Jesus is like pumpkin roll. It tastes so good you can't keep it to yourself. You want to share it with everyone!"

For those of you who don't know, pumpkin roll is a sweet roll of confection deliciousness. And I agree wholeheartedly. God is good, and Jesus is so sweet I want everyone I know to share in His sweetness.

I used to get so confused as to how people could not want Him. Then it dawned on me. They haven't tasted Him yet. They haven't experienced Him. They haven't had a personal encounter with His mercy and goodness and love. Once you do, you're hooked and you want everyone around you to taste and see what has set you free.

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good;
Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

Psalm 34:8 (NKJV)

Drink deeply of the pleasures of this God.
Experience for yourself the joyous mercies he gives to all who turn to hide themselves in him.

Psalm 34:8 (TPT)

Day 19

Jesus is everything I never knew I needed. We've said this already but it bears repeating.

Why did I not know? How could I have been so blind? This verse tells us. Because Satan had me blindfolded. I was deceived until I encountered Jesus for myself. You probably have a similar story. Right?

My life was a mess and I was drowning in darkness before I accepted Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. When the blindfold was removed and the light came, I was delivered. Free. Loved. New. I am a completely different person now. I know who I was and I see who I now am, and no one can take that from me.

That's the only difference between us and the people on our list. They're still living in the dark behind the blindfold. It's time to turn the light on.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV)

Day 20

Have you ever been thirsty? I think it's safe to say we all have been. What's the first thing you do? Reach for something to drink. But taking a drink of something won't alleviate thirst if you drink the wrong thing. If you reach for pop, it will only make you thirstier. Water, on the other hand, quenches thirst.

What you drink is just as important as taking a drink.

For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground.
Isaiah 44:3 (NKJV)

Jesus told us in John 7:37, "If you're thirsty, come to me and drink."

We all get thirsty spiritually and emotionally. Sometimes we try to quench it with the things of this world, like TV or books or drugs or alcohol. But those things will never satisfy. They only make us thirstier.

Jesus is the cup that will never run dry. He quenches every thirst and satisfies the longing of every heart when we choose to drink of Him instead.

PRAYER POINTS FOR ME

- Father, teach me to turn to You when I thirst instead of the things that can never satisfy my heart.
- Father, thank You for always being there for me when I need You.
- Father, I surrender those things in my life I've put in Your place. Show me how to drink from You alone.

TODAY'S PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE ON MY LIST

- Father, _____ is thirsty for You and probably doesn't even know it. I know You are the only thing that will satisfy their thirst. Pour Your water on the dry ground of their heart and flood their thirsty soul with the River of Life from heaven.

SPACE TO REFLECT

THE POWER TO **ANSWERED PRAYER**
LIES NOT IN THE WORDS WE SPEAK
BUT IN THE **ONE WE ASK.**

Day 21

We've all seen pictures of the concentration camp prisoners from the holocaust. They were malnourished and abused. I recently read the story of Corrie Ten Boom's life called *The Hiding Place*. It painted a disturbing but accurate picture of someone being held captive by a tyrant. If you have never read it, you need to.

A captive is someone who is held against their will. They lose all freedoms. They lose all their personal possessions. They are not well cared for. They receive little to no food. No heat. No medical care. No comforts of life. Many are beaten and tortured.

It's no life to live, but it's the life we all lived before we surrendered to Jesus. Thank God He paid the price to set us free, and not only us, but everyone who would ever live and die on this earth, including the people on your list.

Their freedom has been purchased; they just don't know it yet. That's where we come in. They need someone to stand in the gap between them and God in heaven who fully paid for their release.

Who can snatch the plunder of war from the hands of a warrior?
Who can demand that a tyrant let his captives go?
But the LORD says,
"The captives of warriors will be released, and the plunder of tyrants will be retrieved.
For I will fight those who fight you, and I will save your children."
(Isaiah 49:24-25 NLT)

By praying daily, you get to be among those on the rescue team, bringing them back to their loving Father.

PRAYER POINTS FOR ME

- Father, thank You for rescuing me from the bondage I used to live in. I love living free!
- Father, tune my ear to Your voice as I lean in to pray for the people on my list today to know how to pray for them.
- Father, strengthen my faith to pray daily, releasing Your power with every word to help set the captive free.

TODAY'S PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE ON MY LIST

- Father, _____ is lost. In bondage. Stuck in captivity with no way of escape except by You. I ask You to intervene. Make them aware of the freedom You purchased and give them the strength to walk out of it.

SPACE TO REFLECT

Day 22

Truth. It's defined as the real facts about something. Absolute truth is something that is true at all times in all places. It's a fact that can never be changed. For example, there are no round squares. Subjective truth, however, is truth based on a person's feelings and emotions. It's the perception of something based on the experience at the time.

We live in a time in history where people believe in absolute truth less and less. Truth has become subjective. If it feels good, it's truth for you. But what people believe doesn't change the facts of the Truth. Truth is truth whether we believe it or not. A lie is still untrue even if everyone believes it.

God's Word is the foundation for truth. It is always true, even if no one believes it. And it is in His Word we find our freedom. Our redemption. Our deliverance. Our hope.

And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.

John 8:32 (NLT)

Sanctify them [purify, consecrate, separate them for Yourself, make them holy] by the Truth; Your Word is Truth.

John 17:17 (AMPC)

Day 23

Before you ever believed in Jesus, you heard about Him. You likely heard about Him through a person. It could have been someone close to you, a stranger on an airplane, or a preacher on TV.

Did you know that on average a person hears the gospel 5–6 times before they turn to Christ? I was a wee bit more stubborn than that. How many times did it take you? We recently spoke to a young man who said his coworker invited him to church for four months before he finally showed up, and he gave His heart to the Lord that very Sunday.

There are lost people all around us that don't believe yet because they haven't heard yet. Oh, I'd venture to say that everyone in America has heard about Jesus. But have they heard the truth about Him? Have they heard that He is good, that He heals, that He sets free and restores the broken?

Or maybe they need to hear the Good News one more time. Keep sharing. Keep praying. Maybe this time will be the time they turn to Him.

But how can people call on him for help if they've not yet believed? And how can they believe in one they've not yet heard of? And how can they hear the message of life if there is no one there to proclaim it? And how can the message be proclaimed if messengers have yet to be sent?

Romans 10:14–15 (TPT)

Day 24

Salvation isn't just about the fire insurance. It isn't just about escaping the flames of hell, although that's a huge part of it. For years we relied on the fear of hell to get people saved.

It is true. Hell is a real and awful place that leaves us eternally separated from God. Putting our faith in Christ guarantees our freedom from ever going there, and there are some that will only come to Him because of the realization of that fear.

Many see God as a mean harsh person in the sky, waiting to punish them for something terrible they've done. But the reality of God's heart and His salvation couldn't be more opposite.

Salvation is about the goodness of God being poured out in our lives. When we encounter His graciousness, it will break down the walls we've built. When we feel His kindness and taste His sweetness, our hearts open to Him and we begin to want Him.

It's the goodness of God that leads you to repentance.

Romans 2:4 (NKJV)

Day 25

No one walks into a dark room and says, "Turn off the darkness!" No. We say, "Turn on the light." Darkness literally means the absence of light.

When light comes, darkness goes. It has no choice. It's not a fight. There is no power struggle over who gets to stay. Darkness cannot overpower the light.

When the light of God's Word comes into our life, darkness must leave. This is why Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:18 for our hearts to be flooded with light so we can understand, and it's why we can pray this for the people on our lists.

If you're feeling "in the dark" about God or any part of His Word, you can pray this for yourself too.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

John 1:5 (NLT)

JESUS WON COMPLETELY THE VICTORY ON THE CROSS, AND **WE HAVE ACCESS** TO IT THROUGH PRAYER.

Day 26

Have you ever been so fascinated by something that you stare at it? I mean it's so mesmerizing you can't take your eyes off it? That's how I feel about sunsets over the ocean. I stare and stare and stare at it until it has sunk completely below the horizon. Then I stare at the pictures I took of it.

Behold means to see or observe something. To gaze upon.

This is what John was telling the people to do with Jesus. In essence what he is saying here is, "Here is Jesus! He has come to take away our sins! Observe Him. Gaze upon Him. Stare at Him." Some people know about Jesus, but they have not yet stared at Him.

They haven't yet really seen Him for who He is, the answer to their biggest need and the One who took their place of punishment to welcome them into a life of grace. It's time for them to stare!

Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

John 1:29 (NKJV)

Day 27

The Holy Spirit convicts. He rebukes. He tells us our faults and shows us where we're wrong. That's one of His jobs. He convicts the church. He also convicts the world of its sin.

What is their sin? Murder? Stealing? Those are pretty big sins, but they aren't the one that He will rebuke them for. They aren't the "Big One."

No, the biggie is refusing to believe in Jesus. That's it. That's what He convicts them of. And He does it by wooing their hearts and saying, "What have you done with Jesus? Don't you know how good He is? How much He loves you? Come on. Just believe. You know you want to."

Every time we pray, it opens the door for Him to speak to their hearts one more time. Don't stop praying. It's working, even if you can't see it.

And when he (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me.

John 16:8-9 (NLT)

Day 28

"So they left." I love this. Jesus knew when to stop. He knew when to rest.

Jesus wasn't a robot. He was a human being just like we are. He got hungry and thirsty and tired. And there were so many people coming and going and pulling on them that they had to shut the door, pack their bags, and head off by themselves to rest.

Self-care isn't selfish. You can't pour from an empty cup.

Rest. Rest even if you're not tired and still feel strong. That's called burn out prevention. Rest, especially if you're feeling weak. God cares about your spirit, soul, and body. He cares about your rest as much as He cares about what you do for Him.

We did it! We finished this prayer journey. Even though we've completed the 28-day initiative, don't let this be the end. Let this be the beginning of a beautiful prayer life.

Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. So they left...

Mark 6:31 (NLT)

PRAYER POINTS FOR ME

- Father, I choose to treasure the gift of rest You have given me. Help me understand it's okay to take care of myself spirit, soul, and body.
- Father, help me cast all of my cares on You so I can rest not only my body but my mind as well.
- Father, help me overcome the need to be busy. Help me prioritize my life and put rest at the top of my to-do list if for no other reason but I know it pleases You.

TODAY'S PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE ON MY LIST

- Father, I ask You to give rest to _____. In their rest, help them to see and hear You clearly. As their mind gets quiet, whisper to their soul of Your goodness and love, and draw them close to You.

SPACE TO REFLECT

SELF-CARE **ISN'T SELFISH.** YOU
CAN'T POUR FROM AN EMPTY CUP.

Appendix: The Epistle Prayers

These are powerful prayers to pray for yourself and for others. Wherever you see the word “you” or “your,” insert “me” or “my” or the name of a friend or loved one. Pray them daily and watch what God will do.

EPHESIANS 1:17–23 (AMPC)

17 [For I always pray to] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that He may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation [of insight into mysteries and secrets] in the [deep and intimate] knowledge of Him,

18 By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can know and understand the hope to which He has called you, and how rich is His glorious inheritance in the saints (His set-apart ones),

19 And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power in and for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength,

20 Which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His [own] right hand in the heavenly [places],

21 Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named [above every title that can be conferred], not only in this age and in this world, but also in the age and the world which are to come.

22 And He has put all things under His feet and has appointed Him the universal and supreme Head of the church [a headship exercised throughout the church],

23 Which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all [for in that body lives the full measure of Him Who makes everything complete, and Who fills everything everywhere with Himself].

EPHESIANS 3:14–21 (AMPC)

14 For this reason [seeing the greatness of this plan by which you are built together in Christ], I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 For Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named [that Father from Whom all fatherhood takes its title and derives its name].

16 May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality].

17 May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love,

18 That you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints [God's devoted people, the experience of that love] what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it];

19 [That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!

20 Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]—

21 To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen (so be it).

PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11 (AMPC)

9 And this I pray: that your love may abound yet more and more and extend to its fullest development in knowledge and all keen insight [that your love may display itself in greater depth of acquaintance and more comprehensive discernment],

10 So that you may surely learn to sense what is vital, and approve and prize what is excellent and of real value [recognizing the highest and the best, and distinguishing the moral differences], and that you may be untainted and pure and unerring and blameless [so that with hearts sincere and certain and unsullied, you may approach] the day of Christ [not stumbling nor causing others to stumble].

11 May you abound in and be filled with the fruits of righteousness (of right standing with God and right doing) which come through Jesus Christ (the Anointed One), to the honor and praise of God [[that His glory may be both manifested and recognized].

COLOSSIANS 1:9-12 (AMPC)

9 For this reason we also, from the day we heard of it, have not ceased to pray and make [special] request for you, [asking] that you may be filled with the full (deep and clear) knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom [in comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God] and in understanding and discernment of spiritual things—

10 That you may walk (live and conduct yourselves) in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him and desiring to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and steadily growing and increasing in and by the knowledge of God [with fuller, deeper, and clearer insight, acquaintance, and recognition].

11 [We pray] that you may be invigorated and strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, [to exercise] every kind of endurance and patience (perseverance and forbearance) with joy,

12 Giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified and made us fit to share the portion which is the inheritance of the saints (God's holy people) in the Light.



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