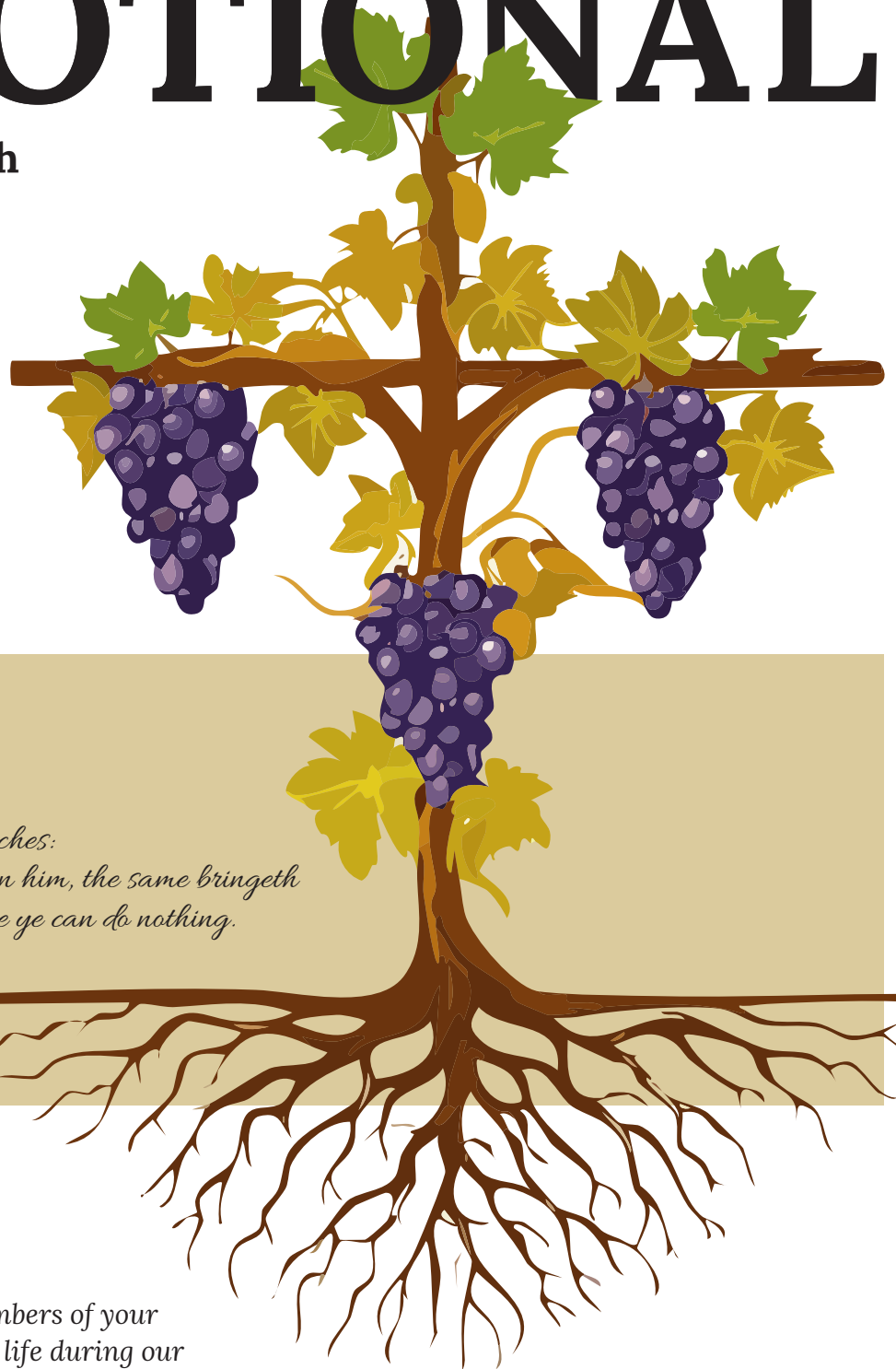


Rooted In Faith —  
Growing in Hope

# DEVOTIONAL

**Second Baptist Church**  
Hopkinsville, Kentucky



**John 15:5**

*I am the vine... ye are the branches:  
He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth  
forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

A 61 day devotional written by members of your church family to help guide prayer life during our capital campaign.

**Dear Friend,**

I want to welcome you to this devotional, to this tapestry of faith. In the pages that follow you will hear the many voices of our church's fellowship but you will only hear one heart-beat. You will read a multitude of faith/life experiences, spanning every age, but you will find only one resounding truth. You will learn the spiritual wisdom of many disciples but you will discover one unifying belief. On every page, through every entry, you will hear, read and learn that our God of unparalleled love is Faithful - faithful in every generation, faithful at every age and faithful to every life He has redeemed. Each entry of this beautiful devotional is stitched by a believer in our church and colored by their life experience with our Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the thread that pulls this tapestry together.

Having a devotional created from the lives of our members is powerful and unique. This is not a sermon from the pulpit, a book from our denomination's press or some famous biblical teacher's essays. This is the full beauty and belief of Second Baptist Church's congregational family. May God direct your heart and open your eyes as you spend time with Him each day through the scriptures, testimonies and prayers found in the pages ahead.

I want to thank everyone who took the time to pray, study and contribute a devotional to this work. I also want to thank each leader who organized these pages and illustrated this wonderful book. May God use it mightily for the growth and victory of His Kingdom!

***Rooted in Faith – Growing in Hope,***  
Brother David Tucker



# Glorify God Through Giving

**Matthew 5:16** - Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.

In Henry and Norman Blackaby's book, "Experiencing Prayer With Jesus", I was challenged by this question: "Have you resolved that no matter what God reveals to you and requests of you through prayer, your answer is an unqualified yes, even before He shows you?"

“My understanding went from only trusting God to provide for us to honoring him. Our giving should reflect back to God so He will receive the glory.”

- Cecilia Gray

Am I coming to God in prayer to present my agenda, or am I seeking His purposes and will for me?

The tithe was settled in my heart, but special offerings brought opportunities for other lessons as I turned to prayer. That's when giving took a much deeper turn for me. In Proverbs 3:9, we read, "Honor the Lord with thy substance". My understanding went from only trusting God to provide for us to honoring Him. Our giving should reflect back to God so He will receive the glory. We are unable to give unless He enables us.

Matthew 6:4 speaks of giving in secret. God, not you, receives the glory. Recently, we moved to Texas and received several monetary gifts. One person wished to remain anonymous. I wanted to know who it was, so I could thank them, but they wanted God to receive the glory! I prayed for God's blessing on this person, but also gave God the glory for moving in this person's heart to give secretly.

My heart's desire now is to glorify God in all I do, which includes giving. Ask God what He would have you give and prepare your heart beforehand to say yes - for His glory.

**PRAYER:** *Dear Father, we come seeking Your purpose. We pray You will be glorified through our giving. May Your will be done in this coming time of prayer for the Capital Campaign. I pray each of us will come to You with an open mind and heart and resolve in our heart to answer yes to whatever You ask of each of us. In Jesus name, Amen.*

Day 2 - Pam Russell

# Trusting God One Day At A Time

**Psalms 8:3** - When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?

Several years ago, the economy took a downturn and my husband was out of work for three years. Neither one of us would have ever imagined our family (one child was in college) could survive three years without full-time employment.

We didn't go bankrupt, and we didn't lose our house to foreclosure. We ended up selling our house, which we had built and lived in, for the equity. We learned to ask God for enough grace to get through one day, and then the next day, we asked God for enough grace to get through that day.

Never did we consider ending our tithing, instead, we gave our 'mite' each week. We knew all that we had was a free and undeserved gift. Tithing was never a spiritual struggle for us, for we know God owned it all.

Through it all, we learned to live simpler and more content lives. We ask God daily to give us wisdom concerning the ways of the world (taxes, major purchases, repairs). He knows we are not wise in the ways of the world.

After three years, the only job my husband was offered was in Hopkinsville, a town I had never been to and he had only been to once.

“Never did we consider ending our tithing: instead, we gave our 'mite' each week.”

**- Pam Russell**

Moving meant starting our youngest son in a new high school, where he knew no one. The first year was difficult for him, but in time, he made three friends who became lifelong friends, closer than any he had in our hometown.

It also meant we had to find a new church. After visiting nearly every church in town, we landed at Second, the most loving church

we had ever been to. Everyone truly wants the best for their brothers and sisters in Christ. We rejoice with those who rejoice, and we weep with those who weep.

It means we now realize that being open and honest about our struggles actually strengthens others. The church is needed now more than ever in this dark world. We continue to give our "mites" to further the work at Second. "The work" is a natural overflow of our love for Christ.

**PRAYER:** *Father, forgive us for leaning on our own understanding. Give us courage for all the trials and grace for all the joys. No matter what comes our way, You are still love, You are still God and You have the whole world in your hands. Throughout life's struggles, may we always have a spirit of acceptance and gratitude and hear You saying, "trust me". Amen.*

# The Power Of God

**Proverbs 3:5-6** - Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: And lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths

The following is an excerpt from the book, Streams in the Desert by L.B. Cowman: "Christ is building His kingdom with broken things. Men only want the strong, the successful, the victorious and the unbroken in building their kingdoms, but God is the God of the unsuccessful of those who have failed. Heaven is filling with earth's broken lives, and there is no bruised reed that Christ cannot take and restore to glorious blessedness and beauty. He can take the life crushed by pain or sorrow and make it into a harp whose music shall be all praise. He can lift earth's saddest failure up to Heaven's Glory."

Like in Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, we may be on the island of misfit toys, but God can turn us into a precious prize in someone's life. The Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding; In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." God's Got It!

**PRAYER:** *Dear Father, thank You that we can always trust you. Please help me to always acknowledge You in all I do and say. In Jesus name, Amen.*

Day 4 - Bonnie Adkins

# It's The Greatest, Give It Away

1 Corinthians 13:13 - So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

As a child, I could well have been described as “terminally shy”. I was so glad that my mom had a big, full skirt that I could pull around me. I felt secure and loved, as I hid there when a stranger spoke to me.

God was there, providing for me and giving me security and stability, even before I knew who He was. He still gives, as He did for Joshua. “It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not fail you or forsake you: do not fear or be dismayed.” (Deut.31:8)

“Knowing I’m God’s child and starting to grow up with Him has given me a freedom and urgency to express this “I love you” to strangers as well as my closest kin.”

- Bonnie Adkins

Fair warning---when you see me coming now! Where did the shyness go? I’m going to open my arms and hope you’re a hugger too! I usually ask, “Are you a hug person?” if I haven’t known you for at least a minute before I hug you. However, if we’re pre-acquainted, or soon to be, I don’t like to omit something equally as important as that human touch. I want to start and finish our interaction with an “I love you”!

Knowing I’m God’s child and starting to grow up with Him has given me a freedom and urgency to express this “I love you” to strangers as well as my closest kin. As my years tick by at an increasing speed, I realize it is foolish of me to hoard words of affection, appreciation, or edification. Why be shy about encouraging someone or speaking possible life-giving words as I meander through ordinary days? If I don’t use that “thank you”, “good job”, or “that was so kind” today, will I have the opportunity to do so tomorrow? When I need to say “I love you” or someone else needs the “greatest of these” expressed to them in some other way, what greediness it is on my part to hold it in my heart!

As God’s children, we are wonderfully and fearfully made (Ps. 139:4), multi-gifted and blessed, unique, one-of-a-kind wonders. He has given us an unending variety of ways to express love to Him and others. We needn’t be hoarders. The supply of love is endless because it comes from Him, the greatest Giver, He is LOVE! (I John 4:7-21)

Colossians 3:12-17 (v 14) “And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

**PRAYER:** As a child, I ‘put on’ my mother’s skirt around me for security. Now Lord, You tell me to ‘put on’ love. Clothe me, hide me in Yourself so others see You. Of all the characteristics that show through me, let the greatest be love. Teach me how to give it more. Amen.

# The Power of God To Move Us Forward In Unity And Faith

**1 Chronicles 4:10** - And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying “Oh, that you would bless me indeed and expand my territory, that your hand would be with me, and that you would keep me from evil, that I would not cause pain!” So God granted him what he requested.

I was gifted by a friend at a particularly hard/difficult time in my life with a little book, “BEYOND JABEZ” by Bruce Wilkinson. It was a very inspirational read for me, and I continue to carry the life-changing scriptures it focused on in my heart. I believe it has volumes to say to each of us individually as well as collectively as a church family.

If you study the scripture, you will find that Jabez was at a low point in his life and seeking direction from God about the task before him. In his prayer, he asked God to “bless me and expand my territory.” He went on to ask God’s protection, direction, and blessing as he moved “to expand his territory.” And “God granted him what he requested.”

“Throughout the Bible, God speaks to his followers and offers tangible examples of His blessings.”

- Kay Lancaster

Throughout the Bible, God speaks to His followers and offers tangible examples of His blessings. However, he also chastises us, his followers/believers, with the words, “You have not because you ask not.”

**PRAYER:** God, we as a body of believers at Second Baptist Church, come before You humbly asking for Your guidance, direction, and blessings as we seek to ‘expand our territory’ in order to spread Your Gospel and minister to the ‘territory’ You give us. In Christ’s blessed name, Amen.

Day 6 - Vickie Robertson

# Our Strong Image, With God's Help

**Psalms 46:1** - God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

**Psalms 5:12** - Surely, Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as a shield.

Each morning, I wake up assured in the understanding that I am divinely protected. This agreement is my rock, definitely when life seems unclear. I may not always have a loved one to support or comfort me, but I always have God.

I can be consoled knowing I am never truly alone. God is always within me. I feel this spiritual relationship through meditation, prayer, hearing wonderful music or venturing through places which have particular significance to me.

“*In the latter part of Psalm 5, David glorified God for His devotion to praise and shield the honorable, as they found shelter in Him. We all need God's guidance.*”

**- Vickie Robertson**

In the latter part of Psalm 5, David glorified God for His devotion to praise and shield the honorable, as they found shelter in Him. We all need God's guidance. Yes, David displayed dependence on God. Whenever I desire support or encouragement, He never fails.

Whatever is causing me to seek contentment, I believe I will find rest and comfort within myself. The Holy Spirit gives me solace and

assures me that I am much loved. I recall what James Dillet Freeman mentions in the “Prayer for Protection”: The power of God protects me; the presence of God watches over me.

THANK God for yesterday,  
TURN to God for today,  
TRUST God for tomorrow.

**PRAYER:** *Dear Heavenly Father, let me know You are there in every place I find myself. Lord, You protect me and are my source of strength and security. I rest soundly accepting this fact. God, You are wherever I am. You are always with me. Thank you, Amen.*

# A Great Calm

**Mark 4:39** - And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

On Sunday morning, May 26, 2024, at 9:03 a.m., we experienced a life-changing event. We were getting our three youngest grandkids (ages seven and four) ready to go to church at Second Baptist Church. We had them for the day and night, while keeping them at their house on the same property as ours. They were excited to stay with us, primarily because they could do what they wanted.

At about 9 a.m., Margaret answered her cell phone to receive a call from our oldest granddaughter, who reported that a tornado was less than half a mile from our house. At this point, four miracles had already taken place; our son was watching Channel 5 weather and got the report of a tornado spotted on Locust Grove Road, Hopkinsville (1/2 mile away); he called our granddaughter who answered a call from him to get in the basement and to call Margaret; Margaret found her cell phone and answered it in the midst of “herding cats”.

None of these actions would have normally happened so quickly. (MIRACLES.) Our granddaughter told us about the tornado and to get to our basement. Since we were not in our house with a basement, and had no time to get to it, we gathered the grandkids and went to a hallway with no windows. Miracles continue; the kids were very calm; Margaret, who has storm anxiety, was calm and collected, getting pillows off the couch to cover their heads (quick thinking). In minutes, the tornado passed.

We will never forget the greatest miracle. Margaret prayed a prayer of gratitude over us for our safety. About the time we were getting up, we both felt a cool, calming puff of wind. We assumed the west wall of the house or the windows had been blown out. We found no damage to the house, so we are convinced that the calming nature of God, through the Holy Spirit, anointed us with a calming, refreshing breeze. Although everything around us was damaged or destroyed, we, and more importantly, the grandkids, were protected. The house we were in, which is the oldest structure on the property, had the least damage. Even though we had five buildings destroyed and four buildings damaged, including our primary residence, we will never forget and will be eternally grateful for A GREAT CALM!

Christ brings peace in uncertainty. Just as the disciples were in a storm that felt overwhelming, a church may feel that a capital campaign is a “storm” of uncertainty, fear, or doubt. Mark 4:39 reminds us that with faith, Jesus can calm the chaos. In any large financial undertaking, there can be anxiety about resources, giving, and whether the goal will be reached. Mark 4:39 reassures everyone involved that God brings calm and guidance when we trust Him. Just as Jesus was in the boat with His disciples, He is with our church during this campaign. Success is not just about money; it is about trusting Christ to guide the journey.

**PRAYER:** *Our most gracious and kind heavenly Father, we trust You will calm our fears and guide us through the journey. We pray what feels like a great challenge now will one day be remembered as a moment of faith where You provided peace and made the impossible possible. Amen.*

Day 8 - Tommy Daniel

# How Sweet Is Your Fruit?

**John 15:5** - I am the vine, you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.

As an old farm boy, I always find the farming examples Jesus used when He spoke to be the most touching to my heart. In John 15, Jesus spoke to us, comparing our walk with Christ to the grape cluster growing on the vine. This is symbolism that all those listening that day would understand, as wine production was an important part of the people's culture.

“May we all strive to be sweeter Christians by getting closer to the main vine!”

- **Tommy Daniel**

So what does it take to produce a grape that offers high fermenting characteristics to make the good wine? Sugar. The higher the sugar content within the grape, the higher the quality of the finished wine after it goes through the juicing and fermenting process. A grape vine to be healthy must first have a strong root system that is rooted in healthy and nutritious soil. For us, it means our roots in our Christian walk must be grounded in our faith in Jesus Christ.

Did you know that a grape located closer to the main vine will have a higher sugar content than the grape situated at the tip of the cluster? The grapes that are closest to the main vine will produce the best wine as these grapes are receiving the best, first and most concentrated nutrition from the main stem. So if Jesus used the example of Him being the vine and we the branches, He gave us the road to a sweeter and more abundant life by striving to be closer to the main branch. By allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us in prayer, study, and service, we draw closer to Him and become more obedient to His call. He provides all we need to do His will.

I look at John 2:9, which describes Jesus converting water into wine after the wedding wine ran out. In this verse, we see that the head waiter tasted the new wine, and in verse 10, he said, “Everyone sets out the fine wine first, then, after people are drunk, the inferior wine. But you have kept the fine wine until now.” Why is this wine superior to the best wine man was able to produce? This wine was produced from the main vine, directly from Jesus. It was the best because the one who produced it WAS the source of the sweetest of all grapes!

May we all strive to be sweeter Christians by getting closer to the main vine!

**PRAYER:** *Dear Heavenly Father, please remind me of my shortcomings through the prodding of the Holy Spirit so that I may strive to be closer to Jesus and walk the path of Your calling in my life. Amen.*

# Under The Oak

**John 14:20** - On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

A few weeks ago, I went back to pray under the shade of a familiar oak tree. When I was in high school, attending church at Oak Grove Baptist Church in Cadiz, that tree became a sacred place for me. It soaked in my tears, listened to my prayers, and became the backdrop for countless moments where I encountered the presence of God. For the last seventeen years, whenever I felt lost, needed wisdom, or was desperate to hear from Him, I would return to that tree. It wasn't the tree itself that was special; it was simply the place where God chose to meet me again and again.

So when I rounded the corner and saw that the tree had been cut down, my heart sank. That holy ground felt empty, even hollow. But in that moment, God used the oak to teach me one final lesson. Under its branches, I had experienced His presence in unforgettable ways. But the oak wasn't holy in and of itself. It was holy ground only because that's where my feet were, and God was there.

“Every step we take can be holy ground because His Spirit lives within us.”

- Robby Shearon

In John 14, Jesus comforts His disciples by promising that He would never leave them as orphans. Even when He returned to the Father, He would send His Spirit to dwell within them. “On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you” (John 14:20).

The tree is gone, but the truth remains: God's presence isn't tied to a place. When I prayed, He still showed up. When I cried, He still drew near. He is here. As believers, every step we take can be holy ground because His Spirit lives within us.

I'm grateful for the memories under that oak, but even more thankful that we don't have to wait for a sacred spot to encounter Him. We carry His presence with us daily. And there is no greater hope of glory to come than knowing the glory of God already lives within us.

**PRAYER:** *Father, thank You for Your unfailing love, love that never leaves or forsakes me, love that pursues me each and every day. Jesus, thank You for the gift of peace and hope, peace secured by Your finished work on the cross, and hope anchored in the certainty of Your promises. Holy Spirit, thank You for Your constant presence, guiding, comforting, and reminding me that I am never alone. Lord, what my heart longs for most is communion with You. Today, I invite You to make Your love and grace real to me in a fresh way. Let me walk in the assurance that wherever I am, You are with me. Amen.*

Day 10 - Alice Chambers

# God Used The Internet

**Hebrews 12:1** - Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is before us.

In 1998, I went to graduate school in Seattle. It was the first time I lived in a place where I had no family or friends nearby. Although I had lived in many places around the world, this was my first experience of severe culture shock. Among other challenges, I struggled to find a church.

God led me to learn how to use chat groups on AOL.com. Most chat groups I found to be ungodly, offering a slippery slide into sin. However, knowing that I wanted a church, I searched for a Seattle Protestant church chat.

I found one; no conversations were happening there. I posted, "Does anyone here absolutely love their church? I am looking." Six hours later, I found one, only one response. Two days passed, and there was only one message. I replied, asking for details, location, and service time.

Sunday morning, I thanked God for this opportunity and asked Him for guidance and protection. Upon my arrival at the church, I felt assured that I was in the right place.

*“In this experience, I learned that God will help me solve problems by giving me the knowledge and skills I need.”*

**- Alice Chambers**

In this experience, I learned that God will help me solve problems by giving me the knowledge and skills I need. He also blessed me with a group of lifelong friends in that church. He cleared my path so I could successfully move forward in grad school.

I encourage others to look in unexpected places for answers and ignore temptations to sin. Only focus on the good ahead. God is guiding you and clearing the path.

**PRAYER:** *Thank You, God, for your guidance, protection and provision so that we can run the race with endurance. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

# Alone With God

**Matthew 6:6** - But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

In my 93 years, I have gone through many valleys. I also have had many mountaintop experiences. Praise the Lord!

Through God's love for me and time spent in prayer, I have endured. Prayer has been a great part of my life. After breakfast, I can't wait to get in my chair physically and spiritually to talk with my Heavenly Father and to hear from Him.

Christmas is a special time in my life. I look forward to the cards I receive. Each morning, I read one card and pray for the sender. I can't wait to know who I will be praying for. Sometimes I call them to let them know I have prayed for them. It has blessed my heart, and I hope it has blessed theirs. I don't want to pray just when I am in the valley, but also on the mountaintop.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, thank you for hearing my prayer. Never let me forget to take time to be alone with You. Prayer is a grateful day opener, a beautiful day brightener and a joyful day closer. In the precious Name of Jesus, Amen.*

“I don't want to pray just when I am in the valley,  
but also on the mountaintop.”

- **Patsy Ezell**

Day 12 - Sandra Dresel

# Being Good Stewards

**Philippians 4:19** - And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His Glory in Christ Jesus.

In our daily lives, we are constantly surrounded by advertisements urging us to buy things we don't truly need. With so much purchasing power at our fingertips, it's easy to fall into the trap of impulse buying and unnecessary spending.

But as followers of Christ, we are called to a higher standard—one that seeks God's wisdom in all areas of life, including our finances. Whether the purchase is big or small, we should pause and ask:

“Is this something I truly need?”

“Can I still be faithful in my giving to God's work—through my church, missions, and those in need?”

“*God invites us to bring every decision before Him. He promises to supply all our needs—not necessarily our wants, but our true needs.*”

**- Sandra Dresel**

God invites us to bring every decision before Him. He promises to supply all our needs—not necessarily our wants, but our true needs (Philippians 4:19). So let's ask Him to guide us in our spending and to help us be good stewards of what He has entrusted to us.

May we be willing to sacrifice comfort or convenience for the sake of His kingdom. And may we always give thanks—not just for what we have, but for the freedom to choose well and live generously.

**PRAYER:** Lord, help us to seek Your face before we make purchases. Give us discernment between wants and needs. Teach us to be faithful stewards and generous givers. Thank You for providing all that we truly need. Help us to live lives that honor You, even in how we spend. Amen.

# Peace In The Storms Of Life

**Joshua 1:9** - Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Many times in life, I have experienced God's loving care for me during hard times, or as some refer to them, "the storms of life." During 2024, I lived through one of those storms.

In May of that year, I started having a pain in my abdomen for a few days, but I fully expected the pain to go away. After sharing about this pain with some friends at lunch, they urged me to see a doctor without delay. I decided to go to the ER to make sure my pain was not indicative of something serious. After seeing a doctor and undergoing some tests, I was admitted. During the next several days, many more tests were run and indicated I needed surgery immediately to remove a blockage in my intestine. After surgery, I was put in the ICU on a ventilator, where I stayed for several days. When I was taken off the vent and brought back to consciousness, I realized then just how sick I was and how much I needed God's help. I recalled the above Bible verse from Joshua that reminded me "to not be afraid or discouraged, for God would be with me wherever I was."

“Always remember that God is in control and He will be there for you at ALL TIMES.”

**- Bonita Johnson**

I spent many days in the hospital and then many more long days in rehab facilities where I received a lot of special care. Many of those nights, I would wake up and just talk to my Father, knowing He was always there for me. I had to put my trust in God and pray for His help and reassurance so many times during all those weeks.

Then, two and a half months later, I was finally able to come home, even though I was far from being well. At home, I had to have help walking, going up the stairs to enter my house, help with meal preparations, and assistance in getting to appointments, etc. My friend, Gail, was there to help me, along with Home Health and PT coming in to assist with nursing duties and help in building my strength until I was strong enough to do outpatient PT.

Each night before sleeping, I would have a special time with God in reading my Bible and singing to worship Him. One special song that I loved singing was "God Will Make A Way".

God will make a way  
Where there seems to be no way  
He works in ways we cannot see  
He will make a way for me

He will be my guide  
Hold me closely to His side  
With love and strength for each new day  
God will make a way. God will make a way.

It is a song I taught my Children's Choir a few years ago. It has a great message to remind us that God is always there for us.

I was impatient to get better so I could go back to church and teach my children in Sunday School. In November of 2024, I was finally able to return to church, and then in December, I was able to return to teaching my kids in Sunday School. Since that time, I have continued to gain strength and feel I am able to do more all the time. I still sing that song every night to remind me that "God's got this!" Always remember that God is in control and He will be there for you at ALL TIMES.

**PRAYER:** *Thank You, Father God, for loving me, watching over me and taking care of me. Your love is amazing and a reminder for us to love and care for our brothers and sisters in Christ as You take care of us. In Jesus name, Amen.*



# Changes, Tired But Trusting

**Psalm 46:10** - Be still and know that I am God.

**Joshua 1:9** - This is my command - be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

We plan our future with stars in our eyes, excited to see where God will lead us. From the rain on our wedding day to the present, change has been a significant part of our lives. But God was always there to bring peace, comfort, guidance, and joy out of changing circumstances. God was always in front, opening or closing our pathway to fit us into His plan.

“God has seen us through some impossible situations, providing for our needs when we couldn't see a way through.”

**- Butch & Peggy Stricklin**

We learned to 'Be Still', strong and courageous in our ever-changing lives. Disappointment of no children of our own led to a life filled with children who needed to be loved on.

Numerous health issues are another journey we've traveled for years. God has seen us through some impossible situations, providing for our needs when we couldn't see a way through. Simply amazing!

God sees what we need before we need it; waiting for us to step back when we try to handle it ourselves. When He moves our comfort zones or sends us into the unknown, we do not need to be afraid. He's already there!

**PRAYER:** Thank You for your love and care. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 15 - Denise Tucker

# God Is Good, All The Time

**Romans 8:28** - And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

“God is good.” As Christians, we have heard this repeatedly. And we embrace it when we see things turn out the way we want. You get a better job—God is good. You, or someone you love, is cured from cancer –God is good. You or someone you love survives an accident—God is good.

But what about those times the result does not FEEL good? You get fired, your loved one dies suddenly, your friend does not survive the accident. What then? Is God still good? The very simple answer is Yes, He is. But the emotions are definitely not simple.

You see, the goodness of God is not dependent on the outcome of our struggle. The goodness of God is manifested in us as we go through the struggle. Regardless of the outcome, God promises to be with us through it all. The fear, the grief, the despair, the anger—all of it! He will never turn away. And that is where our hope is — He never turns away. He can handle all of it because HE is GOOD! HE is GOD! And He will bring you through those difficult times, no matter how long it takes.

Recently, my youngest son had an accident that resulted in a skull fracture and a small brain bleed. I spent the 3-hour drive to the hospital just praying, “Please God, please!” I could not even find any other words to say. I wanted my son to be OK, back to normal, but there was a very real chance that would not happen.

My husband and I spent hours in the hospital watching him for the slightest change that would indicate he needed emergency surgery. Through all of it, I held to “God is good” even if he dies or is disabled. God is still good.

This was not an easy internal conversation, believe me! But if God is good all the time, then He’s good when I do not get what I want. My son is OK and pretty much back to normal, so this may seem easy for me to say, but the struggle in my heart was real. And if it had not turned out the way it did, I would have gone through all the grief, anger, and despair, but I also know God would have been right there with me. Because He understands the pain of watching someone He loves go through something horrific.

God IS good all the time. We must know this in our heads so we can reassure our hearts when they are weak.

**PRAYER:** *Please help us to always lean on your goodness even when things are not going the way we want. Help us to see Your presence and feel Your love in all situations. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Day 16 - Linda Johnson

# God Always Provides

**Luke 6:38** - Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

**Matthew 10:8** - Freely you have received; freely give

**Luke 11:13** - If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

**Malachi 3:10** - Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

Generosity is more than just an action - it's a reflection of our trust in God's provision. When we give with open and glad hearts, God responds to us with overwhelming abundance. He multiplies not only the tangible gifts we give, but also the joy in our hearts and souls.

“Step out with a spirit of giving. God is always faithful, and His promises never return void.”

- **Linda Johnson**

Each act of giving creates ripple effects. Whether it's time, money, kindness or compassion, what we give in faith, God uses for good. Don't hold tightly to what God has asked you to pour out — His return is always greater than what we give. Step out with a spirit of giving. God is always faithful, and His promises never return void. Give generously, and watch His blessings flow.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, teach me to be generous, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not look for any reward, save that of knowing that I do your holy will. - St. Ignatius*

Day 17 - Beth Wallis

# Blessing Others

**2 Corinthians 9:8** - And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

The letter I received in the mail one day was both exciting and upsetting at the same time. My cousin from California had written to tell me that he and his family were traveling cross-country and would be coming for a weekend stay. I hadn't seen them in several years and had never met their young son, so I was very glad to hear of their plans to visit.

But as pleased as I was they were coming, I knew I wasn't prepared for the added expenses that come with entertaining weekend guests. My budget was extremely strained just then, and I knew I wouldn't have the finances to show them the good time I'd envisioned.

The closer the time came for their visit, the more I fretted. As I sat at my kitchen table one morning, tears sprang to my eyes. I breathed a short prayer to the Lord: "I haven't seen them in so long, all I want to do is show them a good time". With that prayer, I did what I should've done from the beginning - ask God for help!

*“I believe the Lord is especially pleased when we ask for a blessing so that we, in turn, may bless others.”*

**- Beth Wallis**

Time passed and one day I stopped at my mailbox after work. Inside was a note from an aunt and uncle who lived in North Carolina. For them to write was very unusual, so I was anxious to see what was inside. The note contained some words of encouragement along with a very generous check because "they love me and wanted me to have it..."

Well, I burst into tears right then and there, thanking the Lord for answered prayer and prayed a special blessing on my aunt and uncle for their generosity. The amount they sent was more than enough to help me prepare for my California guests!

I believe the Lord is especially pleased when we ask for a blessing so that we, in turn, may bless others. His plan for my situation was set in motion the moment I turned to Him for help! He placed me on the minds of my aunt and uncle and moved their hearts to extend their loving generosity; I then was able to extend my love and hospitality to my other family members. That is the Lord's will for us - to use what He gives us to bless others. In this way He is glorified!

**PRAYER:** *Dear Jesus, help us to remember that "every good gift comes from above" and is a blessing from You! May we always be sensitive to Your leading and mindful of how we might help others in tangible ways as an expression of Your love both for them and for us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

# God's Unconditional Love And Forgiveness

**Luke 15:11-32** - ...24: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to make merry.

...32: It was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Jesus taught many times by telling parables or simple stories that hold profound truths. All Christians know the parable of the 'Prodigal Son' where a younger son asked his father for his unearned inheritance. The father complied with the son's wishes and the son left the father and went his own way. He lived his life on his own terms, wasting his fortune and losing out on closeness to his father, until hard times came upon him. Only then did he remember how good he had it when he was with his father. He finally chose to return to his father, admit that he was wrong (sinned against him) and ask for his father's forgiveness. The father in the parable did not hesitate; he even saw him coming and made preparations to receive him back and celebrate.

God's Love and Forgiveness is unconditional. If you are a child of God, no matter how far or long you have wandered, He is patiently waiting and seeking to restore you to a closer relationship with Him.

I learned this truth the hard way. I was a born-again Christian who went my own way outside the church and serving God. I was too busy with friends, career, and living life on my terms to take time to attend church and seek God's direction in my life. When circumstances in your life get so dire that you know you can't handle it, God is waiting. His love and forgiveness can fix anything and restore you. He will give you strength, peace, and contentment when you turn to Him.

“God's love and forgiveness is unconditional. If you are a child of God, no matter how far or long you have wandered, He is patiently waiting and seeking to restore you to a closer relationship with Him.”

**- Tommy Henderson**

**PRAYER:** *Father, I thank You for how You have blessed me throughout my life in spite of my sins and short comings. I thank You for Your unconditional love and forgiveness and I pray that You help me to follow your will for my life and use it to glorify You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

Day 19 - Glenda Fuller

# God Is Always Listening

1 Thessalonians 5:17 - ...Pray continually.

“ I am a prayer warrior and believe in the answers to prayer. Thy will be done in all things. ”

- **Glenda Fuller**

Do you ever catch yourself talking out loud to yourself? Well, I do. In fact, most all the time.

I'm sure my poor cats (three of them) think I've lost my ever-loving mind. The fact is, it's really okay to talk to yourself, even if you answer yourself. You are not crazy. You see, our Heavenly Father wants us to talk to Him...anytime, all the time and I do.

He knows all things, so I'm sure He already knows I've not lost my mind. You see, talking to my Father, my Lord, the Holy Spirit is the only way I feel closer to Him. I am a prayer warrior and believe in the answers to prayer. Thy will be done in all things.

So, if you should find yourself talking to yourself, just smile. God is always listening.

**PRAYER:** Lord, thank You for always listening, always loving and always caring. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

# God Will Provide

**Matthew 6:33-34** - <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

If there is one thing I know for sure, it is that God will provide for His people! I have seen it time and again in my adult life. While our children were small, we were a single-income family, and God provided for us in more ways than I can count: from healing our sickly, premature babies to providing funds to cover the mountain of medical bills that resulted from their prolonged hospital stays. God provided for every need we had and even some of our wants.

God loves His children and wants us to trust Him for everything. I am not saying it's easy, but I am saying life is so much more enjoyable when we do what Matthew 6:34 says, "Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself." Do not allow your life to be consumed with worry over things you have no control over!

“God loves his children and wants us to trust Him for everything.”  
- **Lori Kirkman**

I encourage you, Reader, to take time each day to turn your worries over to the Lord. Trust Him to take care of your family, your finances, all of it. When you do that, you will feel that weight lifted from your shoulders. The Lord will take it from you, and you will be able to enjoy the things that really matter.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, thank You for being the One who provides. Thank You for taking care of Your children. I give You all my concerns and worries, Lord, and trust You for the right outcome. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

Day 21 - Rachael Sutton

# Grace Given, Grace Received

**Luke 1:41-45 (ESV)** - And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.

Picture it...a young, unmarried, pregnant woman. She is scared, overwhelmed, and likely tired of all the sideways looks and comments from her community. Feeling very alone, this young woman decides to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. Surely Elizabeth would understand and allow her to complain a bit. Perhaps she would even permit a tiny pity party?

While that may have been the reception Mary was hoping for, that is not what she got. As we read in Luke, before Mary was able to say much more than a greeting, Elizabeth quickly reminded Mary of the wonder and miracle growing inside her. Elizabeth would not allow Mary to wallow in the difficulty of her situation, but instead she, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke blessing over Mary. In the verses that follow, we sense a turn in Mary's countenance as she offers a song of praise – The Magnificat.

Do you know someone like Elizabeth? The one who is always quick to point out the silver lining in every situation? Perhaps you have been “Elizabeth” to someone who is struggling with the path God has placed them on? Honestly, some days I play the part of Elizabeth very well while other times I desperately need someone to be “Elizabeth” for me. As Christians though, we are called to encourage one another toward a fruitful walk with the Lord. This may mean we need to lovingly interrupt discontented conversation by loudly proclaiming, “Blessed are you...!” In your struggle, it may mean you need to seek out a friend who will help you gain Godly perspective on your situation.

For all the “Elizabeths” out there, keep your eyes open for the heart that is desperate for a divine interruption. For those who find themselves in a “Mary” season, be open to the “Elizabeth” who has been sent to encourage and uplift you. The roles that these women play in this passage are not accidental. By diligently working together to maintain healthy perspective, not only will the Lord be glorified, but our hearts will be full of praise as well!

**PRAYER:** *Dear Lord, how wonderful it is to be part of Your family. To have brothers and sisters that encourage me to remember Your promises. Lord, I ask that You allow me to be an ‘Elizabeth’ to someone who needs uplifting today. Help me see them in their struggle and remind them of how blessed they are. Father, when I’m tempted to complain or become discontent, help me to be open to the ‘Elizabeths’ in my life. Help me to trust Your plan for my life above what the world is calling me to. Thank You for Your unfailing grace and mercy. In Your Name I pray, Amen.*

# God Will Provide

**Philippians 4:6-7** - ...Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

I have had many times when I was anxious. I worry about my health, financial difficulties and especially about the spiritual life of my grandchildren. Through these times of worry, I have felt the presence of God in my life. In hard times and in times of great joy, I know that He will provide me with what I need.

*“In hard times and in times of great joy, I know that He will provide me with what I need.”*

**- Brenda McKinnis**

No matter what happens, with God on my side, all things are possible.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, I know that you will provide me with what I need. Even in times of worry and hardship, I thank You for all of Your blessings and for giving me the opportunity to help others. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 23 - Gail Wyatt

# God Holds My Hand

**Isaiah 41:13** - For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear, I will help you.

The above Bible verse has become one of my very favorite verses. I discovered this verse back in 2017 when I had a double knee replacement.

Since both of my knees were bad and I didn't have a good knee to rehab on, my orthopedic doctor suggested that getting both knees replaced at the same time would be the best way to go. I knew that having both knees done at the same time would be tough. Still, I thought after I got through the surgery and several weeks of physical therapy, I would be good to go again with my new knees. Unfortunately, my plans didn't go as I had hoped.

After surgery, I went to an inpatient facility for a short time of rehab before going home to start outpatient therapy, three days a week. I was blessed to have a great therapist who worked hard to help me get well. I also worked as hard as I could, even faithfully doing my exercises at home. However, I still wasn't able to progress very much and get the bend and function that was needed in my knees.

To make a long story short, what I thought might take several weeks turned into several months. I soon found out the reason that I wasn't progressing in therapy was due to my knees forming scar tissue, thus causing me to have what they called a "knee manipulation." To make matters worse, the doctor also told me that both knees required this procedure. Since they didn't want to do this until about three months after my surgery, this resulted in many more weeks of therapy before having this done, as well as several more weeks of therapy after the procedure. Thankfully, after this procedure, I was able to progress much quicker. Today I can say there is life after knee surgery and I am so thankful for that!

I share this story with you to let you know how God was always there to help me. During all those times when I would leave to go to therapy, I would claim the above verse and ask God to hold on to me with His hand. There were many tough days of having to push through the therapy sessions, but I still felt peace knowing that God was walking with me and holding on to my hand. He helped me get through that time in my life, just like He has continued to hold on to me when I've gone through other difficult times.

I hope each of you have some special Bible verses that bring hope and comfort to you. If you don't, you are welcome to share mine. Just like the verse says, you don't have to be afraid because God will hold your hand and help you. His hands are big enough to hold on to you...just ask Him!

**PRAYER:** *Father, thank you so much for loving me. Thank you, also, for reminding me that I don't have to be afraid, because I know You are always there to help me. Please hold on to my hand and walk with me each day. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*

# Miracles

**Exodus 14:16** - As for you, lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.

Miracles were performed in the Bible many times. But have you seen miracles in our time? It's all a matter of how you look at it. Albert Einstein said it best. "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." Look for God's miracles. They are around us every day.

Look at the hummingbirds. They flap their wings at 50-80 beats every single second and can hover, while consuming an enormous amount of energy.

Or take the honeybee. Each one has its own role, whether it's a worker, a drone, or a queen. But they basically work as one single organism to keep the hive thriving and to create the only food source that never goes bad: honey.

Or even take something as simple as corn. It started as a wild grass and was carefully cultivated for many years by indigenous people. Now, a single kernel of corn can grow a stalk taller than a person. Then, those ears can be used for a variety of purposes, including food, plastics, and fuel.

Much of what the Bible tells us about miracles is all about faith. Consider when Jesus walked on water. Peter got out of the boat and was able to do the same, as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus. The Israelites displayed plenty of faith when Moses parted the Red Sea, and they walked through on dry ground. Despite the very real human emotion of fear, they trusted God to get them through.

That need for faith to help bring miracles is still very much a part of our Christian lives today. I am somewhat of an analytical thinker. Things have to be logical and all the pieces have to fit together based on data and mathematics. So when Second Baptist Church needed to install an elevator for about \$79,000, I couldn't immediately see how we could make that happen. I figured it would take many years to pay off. But God is great and it was paid for before work even started.

And in the first phase of our current construction project, it didn't take long to see God working through his people. Tearing down buildings and working on the sanctuary came with a lot of hard work and dust. But we didn't really have any complaints. Instead, people gave whatever they could, whether that was time or money. They showed they have faith that the church is doing God's work and a miracle followed. The \$1.6 million the church was going to have to borrow? No need. God took care of that.

Faith and miracles? I have seen the proof, faith through his people and the miracles are never far behind.

**PRAYER:** *God, Your miracles are all around us. Help us to notice and not look over them. I pray that I will always give with a joyful heart, remembering what You have done for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 25 - Natalie Shearon

# Peace That Passes Understanding

**Philippians 4:6-7** - Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

This past year has been one of the hardest my family has faced. My dad has been sick, my sister went through a divorce, my mom suffered a stroke, and my brother broke his back. It seemed like the storms were constant. When it seemed like a storm was about to pass or it seemed like a rainbow was coming, then a new storm would start. These different situations caused me to make some difficult choices, evaluate my priorities, and trust God. I have had to trust God's promise that He provides a "peace that passes understanding".

“What I've been learning and clinging to is this: when I pray and truly release things to Him, He gives me peace..”

**- Natalie Shearon**

At the end of April, the Lord reminded me that I can come to Him boldly in prayer. I can pray knowing that His power can cause a powerful change in circumstances and provide radical healing. What I've been learning and clinging to is this: when I pray and truly release things to Him, He gives me peace. Not the kind of peace that guarantees everything

will go the way I want, but the kind of peace that comes from knowing our Father is working all things together for our good. We can walk in confidence that we will find peace, love, and forgiveness in Him.

**PRAYER:** *Father, I come to You today to thank You for Your provision of peace. You are with us always and You listen to our every word. We can cast our cares onto You because You care for us and our hope is in You alone. The victory is Yours and I can walk in Your power and peace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

# The Great Healer

**Psalms 30:1-12** - ...O Lord my God, I cried out to You for help, and You healed me.

In this Psalm, David offers up Thanksgiving to God for deliverance from death and his enemies. David expresses his gratitude to God for rescuing him from death and distress. The Psalm illustrates God's mercy and power, which we, as Christians, can depend on. The Lord can heal us and save us from our sickness, sin, and even death.

Have you ever felt like everything in this world was against you? I know I sure have, just as David felt during his time of distress. Over the last ten years, Jimmy and I have faced multiple trials and difficult situations. Without the Lord our God by our side, we would have never survived. One of the worst situations occurred this past year after Jimmy's cancer diagnosis. We were devastated, but knew God would get us through it no matter the final outcome.

“The greatest thing about our God is he stays with you through thick and thin.”

- **Sherri Allen**

After hearing our cries, our prayers, and the prayers of everyone who prayed for us, our great healer performed a miracle and spared Jimmy's life. When we went back for Jimmy's post surgery checkup, the doctor gave us the best news ever. Jimmy's cancer was totally contained in the prostate. It had not spread to the lymph nodes or any surrounding tissues or organs. He was declared cancer free! No chemo or radiation needed.

The greatest thing about our God is that he stays with you through thick and thin. He is there during our hard times and our celebrations. He will never abandon you. Our God also puts people in your life to help and support you during life's struggles. He is a wonderful Father and healer.

**PRAYER:** Dear Lord, You are the great physician and healer. Thank You for always being with us during our good times and bad times. Thank you, Lord, for being a loving Father who never abandons us in our time of need. We love You, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 27 - Polly Yahnig

# A Life Poured Out

**Mark 14:3-6 (NIV)** - While Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume; and she broke the vial and poured over His head. Jesus responded with, "She has done a beautiful thing to me."

“Every breath we take is a moment of God’s grace in our lives and is the right time to praise Him.”  
- Polly Yahnig

We’re eager to do things for Jesus: singing in the choir, visiting, caring for others, leading church meetings, etc. - those are good and pleasing to God. But one thing is even better - doing something beautiful TO Jesus, honoring Him with the alabaster box of praise in response to His grace in our lives.

Taking time to stop and admire a beautiful sunset and thanking God at that moment. Watching a loved one suffer, but hearing them thank God for another day to be with their family. Saying a kind word to a lonely person who needs to be assured God still loves him and is only a prayer away. Praising God despite the detours in our lives is giving Him the alabaster box of praise. Every breath we take is a moment of God’s Grace in our lives and is the right time to praise Him.

**PRAYER:** O God, my Savior and my Lord, help me take time to praise You even on my dark days. Help me express thankfulness amid the trials of life and may it be a beautiful thing to You, dear Jesus. In your precious name, Amen.

# Prayer For Humanity

**Isaiah 58:7a** - ...Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter.

Jesus told us to pray for the poor, the needy, and the homeless, and I ask that God the Father places them where He wants them to be, and where He needs them to be, like He placed me.

“ Jesus wants us to pray for those with a bowed down head and a heavy heart...”

- Hattie West

Jesus wants us to pray for those with a bowed down head and a heavy heart, those who are oppressed, those who have a broken heart, those who are lonely, those who are depressed and distressed, and those who don't know which way to go. Jesus is our great Problem Solver, and we must always stay down at the foot of the Cross where there is room for all of us. Let's keep our eyes turned towards Him, knowing He loves us with an everlasting love.

**PRAYER:** Good morning, Heavenly Father; good morning, dear Lord Jesus; and good morning, dear Holy Spirit. How are You today?

*Heavenly father, we want to thank You and say much oblige, for allowing us to come boldly to the 'Throne of Grace' one more time. We thank You that You allowed us to see another moment, a moment we haven't seen, and won't see again. For thou art the One who rules the wind and water, who stands by me and who stands by humanity. If humanity had all the tongues in the world, Heavenly Father, we would never be able to thank You enough. We would never be able to thank King Jesus, our Lord and Savior enough, and we will never be able to thank the Holy Spirit enough, our dearest and best Friend, our Comforter.*

*Jesus told us to pray for the poor, the needy, and the homeless and I ask God the Father to place them where He wants them to be and where He needs them to be like He placed me. Jesus also said 'to pray for those with a bowed down head and a heavy heart, those who are oppressed with oppressions, those who have a broken heart, those who are lonely, those who are depressed and distressed and those who don't know which way to go.' Jesus is our great Problem Solver and we must always stay down at the foot of the Cross, because there is always room at the foot of the Cross.*

*May God be the glory, forever and forever, because forever has no ending! Amen, Amen and Amen.*

Day 29 - Rachel Barner

# Jesus Calms The Storm

**Mark 4:37-39** - A furious squall came up and the waves broke over the boat so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Peace. Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

On Sunday morning, May 26, 2024 we experienced a literal storm in the form of an EF-2 tornado that left our family farm almost unrecognizable. In the difficult days that followed, we counted our blessings and were moved by friends and neighbors who assisted. But as we sifted through the rubble, we also asked some hard questions, such as "Why did this happen?" and "Where was Jesus in the storm?"

It may seem "unspiritual" to question, but Jesus' disciples also questioned while in the midst of a violent storm on the sea. They asked, "Don't you care if we drown?" The Son of God was present in the boat with them and yet they feared, questioned and their faith seemed to waiver. Our faith

*"The storms in our life may not be immediately be stilled, but the presence of our Lord brings a peace as He calms His child in the midst of the storms."*

**- Rachel Barner**

often seems small when the storms of life come our way. We need to remember to call out to the same Savior who spoke the word and calmed the sea that He had created. The storms in our life may not immediately be stilled, but the presence of our Lord brings a peace as He calms His child in the midst of the storms.

A song entitled "Sometimes He Calms the Storm", sung by Scott Krippayne expressed this best. The chorus of this song declares:

Sometimes He calms the storm  
With a whispered Peace, Be still  
He can settle any sea  
But it doesn't mean He will  
Sometimes He holds us close  
And lets the wind and waves go wild  
Sometimes He calms the storm  
Sometimes He calms His child

**PRAYER:** *Jesus, keep us mindful that You are in control even as the storms of life rage about us. Thank you for responding to our 'little' faith as we cry out to You. Hold us fast and calm the heart of Your child with Your precious peace. Amen.*

# The Great Healer

**Psalms 23:1-6** - <sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup>He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. <sup>3</sup>He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. <sup>4</sup>Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

After my husband passed away, I had to learn to be “me” again. It had been 40 years of “we”. I felt like half of me was gone. After his death, I developed fears like driving long distances, even though I had been driving since I was 16 years old. I also became fearful of taking the dogs out at night and even just being alone at night. I felt I made it pretty good in the daytime, but at night, when bedtime came, I would find myself not being able to go to sleep until the early hours of the morning. I even had a security system installed, which included motion sensor lights and a door camera that allowed me to see inside the house when I was away. I felt like I was as safe as I could be with the security that money could buy.

Over time, I adjusted to my new life, but still knew that I wasn't whole. When the realization of knowing that hit me, I would get on my knees and pray. I found that God was there to help me with everything, even with little things like

remembering to pay bills, finding my glasses and keys, which were some things that my husband, Ros, always helped me with. Ros had been that support and security for me, even though Jesus has always been in my life for as long as I can remember.

A few years ago, in one of my weakest times, I got on my knees and gave everything to God. I gave Him myself and that is when I felt like I became a whole “me”. God is now in control of my life and just as Psalm 23 says, “The Lord is my Shepherd”. I can't live without His Spirit. I feel Him, I hear Him, I ask Him what to do and He leads me daily just as the psalm says. He always provides for me. And at night, now when I lie down to sleep, I talk with God and ask Him to watch over me and my dogs while we sleep and then I am able to turn over and go to sleep. In the morning, I thank Him for waking me up to see a new day, and I ask Him to use me to serve Him. I now feel the peace only He can give. Now, I feel my life is all about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

**PRAYER:** Heavenly Father, I praise You for what You have done in my life. Thank You for being my protector, comforter and for giving me the peace only You can give. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

“I can't live without His Spirit, I feel Him, I hear Him, I ask Him what to do and He leads me daily.”

**- Rita Roberts**

Day 31 - Patsy Ezell

# Saved By God's Grace

Joel 2:32a - ...And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

On a beautiful starlit night, a revival was going on at Olivet Baptist Church in the Howell Community, where I lived, and where my family went to church. Brother Paul Hale was the pastor, and Brother Aubrey Meacham was the visiting evangelist.

“On my way home riding in the wagon, I remember looking up into the heavens with thanksgiving and so much joy in my heart that now I was a Child of the King.”

- Patsy Ezell

My family got ready to go to the revival and the car would not start. My daddy got the tractor and wagon and off we went. When Brother Meacham gave the invitation, the heart of a fourteen-year-old was pounding. Brother Hale started up the aisle headed for me (they did that back in 1946).

Before he got back to where I was seated, I took one step, and Jesus took me on down front, where I gave my heart to the Lord. On my way home riding in the wagon, I remember looking up into the heavens with thanksgiving and so much joy in my heart that now I was a Child of the King.

**PRAYER:** *Father, thank You for making me a new creation through Jesus. Lord, I pray I will walk humbly with You, accepting Your wonderful goodness to me and your unfailing mercies that are new every morning. In the precious Name of Jesus, Amen.*

# Oh, Be Careful Little Tongue What You Say

**Ephesians 4:29** - Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs that it may benefit those who listen.

**Proverbs 18:21** - Death and life are in the power of the tongue and those who love it will eat its fruit.

I have been teaching preschool for over twenty years, and it is truly my joy to work with His children and be a part of shaping and molding them to become lovers of God and people. We sing the song in the title regularly to help us remember to be very careful about what we listen to and look at, what we do and say and where we go.

I remember a time when I learned something about how we are to choose our words to build each other up and not tear each other down from one of my preschoolers:

So, you have rules at your house about language, right? We do, and we especially did when our children were small. In preschool, it can be tricky to figure out just what is ok to say. Our first day, I was helping our little friends, one at a time, to make a "First day hand print project", while my assistant was monitoring the other children as they played in centers. I wasn't listening very closely, but I could hear that kids were playing and talking and one was singing and they seemed to be having fun. After a bit, I could hear some conversation that sounded like a little bit of conflict.

Then one sweet friend came to me and said: "Mrs. Tammy, that boy said a bad word."

Me: "He did?, I'm so sorry, what did he say?" (At this point, I braced myself, knowing it could be almost anything.)

Child: "Sponge Bob Square Pants"

Me: (relieved and choking back a chuckle) "Oh, I see. Your family isn't allowed to talk about that, right?"

Child: "Yes, it's a bad word."

Me: "I understand, thanks for letting me know. I'll have a talk with him."

This job is so much fun, but the challenges are real, y'all.

I know it is easy to remember that crude, rude, and ugly language should be avoided if we are to represent the love of our Savior Jesus Christ. But this story from school reminded me that it is more than that. We are to guard every word we say to build each other up in a way that is helpful to them. The bible is clear when it speaks of the power of our words.

**PRAYER:** Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us your living Word to help us to know how we may live our lives in a way to bring glory to You. Please help me specifically in my use of words to be mindful of the language I use that I may speak life and not death to any who listen and that I would intentionally speak to build others up. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 33 - Andrew Sutton

# Seeing God In The Transitions Of Life

**Ezra 3:12** - But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy.

Transition or change can be difficult, can't it? A massive transition is occurring in Ezra for the Israelites. In 586 BC, Solomon's temple was destroyed by the Babylonians and here, we read the foundation of the new temple being laid, around 536 BC. That means that most of the older generation had witnessed the glory and splendor of the first temple, watched as the Babylonians destroyed it, and then experienced being led into captivity. Now, they sit and watch as the foundation of the new temple is being laid. As we read, Ezra records the older generation wept and, with making some assumptions, the younger generation rejoiced.

This is important for us to understand, because sometimes we respond to change in a similar way. We look at the past and say, "Remember when..." Most of those past experiences are full of God's goodness and expressions of His love for us. So, when we look back at our past, we see God's mercy and His grace in those experiences. Too often we stay rooted in the past and find it hard to believe that God can bring about such great change again.

“...look for the new thing that God is doing. Because often the new thing is even greater than all our past experiences.”

- Andrew Sutton

What we don't see is that God is in the business of making things new. Transition in our lives is often just that; God is taking us through those times where He wants to show us something new. In Ezra, these people, who were mourning, did not understand what God would do in

this new temple. This new temple would be a place where Jesus would walk, teach, rebuke and challenge. This new temple would be the place where the curtain would be torn in two, opening the door for our relationship with God to be restored through Jesus. This new temple, while less grand than Solomon's temple, would house the most precious gift of God, Jesus, His Son. God was doing a new thing, the best thing.

So, as we go through transition in our lives, look for the new thing that God is doing. Because often the new thing is even greater than all our past experiences. Don't let the past dictate whether you can agree to change. Instead, let the past be a reminder of how great our God is. This will help us trust Him with the new thing He is doing in the transitional areas of life.

**PRAYER:** *Father, help me to see You in the transitions and changes of my life. Please keep me from being resistant to the change You want to cultivate in me and through me. Help me to recognize that change and transitions in my life are one of the ways I can grow deeper in my relationship with You. Protect my mind from the pride of my past and from thinking that I know what's best when you want something greater, something better, something new. Father, as I walk into change, help me to walk with complete trust and faith in you. Thank You for showing me that I can trust you throughout my life. Thank You for giving me a hope in Jesus. It's in His precious Name I pray, Amen.*

# Wonderfully Made

**Psalms 139:14** - I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

I want to share another beautiful verse and a beautiful song. Both touch my mind and my heart, and I hope they touch yours, too.

**Matthew 22:37-39**...Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see.

Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace, my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares we have already come. Twas grace that brought us safe thus far, and grace will lead us home.

When we've been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

**PRAYER:** *Dear Lord, we worship You. How deep the Father's love for us is. What amazing grace. We love You, Lord Jesus. In your Name we pray, Amen.*

# Pure Joy

**James 1:2-4** - <sup>2</sup>Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup>Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

“Experience has taught me to release control more quickly and trust His hand, even if I don't understand His ways in the moment.”

**- Brad Kirkman**

James encourages us to “consider it pure joy... whenever you face trials of many kinds”. That’s not usually our first response when life gets hard. Trials bring pain, confusion, and questions in which we don’t always have answers. Yet the Word of God reminds us that trials are not wasted. They are opportunities, refining fires, that God uses to strengthen our faith and grow perseverance within

us. What seems unbearable in the moment can later become the very thing that shapes us into maturity, making us more complete in Christ.

Looking back on seasons of struggle, I can see moments where God was clearly at work, even when I couldn’t see His plan at the time. In the midst of trials, it often felt like chaos, but in hindsight, I can recognize how He was guiding me in directions I never would have chosen on my own. Those difficult times, while painful, were the very moments He used to redirect my steps and draw me closer to Him. Experience has taught me to release control more quickly and trust His hand, even if I don’t understand His ways in the moment.

Though I still question God at times, I’ve also come to realize He welcomes my honesty. Perseverance isn’t something we develop in comfort. It is forged in difficulty. And as I endure trials with Him by my side, my faith grows stronger, and my trust in His goodness deepens. I may not have considered those moments “pure joy” while walking through them, but now I see the blessing they brought. Each trial has left me more mature in my faith, more dependent on His strength and more confident that His plan for me is good.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, You are so good to us. Thank You for the opportunities that even our trials bring, for through them You are shaping us and drawing us closer to You. Open our eyes to see Your hand at work in the midst of our struggles and give us the wisdom and courage to join You quickly when we do. Teach us to embrace perseverance, knowing that as it grows, so does our ability to trust You more deeply and experience new depths of Your joy. Amen.*

# Steps Of Faith

**Proverbs 3:5-6** - Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your path straight.

“Oh, look! Wow!” My sweet feisty two-year-old exclaimed. She was jumping up and down with huge eyes; her excitement was palpable. The problem was we were in the bathroom at the zoo. Her daddy and I had talked about the zoo and explained to her what she would see, but her little eyes had never been to the zoo. She was looking at the paintings on the wall thinking that they were real. The paintings were colorful, vibrant, and life-size. She thought she had made it to the zoo, but what she didn't know was that she needed to trust me to lead her to the actual live animals just outside the door. She was confused and quite angry with me as I tried to take her to our actual destination.

Our relationship with God is sometimes like my trip to the zoo. We know God has something planned for us. It may be a new job, a friend who needs the gospel, a change in a relationship, a financial hardship, a unique opportunity, or any new adventure in your relationship with God. We won't be guided onto the path that he has for us if we don't take the first step. We may need to leave the comfort or familiarity that we are currently living in to take the next step with him.

“Whatever the next step is that God is calling you to take, it is impossible to please him without at least a mustard seed of faith.”  
- Dwana Capshaw

Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

Sometimes our faith will look like being consistent in church on Sunday mornings, sometimes it will look like simple obedience of speaking to a stranger and sometimes it will look like turning off an app or shutting down social media. Whatever the next step is that God is calling you to take, it is impossible to please him without at least a mustard seed of faith.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your path straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

My daughter's own understanding of the zoo was simply the bright colored paintings that she loved in a stinky, dirty bathroom. At her little age, I finally had to pick her up, tears and all, to take her out to the animals. In our walk with Jesus, we have to move our feet and take a step on the path of faith He has laid out for us.

**PRAYER:** *Father, please help us to walk in faith on the path You have laid out for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 37 - Graham Westerfield

# The God Of Hope

**Psalms 118:6** -The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

This verse means a lot to me. I see it as a representation of strength, hope, and love. It wasn't until recently that I found this verse, but it has helped me greatly. When I'm nervous or worried and I read it, the verse calms me. It helps me realize that I shouldn't be scared or worried about what people think or do to me, or the outcome of a temporary problem that won't matter a year from now, especially if the God of the universe is with me. I used this verse one time when I was really nervous the night before an upcoming test. God showed me this verse and it helped calm my nerves. Since I knew God was with me and that in the long term He was the only one that mattered, I was able to relax. Not one person could take that from me.

“...no matter how high, how low, how nervous, how calm, how confident or unsure you may be, if God is with you, no one can touch you.”

**- Graham Westerfield**

The thing to take away from this experience is that no matter how high, how low, how nervous, how calm, how confident or unsure you may be, if God is with you, no one can touch you. You have nothing to worry about. You always have hope through Him. We all should praise Him for this. We very easily take it for granted that the God who made

everything is with us, loves us, and protects us. We should be thanking him constantly for this because we are not even the littlest bit worthy of that. Also, we should never doubt. It may be hard not to, but if we realize that He is with us then we know He has a plan and a purpose, and He won't let anyone interfere with that.

**PRAYER:** *Dear Lord, please help us to trust You and realize Your power. Please help us to know that even in the hardest times You are with us and no one can take that away from us. Please help us to live with our mind focused on Your plan and purpose for us and let no one influence us to stray from You. We love You Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

# Love x Infinity

**John 3:16** - For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have eternal life.

This verse tells us that God loved us  
soooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo [x infinity]  
much, that He sent His very own son to die for  
our sins! Isn't that awesome? Imagine sending  
your very own child, for dying, yes, DYING for  
someone's sins, I wouldn't do it, would you? But  
God loved us THAT much!!!!

“Think about how God loves you very, very much.”

- Haddix Wilson

**Think About It:**

Think about how God loves you very, very  
much. There is no one else who loves us that  
much, so thank Him for loving you!

**Do it yourself:**

Thank God for loving you that much! Tell five people that God loves them!!!

**PRAYER:** Thank you God for loving me so much that You sent Your very own Son to die for us.  
Forgive any of our sins, please, and restore our health to make us healthy and strong. In Your name,  
Amen.

Day 39 - Jerry Barron

# He Is A God Of Miracles

**Isaiah 41:10** - So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

During the Second World War, a crew flew a bomber from England to Germany, equipped to bomb certain targets. During their flight, the plane was severely damaged; three engines would no longer run. Having only one engine left, the plane could only fly at an altitude of 300 feet.

They managed to cross the English Channel and the Cliffs of Dover. Then, the entire tail section broke off, including the tail gunner section with the gunner still in it. It began to tumble, and the gunner had no parachute. He landed in a tree and miraculously ended up with only scratches and bruises. He climbed down the tree, went to where the plane crashed and saw that

all his crew mates had been killed in the crash. He was treated for his scratches and bruises and flew back to Germany to continue fighting and flew 25 missions before the War ended.

*The important lesson to learn, to see and to remember is that no matter what is going on in your world, no matter what is crashing or what is happening, we have and we serve a God of miracles.*

**- Jerry Barron**

Back home, he was attending church one Sunday when he heard the Lord call him to be a missionary. He went to college on the G.I. Bill and then went on to the

Seminary to become a missionary. The Foreign Mission Board granted his request to go to Germany. In Germany, he led many German people to the Lord, had a very successful ministry and started several Baptist Churches.

The important lesson to learn, to see and to remember is that no matter what is going on in your world, no matter what is crashing or what is happening, we have and we serve a God of miracles. Our God always stands true to His Word, and always keeps His promises: His promise to be with us, strengthen us, help us and uphold us with His righteous right hand. We need not be afraid, ever. He is with us.

**PRAYER:** *Father, we pray that Christians will learn to trust You and trust your Word. You always keep Your promises and You are always with us. May we trust and believe that You are who You say You are and You will do what You say You will do. May we believe and trust. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

# Pray About Everything

**Philippians 4:13** - I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.

Paul had visited Philippi on several occasions. Timothy was his traveling companion. Paul spoke powerfully of the Good News of Jesus, but not everyone embraced this message.

Paul was eventually arrested and sent to Rome to be on trial for his life. Since he was a Roman citizen, he appealed to Caesar and rather than being in a dungeon awaiting his execution, he was under house arrest, where he could write letters, receive visitors and gifts.

It was during this time that he wrote a letter of joy to the Philippians that continues to encourage us today. Here are some beautiful verses: Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. I rejoiced greatly in the Lord...I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. Phil 4:6-11...and verse 13, “*I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.*”

**PRAYER:** *Lord, please bless family, friends and the world that You be praised with thanksgiving for who You are. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 41 - Leslie Carroll

# God In The Details

**2 Corinthians 12:9a** - ...But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Yes, God’s grace is sufficient, even down to the smallest detail. Have you ever felt exhausted, only to have someone you love and care for tell you they are out of toothpaste, right after you have just returned from the store? Truly, God’s grace is sufficient to energize you and to carry you to the store to get toothpaste for someone you dearly love.

But then the most interesting thing happens when you are roaming the aisles of the store looking for toothpaste. You encounter an old friend that you have not seen in years, and learn that their child was just in a car accident. Thankfully, the child will be ok, but they are in great need of prayer for the child’s healing, and the parents’ peace and strength.

“Yes, there is God in the details once again, working His purposes, extending His love and providing His Grace, forever sufficient.”

**- Leslie Carroll**

Aha...there is the reason you were called on to go to the store for toothpaste, even though you were exhausted. Yes, there is God in the details once again, working His purposes, extending His love and providing His Grace, forever sufficient.

What a joy to journey together, and what a blessing to see our Lord in the details of our life and those around us. Let’s don’t miss Him, even if it’s a small thing like going after toothpaste.

**PRAYER:** Lord, thank You for who You are, for Your presence, Your plans and Your purposes. May we be faithful and may You be glorified in all we say and do. May we love as Jesus loves. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

# God Is Unchanging And Steadfast

**James 1:17** - Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

This verse reminds me that God is in control and we are blessed directly from Him. Our own feeble wants and desires are nothing in comparison to what God blesses us with. The beauty of seeing Him as the Father of heavenly lights reminds us we should depend on Him just as we depend on the sun rising and setting. The thought that the God of Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Paul looks upon me and gives me goodness is so powerful. God hasn't changed His love and He will never leave.

The book of James gives wisdom to the doers of the word who inevitably face trials. James reminds us that God is the giver of good and remains steadfast in our lives. He is dependable, a source of hope and never changing. When our situations change, trials arise, or you have to face another day in doubt, He is there just as He was yesterday and will be tomorrow. He keeps you close and is always with you.

“God hasn't changed his love and He will never leave.”

- Mackenzie Denton

Most of the time, my pride deceives me into thinking I am in charge. Everything I have comes from God, not from my own making. This life is not about me or my plans, it is about serving toward His will. We must not be passive listeners, we must learn to live out God's word through our actions.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, You are steadfast and unchanging. You fill my life with wisdom and hope. Open my heart to Your plans and give me the strength through trials. Give me a seeking heart for Your truth and align my actions with Your words. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 43 - Mitzi Perkins

# Honoring Jesus

**Colossians 3:17** - ...And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

“Am I encouraging other believers and serving where God is calling me?”

- **Mitzi Perkins**

This verse reminds us that whatever we do or say represents Jesus. What impression do people have of Jesus when they see or talk to you?

Some days, I feel as though I have not represented Christ in a way that would honor him. Would my actions prompt others to come to our Church or to

seek Christ as their Savior? Am I encouraging other believers and serving where God is calling me? Am I truly thankful to God in all situations?

**PRAYER:** Lord, please lead, guide and direct me to represent You in a way that would honor You. Thank You for all of my many blessings, in Jesus' name, Amen.

# When Storms Come, Keep The Faith

**Isaiah 41:10** - So do not fear for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Mark 4:37-40 "A furious squall came up and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the storm, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?' He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet Be Still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to His disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'

When Jesus rebuked the wind and it died down and was completely calm, Jesus said to His disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Throughout my life, I've faced storms that came out of nowhere, leaving me to wonder:

Why is this happening to me? What am I going to do? How am I going to make it? I asked Jesus to help me through the storms and He did. He gave me the courage and faith to keep going.

“So, whenever storms come, keep the faith. You will make it through. Hold on and don't ever give up. Jesus will see you through.”

**- Mona Pyle Moss**

My mother was diagnosed with gallbladder cancer and given three to six months to live. That news was really hard to take. She lived a little over three months. Before my mother was diagnosed with cancer, my dad began showing early signs of dementia. No, it wasn't easy what I had facing ahead of me, but I kept the faith and Jesus was right there with me, holding my hand and walking with me every step of the way.

So whenever storms come, keep the faith. You will make it through. Hold on and don't ever give up. Jesus will see you through. I know because He's done it for me!

**PRAYER:** Lord, I come bodily to Your throne asking that when we go through life's storms that You will always give us courage and faith to keep going. You are there with us, holding our hands and walking beside us. All we need to do is to have faith the size of a mustard seed. Thank You for calming the storms as we go through life. In Jesus' mighty Name, Amen and Amen.

Day 45 - Peyton Little

# Trusting God's Timing

**Jeremiah 29:11** - For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.

One of the hardest lessons in life is learning to wait on God's timing. We often want answers right away, but God sees what we cannot. His timing is never early and never late—it is always perfect.

Our church prayed for a young adult group for a long time. It felt like nothing was happening, and at times, we wondered if God heard us. But we kept praying and trusting His plan. Then, in His perfect timing, Hunter and Emma Hanson came into our church family. The young adult

group became thriving and alive under their leadership. Some of the best memories and new families growing happened under their leadership! What a beautiful reminder that God answers prayers in ways and times that are best for us!

*“If you're in a season of waiting right now—whether for a job, a relationship, or a breakthrough—hold on to God's promises.”*

**- Peyton Little**

plans for a hope and a future. When things don't happen on our timeline, it doesn't mean God has forgotten us. It means He is working behind the scenes, preparing something better than we could have imagined.

Isaiah 40:31 says, “But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” Waiting is not wasted time when we trust God. He uses the waiting to strengthen us and prepare us for what's ahead.

If you're in a season of waiting right now—whether for a job, a relationship, or a breakthrough—hold on to God's promises. Just like He brought Hunter and Emma at the right time for our church, He will come through for you, too. His plan is perfect. His timing is best.

**PRAYER:** Lord, thank You for knowing what's best for us. Help me to trust Your timing, even when it's hard to wait. Remind me that You are always working for my good and that your plans are perfect. Amen.

Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us that God knows the plans He has for us—

# Learning To Lean On God

**Proverbs 3:5-6** - Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.

There are times in my life when I fail God by not listening and trusting Him. I trust God, and yet there are times when I fail by telling Him I can do it myself. God has been so patient with me. He has taught me not only to trust Him fully, but to learn to lean on Him. God taught me what it means to lean on Him when tragically my nephew was killed in an automobile accident. That is truly when I learned to totally lean on Him and not depend on myself.

“God has been so patient with me. He has taught me not only to trust Him fully, but to learn to lean on Him.”

**- Rosaleigh Tabor**

**PRAYER:** My prayer, Lord, is that I should lean on the everlasting arms daily. God, I praise You for being patient and helping me to trust You always. Guide my steps and guide me to wherever You want me to go and whatever You want me to do. Help me to reach out to others who are not saved and to give those with whom I speak hope and a knowledge of You. Help them to learn of You and Your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 47 - Samantha Matuszak

# Flipping Tables

**John 2:13-17** - "When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts He found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So He made a whip out of cords and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves He said, 'Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!' His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'"

Many times, we experience moments of 'road rage' whether in our own lives or from others. We need to ask, how would Jesus react to this? In a way, we can think of this scripture and say Jesus got mad and felt injustice by flipping tables and using a whip to drive the greed or wrongfulness out. But it is more about what is going on inside of us. It's about our lives being flipped and driving out the sinful behaviors keeping us from God.

“Through daily prayer and scripture readings, we can overcome the world's temptations, including the compelling drive to keep up with everyone else.”

- **Samantha Matuszak**

Through daily prayer and scripture readings, we can overcome the world's temptations, including the compelling drive to keep up with everyone else. This temptation may result in overconsumption and greed. With this, we lose sight of our Christian life and allow emotions of anger, rage, and jealousy to lead us to sinful ways.

God will provide for us. He will give us good things in his timing. Being our Father, He will correct us to lead us back to His grace and mercy through the Bible and our faith.

**PRAYER:** *God our Father, give us the strength today to deal with whatever may come our way. Please help me to remember that the strife and strengths of our existence are only by Your guiding hand. Please remind me that I may one day be cleared of my sins to enter Your embrace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

# Seeking Contentment

**Hebrews 13:5** - Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

**1 Timothy 6:6** - But Godliness with contentment is great gain.

People who say money can't buy happiness usually have a lot of it—money, not happiness. I think the subject of money, while not discussed often in respectable southern circles, remains in our thoughts. How can it not? Inflation is, apparently, trending. It has become increasingly difficult for people to feed their families and provide life's necessities. Or perhaps, our problem is that we have all of our needs met, but we are unhappy when the budget calls for us to do without some of our wants. Ouch. I have found this to be true while looking at expensive face creams that claim to make me look “10 years younger.” While my face may look like that cream is a need, it is, indeed, a want. As are most of the other things I would like to purchase.

“...because He is enough, we can open our hands to cheerfully let go of everything else.”

So how do we adjust our wants and our lives so that we live as Christians with open hands toward Jesus?

- Sara Roberts

When does what we have become enough?

I wish I had the perfect answer. Even if I did, I'm not sure that answer would fit in a devotional passage. This much I do know: the Lord has led me in this season of my life to strive for contentment. First Timothy 6:6 says, “But godliness with contentment is great gain,” and I find that it truly is a key to satisfaction and peace in my life. I also know that contentment is a direct result of gratitude. I don't think any of us are grateful enough for all the blessings we have been given. The people in our lives, including church family, our homes, our vehicles (even older models), our jobs, our health or at least the fact that we are still here, multiple copies of God's word, clean, running hot and cold water, so much food we have to watch what we eat, and enough clothing that we can wear different outfits to church (or at least rotate them). I really could go on and on, but I think you get the point.

So maybe I do know the answer to my question, “When does what we have become enough?” I think it's when we realize that Jesus is and has always been enough. He has given us so much more, but even if He has not, He Himself is still enough. And because He is enough, we can open our hands to cheerfully let go of everything else.

**PRAYER:** Lord, thank You for how You have so lovingly provided me with everything I need. Thank You for the gift of your son. Help me to grow in the knowledge that You are my enough. Help me live my life with heart and hands wide open to you. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 49 - Shelly Kearny

# Move Mountains With A Mustard Seed

**Matthew 17:20** - He replied, (Jesus to his Disciples) 'Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, move from here to there; and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.'

Jesus's disciples failed at casting out a demon child that was sick. The father pleaded with Jesus to heal his son. The disciples asked Jesus why they had failed when they had been helping to heal others. Jesus used the parable to tell them that they lacked in their faith. A Sahara mustard seed is the smallest seed in the desert, and it grows into a mighty, expansive plant with resilient wood. It also produces millions of seeds. With our faith as small as a mustard seed, we can expect great things in our lives to happen.

Our faith in God starts out small. All it takes is that seed of faith to be planted in us because our faith in Jesus is powerful against anything. I have experienced this many different times in my life. I have faced hardship, homelessness, financial loss, health issues and I have even come close to death a few times. I held on with so little faith and strength, and cast all my energy and that little mustard seed size faith onto God, praying to Jesus for help. And, He did help move mountains in life. I know that God sees me and loves me. Jesus holds me in His hands and is not

“ All it takes is that seed of faith to be planted in us because our faith in Jesus is powerful against anything. ”

- Shelly Kearny

letting me go. I may be weak in faith, like a child, but He will not let me down. I have to continue to feed my faith with God's word and have more trust in Him than others, because others will lead me astray.

Keep believing in God and Jesus' salvation. Drink of His eternal

water of His Word as it feeds us and refreshes us daily. Keep walking daily in faith and communion with God through Jesus. By our salvation we are given the measure of faith needed. Even if at times we feel our faith is as small as a mustard seed, it is enough for God to reach down and lift us up as we continue to keep ourselves focused on Jesus.

**PRAYER:** *I pray in God my Father, the Alpha and Omega, that no matter when my faith starts to dwindle even to a mustard seed size because of doubts and fears that the enemy has come against me attacking in various areas of my life, I know I can hand You my mustard seed of faith and in Jesus' precious blood, his love and grace and mercy you will do something abundantly for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

# Seeking Contentment

**Ephesians 5:10** - Learn as you go along what pleases the Lord.

In the Experiencing God study, we learned that God is always at work around you. Also, it was shown that as we follow Jesus every day, He will help keep us in God's will. Our daily attention and focus would need to be on the Lord to recognize the opportunities that await us, so we can join God in what He is already doing. Ephesians 5:10 can also be written "Your lives should be an example".

I am reminded of a recent trip where we put in the coordinates in the GPS and it kept us on track. When we would make an exit, the GPS was quick to inform us that was not the route to go. Studying the Book of Ephesians, and also studying the Book of James, there are many examples of how our daily walk with the Lord should be. So as we face each day and go along, we can seek God, live for Jesus, and allow the Holy Spirit and Scripture to be our inspiration and daily guide.

**PRAYER:** *Dear God Heavenly Father, we thank You for each day and the opportunities that You show us so that we may grow closer to You. May we be obedient to You and live so You would be given all the Glory and Praise. We thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to be our Lord and Savior. Thank you again for all Your many blessings. In Jesus' precious Name we pray, Amen.*

Day 51 - Taylor Dwire

# God's Timing

**Proverbs 3:5-6** - Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.

When I broke off my engagement 45 days before my wedding date, everything had been planned and paid for. I had my dress and my bridesmaids had theirs. I was ready to go. Deep down, I knew something was wrong and that I was not truly happy, but I thought that I was too far into this wedding to cancel it.

God had a different plan.

I had asked God to give me a sign and show me if this man was truly the one for me. Well, He did just that. God opened my eyes and revealed to me that this was not the man He wanted me to marry.

That night, I called off my engagement. It truly broke my heart. I was embarrassed because my parents had paid all this money and it was all for nothing. I thought I would never find someone

that would love me and want to marry me. All of my friends were getting married and having babies, and here I was, single and all alone.

*I am forever grateful that God had a better plan for my life than I did.*

**- Taylor Dwire**

I was wrong, God did have a plan for me, I just didn't know what the plan was yet.

About a year or so later, my mom ran into one of my childhood best friend's grandmother at a store. They began to talk about me, and my mom told her to tell her granddaughter to set me up with a good guy. Well, her granddaughter's husband just happened to work with a single guy who had been praying to find the right woman. They set us up on a blind date.

He was perfect. He was the calm to my craziness, and he was a man of God. I knew after a few dates that there was something special there and he was the one for me. After nine months of dating, he proposed and a year later we got married!

I say all this to say, God had a bigger plan for my life. I thought I knew the kind of person I wanted to marry, and I had him picked out and ready to marry. Instead, God provided just the right man for me. He gave me a loving, caring man of God. I am forever grateful that God had a better plan for my life than I did. Always trust in God and His perfect timing.

**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, thank You for being the ultimate provider. You know just what we need, when we need it. Even though there are times where we may not see clearly, You are always there with us. Thank You for always guiding us in the right direction. I love You! In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen.

# The Fear Of Failure

**2 Corinthians 12:9** - My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

So often in life, our anxieties are fueled by a fear of failure. That fear can paralyze us to the point that we do nothing in the face of a challenge. Sometimes it's something small, like choosing the restaurant for a group, and other times it's something weighty, like tackling a difficult project at work. In both cases, we tend to measure success by earthly standards instead of asking: What path has the Lord set before me? When we try to control outcomes on our own terms, we forget to let God guide our decisions.

I remember in college, sitting down to study for a hard exam, only to be so overwhelmed by worry that I couldn't even focus. Even now in my career, I sometimes stare at a "mountain" of tasks and freeze, wondering how I'll ever get it all done. That shows how often we as Christians focus too much on the "how" instead of the "why"—and most importantly, the "who" behind our circumstances.

“The truth is, God often calls us into things that feel far beyond what we can handle alone. But he never calls us without equipping us.”

**- Taylor Walker**

Moses gives us a powerful example of this struggle in Exodus 3–4. When God appeared to him in the burning bush, Moses was not a confident leader. He was a man with past failures, lacking credibility among his people, and carrying deep insecurities. So when God called him to confront Pharaoh and lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses asked: “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?” (Ex. 3:11). God's reply was simple but profound: “I will be with you.”

When Moses feared the people wouldn't believe him, God gave him signs—a staff that became a serpent, a hand that turned leprous and was healed, water that turned to blood. When Moses insisted he wasn't a good speaker, God reminded him: “Who gave human beings their mouths? ... Now go; I will help you speak” (Ex. 4:11–12). Even then, when Moses begged God to send someone else, God provided Aaron to go with him.

Nothing Moses accomplished was done in his own strength. His fear was that he was inadequate—but God showed him that His presence and power were more than enough. On his own, Moses was weak, but with God he could do all that was required.

The truth is, God often calls us into things that feel far beyond what we can handle alone. But He never calls us without also equipping us. The comfort we have is not in our own ability, but in the promise of His presence: “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” (Phil. 4:13)

**PRAYER:** Dear Lord, remind us that our weakness is the place where Your power shines brightest. Amen.

Day 53 - Dana Lopez

# He Will Provide

**Philippians 4:19** - And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

I was already a faithful tither for many years, but I wanted to be a generous giver as well, like the people of SBC. God knew this was a desire of my heart, so He told me to set back \$25 from every paycheck, so that when a benevolent need arose or a love offering was taken up, I would be prepared; I would already know how much I could give because I had set aside those funds for that purpose. I was resistant to the idea at first, thinking that I didn't have any excess funds, much less to do it consistently, but I trusted that, in my obedience, God would provide.

“Ask God to order your steps so that your efforts will be fruitful, and, best of all, so that He may be glorified.”

- Dana Lopez

Every payday, I set those funds aside right after my tithe. I haven't missed it one day, and in fact, now I look forward to whom I get to bless with it when I have quite a bit built up. It may not be the thousands that I've seen some people give, but the proportion to my income is the same. It makes me feel good to bless others

without hesitation (i.e., scrambling around in my wallet for a dollar or two) and without worrying about how I'm going to make up for what I gave (i.e., fretting over my donation because I just gave away my water bill money).

I encourage everyone to put God first! Put His desires first! In your finances, in your goals, in your relationships... in your everyday activities! Ask God to order your steps so that your efforts will be fruitful, and, best of all, so that He may be glorified.

**PRAYER:** Heavenly Father, thank You for the many ways You have provided for me. I have never lacked because of Your loving kindness towards me. May You continue to bless my resources so that Your name be glorified and Your Kingdom multiplied. Amen.

# Sunset Moments

**John 16:33** - I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world!

I love sunsets. Our backyard is surrounded by open fields that give us the best view of the sunset at night. I go outside and catch as many as possible. Some are cloudless and painted with golden hues. Others are surrounded by clouds that look like cotton candy with colors to match the cloud's delicious flavors.

Sunsets remind us that even when we've had a long or hard day, we can just look up at the sky, see all the beautiful colors, and feel God's peace all around us. We just need to slow down and remember to stop to see what He has made.

Jesus says in John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome that world." With the busyness and stress of everyday life, we all have troubles. Anxiety is at an all-time high. There are rare moments of peace, but it's there. Jesus has promised it to us. We just need to find our sunset moments and recognize them for what they are. God's promises are found everywhere, but especially in the western skies every single night.

“God's promises are found everywhere...”

- Adeline Crook

**PRAYER:** Lord, You are the peacemaker of the world. You bring peace to me when I feel stressed or troubled. I thank You for the peace You give me even in my life's troubles. You help me to take heart and trust that You have overcome the world. Fill my soul with hope as I rest in Your promises. Amen.

# Leaving Where You're Comfortable

**Proverbs 3:5-6** - Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

During this past summer, I worked at summer camp where I had no clue what I was doing. I had to leave everything I had known and loved for three whole months without a plan for my future. The verse that was on my heart the entire summer was Proverbs 3:5-6. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

“Even though I had no idea where I was going or where it was going to take me, I put all my trust and hope in the Lord to guide me.”

- **Adriana Lozano-maya**

Even though I had no idea where I was going or where it was going to take me, I put all my trust and hope in the Lord to guide me. It was hard at the beginning, and I wanted to go back home, but I continued to pray and ultimately decided to stay.

Staying was absolutely the best choice I could have made. I was able to impact kids and teens in ways I never thought I would. I was able to share my testimony and be there for those who needed someone who was going through similar things. I was able to make long lasting friendships and memories all because God knew my heart belonged there because I was able to trust and grow in the uncomfortable, I was able to come out of it with so much joy and peace from the Lord!

**PRAYER:** Dear God, I just want to thank You for all the things You have made possible. Even in the midst of uncertainty, I believe You can do all things. Through all the doubts and struggles, I know You are good. When I am weak, You are my strength to keep going day-to-day. When I place all my hope and trust in You, I know my paths will be straight! Lord, continue to guide and lead me to be able to proclaim the gospel! Amen.

# Does God Give Us More Than We “Handle” Or “Live Through”?

- 1 Corinthians 10:13** - There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.
- Psalms 46:1-3** - <sup>1</sup>God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. <sup>2</sup>Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; <sup>3</sup>Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.
- Isaiah 40:29** - He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increases strength.
- 2 Corinthians 12:9** - And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

I have personally been aware of close friends losing family members unexpectedly and being confronted with life-changing health issues recently. This led me to look for the scripture that people reference when stating “God will not give us more than we can deal with”. Boy, was I surprised! The actual scripture referenced is I Corinthians 10:13. When I read it, I realized that this scripture alone, is only referencing temptation. You really need to follow it up with the other scripture passages referenced above. After reading all of these (as well as Philippians 4:6-7 and Isaiah 41:10), I realized we need to constantly be in our Bibles to keep us humble and aligned with God’s purpose for our lives.

Being a “Preacher’s Kid”, I now feel (for whatever reason that only God knows) has given me insight into people that everyone might possibly not have. This could come from moving around most of my life and experiencing life in different settings. My parents raised me to respect my elders and friends. I truly appreciate, as I got older, the stories they shared with me of their experiences in the churches they served.

The most eye-opening and painful thing to happen in my life was to watch what happened to my older brother. When he was a high school senior, a church member where we were attending made a comment in his presence that caused him to tell our dad that he would never step back inside a church. The comments the man made that day caused my brother to feel that God didn’t love him or would be there for him when he needed God the most. Soon after that incident at church, my brother left to serve in the Air Force, where he ended up in Vietnam and was exposed to Agent Orange. The comments made that day not only affected my brother, but our mom and dad, as well as having an effect on my brother’s family for many years after that. Those comments kept my brother from having the relationship that he and his children needed for many years. Years later, my brother did finally come back to

“...we all need to really stop and think before we speak-whether we are in the church building or even out in public.”  
- Martha Colley

God and then spent the last 25 years of his life working to mend relationships with his family. He also worked to make sure that those he came in contact with knew God loved them no matter what. God loved them in all situations.

I say all this to say that we all need to really stop and think before we speak—whether we are in the church building or even out in public. There can always be others who hear our conversations. We have no idea who or when someone could overhear something that was said and turn away from God because of what they heard.

As I referenced in my first scripture, don't forget that God is with you through it all when you are confronted with a trial in your life. Even though we don't know why we may be given these trials, how we respond, may speak very loudly to those around us....specifically, someone who may not know God. Watching us may be the only time they experience God in their life.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, May we always remember we are Your children and You love us no matter what. May we realize we can always depend on You for comfort and guidance and may we be ambassadors for You to the world. Amen.*

# Forgiveness Leads To Freedom

**Luke 23:34a** - ...Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

**Ephesians 4:32** - ...Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

In today's world, it often seems it is more common to hold grudges than to forgive. We like to dwell on the wrongs done to us, allowing them to fester in our hearts. The more we dwell on them, the heavier the weight becomes, leading to anger, pain, and turmoil. The longer we avoid forgiveness, the more difficult it becomes to forgive.

Jesus gave us the best example of forgiveness when He was on the cross. In Luke 23:34, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Can we imagine the pain and agony that He was enduring? Yet He chose forgiveness over bitterness. In His deepest agony, He extended mercy to those who caused His pain.

“Being able to forgive is life-changing. It opens the door to blessings and freedom that we may not anticipate.”

- Sandra Hancock

In our lives, there will be times when we need to forgive people who have wronged us. Let us not avoid the act of forgiveness. Let us not procrastinate in forgiving those who have hurt us. Instead, choose forgiveness and lift that person up in prayer. When we do, the burden lifts, and God replaces it with peace. Being able to forgive is life-changing. It opens the door to blessings and freedom that we may not anticipate.

Let us challenge ourselves to use Ephesians 4:32 as a daily reminder: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Forgiveness is a reflection of God's love living in us.

**PRAYER:** Dear Father, thank You so much for Your grace and mercy. Please help us to follow Your example to forgive. Help us to let go of the grudges that we have so tightly held. Remind us daily to be kind and show compassion to one another. Allow others to see your love radiate through us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 58 - Pam Lyon

# Trust In God For All Provision

**1 Thessalonians 5:18** - Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

**Proverbs 3:5** - Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

At one time, Wally and I co-owned a sporting goods store. We sold hunting and fishing equipment. To make a long story short, we lost the store back in 1990. We were devastated. It was how we made our living, and suddenly we had nothing.

Right before it happened, Wally came to me, and I could tell something was wrong—like someone had died. He told me we were going to have to close the store permanently. We went right then to the sanctuary of our church and started praying. One thing we prayed for was that we not have to take bankruptcy because we felt it would dishonor the Lord. We thanked Him for whatever He would do for us.

“Trust in God for all provision, no matter what comes.”  
- Pam Lyon

Wally sent letters to all our creditors, and a lot of them simply forgave our debt. Some worked with us to arrange other places to send merchandise. Through the next few months, it was hard. But God was faithful and we did not have to claim bankruptcy. Since then, God has blessed our lives in so many different ways.

Trusting God is what got us through this. Through it all, we became closer to God and closer as a couple. We began to seek God as a couple as well as individuals—something I’m not sure we had really been doing.

We never really wanted for anything during this time. I don’t know what we would have done without God providing and looking out for us. He has blessed us in so many ways since the store.

Trust in God for all provision, no matter what comes. God knows what you are going through and will provide what you need. God is good all the time.

**PRAYER:** Lord, thank You for your faithfulness and love through hard times. Even in our fear You comforted us. We were made stronger through adversity because You upheld us. Thank you, Lord.

# Finding A Family

**1 Peter 4:8-10** - Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

When Glen and I moved to Hopkinsville, we had no family here. We had some friends from Christian County Middle School and Wyndall's Big Star, but no family. When David was a toddler and I was pregnant with Damon, we rented a house between two Second Baptist families. They instantly became close friends and mentors for this young mother. When Damon was born, I instantly felt I needed to know more about a God who could make such a beautiful baby.

We soon visited at Second and realized what a wonderful congregation it was. I was saved at the age of 26 and was baptized here. Then, Glen moved his membership here. We found family and friends that I didn't even know I needed. As our boys grew, they were both saved and baptized at Second and made some lifelong friends.

When I think back to those first few years, I had no idea what I was missing or what I needed, but God knew. He brought us here and kept us here through some challenging times. I am so very thankful that He never told us to move. I now live alone but know that my family is here at Second, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve my God and my church here at Second Baptist.

**PRAYER:** Lord, You are our provider. You provide us with our needs even when we don't know what they are. Thank You for Your care and help me be more like those women who were our neighbors. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

“When I think back on those first few years, I had no idea what I was missing or what I needed, but God knew.”

- Glenda Hall

Day 60 - Nancy Hyams

# Along The Journey

**Jeremiah 29:11** - For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.

Are you facing a move in your future? In facing a move with uncertainties, be reminded that God's plan calls for our good and not for our harm.

Shortly after Jim and I married, he entered into a long career with Gulf Oil Company, which eventually required constant moves. I began a career in teaching that fall. Three years later, we began our family of three sons: Mickey, Keith and Brent. During their childhood years, I became a stay-at-home-mom. By the time Mickey and Keith entered elementary school in Louisville, Kentucky, we had already moved three times.

For a few years in the 1970s, Jim was shuffled around in supervisory roles, first to Mobile, then to Birmingham, Alabama. We only lived about a year in either of these places; and the boys were constantly being faced as "the new kids on the block," having to stand up for themselves. After 15 months in Birmingham, near November 1977, we again moved the family, our sixth move. We remained in Marietta, Ga., for 12 years.

We all felt so at home in the Atlanta area, in our neighborhood and in our church. But, not long after Mickey and Keith were attending the University of Georgia, and just before Brent was to begin his high school junior year, Jim was asked to transfer back to Mobile! We were heartbroken at the prospect of leaving Marietta, because we had felt so content there. Our stomachs were in knots! We had never intended to move again! We prayed over it.

One night our family devotional was titled: "Are you facing a move in your future?" It was about a mother bird that kept trying to build her nest in a particular tree; and the farmer kept tearing her nest down. This happened several times, until the mother bird finally relocated her nest. This time the farmer allowed her nest to remain secured. What the mother bird had not known was that this farmer had planned later on to cut down that particular tree in order to move a fence line. He was just protecting her future.

This devotional essentially asked if we were facing "a move with uncertainties?" Jim and I knew we were soon going to be "empty nesters," and the irony of the bird's nest analogy did not fail to resonate. We'd never considered that this could possibly be God's plan for our good, and not for our harm! At that point, we never looked back, trusting God's guidance in our move back to Mobile. It was one of the best moves we had ever made!

Looking back over 61 years of marriage, we see the Hand of God leading us through the pivotal decisions we had to make. With every move, we asked God to lead us to the right home and to find a church home as soon as possible. We made a point to reach out to our neighbors and be involved with our church and community.

During this process of constantly facing new situations and new environments, all three of our sons learned to be strong and easily made good friends along the way. In the long run, constant change benefited them. They're certainly not withdrawn; and they have no trouble traveling since they've lived just about everywhere in the South, and have contacts along the way!

We never regretted any of our many moves! What a journey we've had!

**PRAYER:** *Thank you, Lord, for guiding us through Your plans for our lives. In Jesus' Name, Amen!*

# God's Plan For A Family

**Proverbs 22:1-6** - Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

This verse is a foundational principle for Christian parenting, highlighting the responsibility of parents to instill values and faith from a young age. Unconditional love and prayer while setting boundaries are key tools for parents to utilize in their responsibility following God's plan. The breakdown of the family is a pressing issue in society today and needs to be addressed in the local church first and foremost. As a church family, we can provide an environment that will teach children about Jesus at a young age and also support their parents by creating community and meeting tangible needs.

God has blessed our family beyond measure and has always provided in difficult seasons. Having a church family and being involved in various activities like Bible school, summer camp, small groups like Royal Ambassadors and many outreach programs as a child myself, I learned the love of Christ and found truth in scripture. Today, those activities in the church that minister to kids and families may look and sound a little different, but the core of them is the same. And that is to share the love of Jesus Christ and find light in a world that at times can feel dark and lonely.

I have learned that being faithful in serving my Lord and giving of my resources has made a difference in my life and others.

**PRAYER:** Father God, thank You for showing me the importance of having a relationship with You throughout my life. Let Your Holy Spirit move me to use the resources You gave me to make a difference in others' lives and growing Your kingdom. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

“ I have learned that being faithful in serving my Lord and giving of my resources has made a difference in my life and others. ”

- David Wimpy







**What began in a tent meeting on O'Neal Avenue** in 1908 grew quickly into a regular Sunday school class and a mission work on the west side of Hopkinsville. This outreach of Hopkinsville Baptist, under the direction of pastor E.J. Wells, was eventually incorporated as the Second Baptist Church of Hopkinsville in 1910. From that small step of faith, Second Baptist not only started but also flourished in its ministry for God.

Over a hundred years later, Second Baptist is no longer the missionary start, but now the starter of missions, having helped build and grow three different congregations. That humble and faithful group of believers built a church that has pioneered radio and television ministries in Christian County. They have supported missionaries both locally and around the world through generous gifts to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program. They have been a beacon of hope to the west side of Hopkinsville through good times and bad.

Today, our church continues to be faithful to our history while embracing where God is leading next! Second strives through Christ to revive every heart, build every home and impact our world. We hope that you will come and join us. Come and be a part of the history that is still being written. The best is yet to come!