

**2026
DAILY
DEVOTIONAL**

JULY 2 - SEPTEMBER 29

HOW TO PRACTICE THE SOAP METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY

The SOAP method is a simple and powerful way to engage with Scripture and apply it to your daily life. It stands for Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer. Using SOAP helps you slow down, reflect deeply on God's Word and respond thoughtfully.

1. Prepare a Quiet Space

- Find a calm, quiet place where you won't be disturbed.
- Sit comfortably and take a few deep breaths.
- Begin with a short prayer, asking God to speak to you through His Word.

2. S - Scripture

- Choose a short passage of Scripture (a few verses or a chapter).
- Read the passage slowly and thoughtfully, even multiple times.
- Write down the verse or verses that stand out to you most.

3. O - Observation

- What do you notice about the passage?
- Who is speaking? Who is being addressed?
- Are there any repeated words, key themes or commands?
- Write down your observations—what's happening, what truths are being revealed?

4. A - Application

- Ask: How does this apply to my life right now?
- Is there a sin to confess, a promise to claim, a command to obey or an example to follow?
- Write down how you will live differently because of this truth.

5. P - Prayer

- Write a short prayer responding to what you've learned. It could include praise, confession, a request for strength or a desire to grow.
- Talk to God about what you read and ask for help to apply it.

6. Conclude

- Close with a moment of stillness, thanking God for His Word.
- Carry the truth or challenge from the passage with you into the rest of your day.

Helpful Tips

- Keep a dedicated journal or notebook for your SOAP studies.
- Try doing this at the same time each day to create a rhythm.
- Don't worry about making it perfect. The goal is not performance—it's connection with God.

JULY 2

THE PREACHER

*“Set your minds on things above,
not on earthly things.”*

COLOSSIANS 3:2

When my family moved to North Carolina, we found a mid-size church that had just gone through a building campaign. The church was holding steady but not growing the way they thought with the shiny, new building. July came around and a young pastor found himself appointed to the church. He was kind and outgoing. Joyful and caring. But most of all he could stand in that pulpit and make you laugh, cry and leave the service each Sunday wanting to change the world. The church began to grow. Most Sundays you could find the young pastor shaking hands and speaking to attenders as they left. But sometimes we would exit the church with the pastor nowhere to be found. As months went by, I befriended the pastor and had the opportunity to ask him about his absences. He sighed and shared that he knew that God had called him to ministry and that God had gifted him with the ability to communicate well from the pulpit. Most Sundays, he could stand at the back and receive praises for his sermon from congregants and file it away that he was doing what God had called him to do. He then became vulnerable with me and shared that he had to fight the sin of pride in his life. On the Sundays he felt especially weak to the devil's whispers, he would go to his office and pray immediately following the service. He would ask God not to allow himself to become puffed up and for the Lord to continually remind him that his calling and his gifts were from Him.

Colossians 3:2 calls us to fix our hearts on things above, not earthly distractions. True peace and purpose come when our focus is on Christ, shaping our thoughts, desires and daily actions.

PRAYER

Lord, lift my eyes to You. Help me set my mind on eternal things. Keep me humble and always bring my thoughts back to You. Amen.

WRITTEN BY JESSICA COATES

JULY 3

RUNNING WITH FOCUS

“Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.”

HEBREWS 12:1-2

Have you ever watched a marathon? At the starting line, runners look excited, but as the miles stretch on, the real test begins. Some slow down, some give up, but those who endure fix their eyes on the finish line. Their focus keeps them moving forward.

Life often feels like a long, demanding race. We carry weights, distractions, habits, doubts, or sin that slow us down. Imagine trying to run with a backpack full of bricks. That's what it's like when we carry all the things God never meant us to carry. The writer urges us to drop those weights so we can run freely.

It's not just about running lighter; it's running with focus. Fixing our eyes on Jesus keeps us from comparing ourselves to others or quitting when life gets hard. He endured the ultimate suffering, the cross, for the joy set before Him, our redemption. If He pressed on for us, we can press on with Him.

Living missionally means that we persevere not just for our own benefit but for the benefit of those who don't yet know Jesus. When we cross that finish line into Glory, wouldn't it be phenomenal to be surrounded by those who came to know Jesus because of our faithful journey with Him?

PRAYER

Lord, help me throw off the weights that slow me down. Fix my eyes on Jesus so I can run my race with endurance and joy not only for my benefit but for the benefit of the Kingdom. Amen.

WRITTEN BY SENTA HINZMAN

JULY 6

COURAGE OVER FEAR

“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

I remember teaching my children to swim. Standing on the edge of the pool, fear would grip them. But when they saw me in the water, arms open wide, their fear would start to fade. Trust gives them the courage to jump. In the same way, when we trust God’s presence and promises, fear loses its grip on our hearts. Fear is a powerful force, often holding us back from the life God calls us to live. Scripture reminds us that fear is not from God. His Spirit fills us with boldness, strength, love and the ability to live wisely.

Power equips us to face challenges without shrinking back. Love drives us to serve others selflessly, even when it’s uncomfortable. Self-discipline grounds us, helping us control our thoughts and emotions rather than being ruled by fear.

When fear whispers that we aren’t enough, God’s Spirit reminds us that He is more than enough. Our confidence isn’t based on our abilities, but on the One who lives within us. Fear may still knock at the door, but it doesn’t have to take up residence in our hearts.

Invite the Spirit to fill you with His power, love and self-discipline.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for giving me a Spirit of power, love and self-discipline. Help me to reject fear and to step forward boldly in faith today. Amen.

JULY 7

BREATH

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness...”

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

One morning, my family and I were headed to our town’s Fourth of July parade. I was excitedly skipping down the stairs to the garage when my feet flew out from under me and my back hit the stairs with a forceful thud. In a panic, I realized that I could not breathe. No matter how much I tried, there simply was no air in my lungs. The breath had been knocked out of me and there was nothing I could do. Finally, after a few minutes, air surged back into my lungs, crisp and cool, calming and free.

Sometimes in our lives, we go through seasons where it feels like we’ve gotten the breath knocked out of us. In a surprising twist, our life or someone else’s took a turn that none of us saw coming and we are left laying there in the midst of it, unable to do anything. This passage from 2 Timothy 3 reminds us that Scripture is God-breathed, that God was intimately connected to the creation of His Word and that it is a place where we can turn and encounter Him. When we are lost, stuck in hardship, unable to catch our breath, we can open His Scriptures, hopefully in the midst of our community of believers, and breathe in His life, His breath, His goodness that He’s speaking over our lives and it will be air in our lungs, crisp and cool, calming and free.

PRAYER

Refreshing God, we give you thanks for your Word that we know has been articulated by you. All the time, but especially in hardships, point us toward it that we might encounter you and be refilled by your breath. Amen.

JULY 8

CHEERFUL GIVING

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-7

When I was in college, I lived off campus and next to a sweet older lady. My friends and I always tried to watch after her. One Saturday morning, I was helping her carry groceries into her house. She was retired and lived alone, and I thought it would be just a small, routine favor. As I handed her the bags, she paused, smiled, and said, “Thank you for always thinking of me, it really brightens my day.” Her words stopped me. I realized that generosity isn’t about how much we give or how public our actions are; it’s about the heart behind them. Paul reminds us that God loves a cheerful giver. When we give willingly, without grumbling or expectation, our generosity becomes a reflection of God’s own heart. Small acts of kindness, done with joy and intention, can have an outsized impact, spreading hope, encouragement and love. Each opportunity to give is a chance to partner with God in blessing others, planting seeds that grow far beyond what we can see.

PRAYER

Lord, teach me to give with a joyful heart. Show me how my small actions can have a large impact. Help me sow generously, trusting You to multiply every act of kindness for Your glory. Amen.

JULY 9

HIS LAST DAY

“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”

JOHN 13:14-15

What would you do if you had one day left to live? Even, one month left to live? Would you travel? Eat all your favorite foods? Spend time with those closest to you? Jesus knew he had one day left, and He washed feet. He humbled Himself to the level of the lowest possible servant, and He washed His disciple’s feet. He even washed the feet of the man that would betray Him. Jesus treated Judas in such a loving and kind way, so much so that none of the disciples knew he was the betrayer. But Jesus knew. And He spent His last day washing his feet.

Jesus said, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” True greatness is found in humble service. Jesus modeled servant leadership, showing us that love is expressed through action, not just words. Following His example means laying aside pride and willingly serving others. When we serve, even those who could be termed our enemy, we reflect Christ to the world.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for modeling humility and love. Teach me to serve others with joy and selflessness, reflecting Your example in my daily life. Make my life a reflection of Your servant heart. Amen.

JULY 10

FROM HEARING TO DOING

“Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

JAMES 1:22

Think about how many podcasts, YouTube videos, and TikToks we scroll through each day. We “like,” save, or share them, telling ourselves we’ll try that workout, recipe, or productivity hack later. But often, it stays on our feed and never makes it into our lives. Information without action changes nothing.

James calls this out in a spiritual sense. In our content-saturated world, it’s easy to treat God’s Word like another post we scroll past, something inspiring in the moment but quickly forgotten.

We nod, highlight verses, maybe even repost them, but if Scripture doesn’t shape how we live, we’re missing its power.

God’s Word was never meant to just sit on our screens or in our journals. It’s a call to action.

Forgive the person who hurt you. Speak encouragement instead of gossip. Put your phone down and show kindness to someone face-to-face. Be generous when it costs you. These aren’t just good ideas, they’re commands that bring life and light into a weary culture.

The world doesn’t need more people who simply know the Bible—it needs people who live the Bible. When we move from listening to doing, our faith becomes visible, tangible, and contagious.

PRAYER

Lord, don’t let me treat Your Word like background noise. Help me not just to hear it but to live it boldly in today’s world, so my actions reflect Your truth. Amen.

JULY 11

REFLECTION

Life doesn’t slow down on its own, we have to choose it. In Scripture, moments of pause became turning points where God reminded His people who He was and who they were called to be. As you step into the weekend, take time to breathe deeply and seek God’s presence. Humility grows when we release the rush and make room for Him. In the quiet, you may find that God’s voice is closer than you thought.

Instead of a new Scripture text today, look back over this week’s devotions and select the bible passage that stuck out to you. Use the SOAP method (at the front of the booklet) to read and study that verse’s entire chapter a little closer.

QUESTIONS

Where have you noticed God at work in your life this week—whether through challenge, blessing or unexpected moments?

What is one area of your heart that God may be inviting you to surrender, soften or realign before a new week begins?

JULY 14

FORGETFUL

“Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

DEUTERONOMY 6:7

We are a forgetful people. We can't seem to remember birthdays or anniversaries, appointments or assignments, why we walked into a room or when we last fed the dog. We can't remember where we put our phone, keys, wallets or AirPods. We forget so much that technology gurus have cornered the market on helping us to remember with apps, digital reminders, Find my Phone locaters and more.

Even in the time of the Old Testament, people were forgetful. Throughout Moses' life much of what he wrestled with was telling the Israelites something from God and watching them forget and do the complete opposite their own way.

Right here in Deuteronomy 6, God through Moses lays out the heart of all the 613 Old Testament laws—to love the Lord our God above all else. He knows how fickle and forgetful they can be and so he emphasizes that they should teach it to their children, talk about it every chance they get at home, while they travel, when they prepare for bed and when they get up from sleeping. So often, like our keys that we set down somewhere at the end of the day and totally forget, we set God aside until we need him for some sort of struggle we are encountering. But, here, we are reminded to keep God and his Word ever before us in every moment, situation and act. Together as a community, we can help one another with this task, not forgetting who He is and what He's done.

PRAYER

Remembering God, you know us so intimately that you have an inventory of the hairs on our heads and every tear that we shed. Cultivate within us a desire to know you that way too that we might keep your Word ever before us on our lips and in our lives. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

JULY 15

HONORING GOD WITH THE FIRSTFRUITS

“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”

PROVERBS 3:9-10

In the early 1900s, an English evangelist and preacher named George Müller made a bold choice. Each week, before paying his own bills, he gave the first portion of his harvest and income to help orphanages and care for children in need. Over his lifetime, he gave away nearly \$700,000 of his own money. He had no guarantees and no safety net, just a deep trust that God would provide. Time and again, God met every need, often in ways George couldn't have imagined. Because of his example and the generosity of others, there grew a network of multiple homes that cared for thousands of children. His “barns” were never empty, and the lives of many children were transformed because he honored God first. Giving God the first and best of what we have is not just an act of obedience, it's a declaration of trust. Generosity opens the door for God to multiply our resources and use them for His purposes. When we give sacrificially, we reflect God's heart, bless others and witness His provision in tangible ways. Honoring God with our resources is both a privilege and a path to a life that makes a difference.

PRAYER

Lord, teach me to give You the first and best of all I have. Help me trust Your provision and use my resources to bless others and honor Your name. Amen.

WRITTEN BY TREVOR MILLER

JULY 16

WORK FOR THE LORD

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”

COLOSSIANS 3:23

On the far side of our house is our septic tank. It lives under the ground with a concrete top that you would have to do some digging to find. Every three to four years we call our septic cleaning company to pump it out. We all know what is getting pumped out and none of us would call it delightful! On one particular day, the truck backed down our driveway, and the employee grabbed the hoses and headed across the yard. I greeted him and found out his name was Ronny. I told him if he needed anything to let me know. After 15 minutes or so, I looked out the window and Ronny was hunkered down, eyes closed, loosely holding the hose as the truck loudly did its job. His mouth was moving, and his facial expression was peaceful. When I heard the truck cut off, I went out to pay. I asked Ronny how long he had worked for the company. He said for 25 years he had been going to houses pumping out their septic tanks. Ronny said he loved his job because while the tanks were being cleaned, he got to pray over the houses, yards and the people that lived there. In a job that most people would not desire, Ronny was working with all his heart furthering the Kingdom for God.

Colossians 3:23 encourages believers to approach all tasks with wholehearted effort and humility, seeing them as opportunities to serve and please God, regardless of what the work is and who the immediate recipients of the work might be.

PRAYER

Lord, remind me that in everything I can choose to glorify You. Help me to do my best because I am working for You. Put people in my path that I can love the way that You would. Amen.

WRITTEN BY JESSICA COATES

JULY 17

CHOOSING THE HARD WAY

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

MATTHEW 16:24

Imagine you're on a hiking trail with two paths. One is wide, paved, and full of people snapping selfies and sipping lattes. The other is narrow, rocky, and uphill with far fewer travelers. Which would most people choose? Probably the easy one. Yet, Jesus calls His followers to the harder path.

He says in Matthew 16:24, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” In today's culture, we're told to “follow your heart,” “do what makes you happy,” and “put yourself first.” But Jesus flips that script. Following Him means saying “no” to selfish desires and “yes” to His way—even when it's uncomfortable.

Taking up your cross doesn't mean carrying around guilt or shame; it means living with a daily willingness to put God's mission above your own comfort. It may look like turning off Netflix to spend time in prayer, choosing honesty when a lie feels easier, or standing firm in faith when culture pressures you to compromise. When we live like this, the world takes notice, opening up an opportunity for us to share more about the One whom we follow.

The cross wasn't glamorous. It was sacrificial. Yet, on the other side of the cross was resurrection.

Jesus promises that when we surrender, we actually find life, fuller and freer than anything the world can offer. The easy path may feel fun for a while, but only the hard path with Jesus leads to true joy.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to choose Your way over my own. Give me strength to deny myself, take up my cross daily, and follow You with courage and joy. Amen.

WRITTEN BY SENTA HINZMAN

JULY 20

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

JOHN 4:24

Visualize a tree deeply rooted by a river. It stands tall, firm and unshaken, drawing life from the water it cannot see but must have to thrive. Its leaves, though outwardly visible, depend on an unseen source for their strength. In the same way, true worship isn't about outward rituals, but about a heart rooted deeply in God's Spirit and truth.

This verse calls us to reconsider the essence of worship. Genuine worship isn't defined by the location or the performance; rather, it's rooted in the condition of our hearts. True worship flows from a heart fully surrendered to God, fueled by the Holy Spirit and anchored in truth.

Worshiping in spirit means engaging with God on a deeper, spiritual level, not just through rituals or routines. It's allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and empower us to worship authentically. Worshiping in truth means our hearts align with God's Word, and we come before Him with honesty, recognizing who He is and who we are in light of His greatness.

When we worship in both spirit and truth, we connect with God in a profound and life-giving way, just as the tree flourishes by the river. Our worship becomes a source of strength and growth, both seen and unseen.

PRAYER

Father, help me to worship You in spirit and truth. May my heart be fully aligned with Your Word and empowered by Your Spirit. Teach me to worship You authentically in every moment. Amen.

JULY 21

DELIGHT

"But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on His law, day and night."

PSALM 1:2

I am convinced that you cannot be around a grandparent for more than five minutes before they will begin talking about their grandchildren. Whether it's the play they were in last week, the visit they had last month or even the cute thing they said five years ago, within a few minutes of speaking with someone who is a grandparent, you are going to know who their grandchild is and why they are so proud to be their Nana or Papa, Grandpa or Grandma. In fact, without a doubt, they'll even pull out their phones and give you a visual, showing you a picture or two!

The Psalmist says that that is the kind of delight that we are to have in God's Word. When we sit down to read it or when we discuss it together, we should be so overcome with God's goodness that we are ready to tell everyone whom we encounter. In fact, when someone steps into our church community, they should be able to sense it about us. They should be able to tell that if they stick with us they are going to hear and experience this God whom we delight in and love deeply. As believers together, we are called to help one another stay in the Word and to be people who meditate on it day and night.

Like those grandparents who are bragging on their grandchildren, we'll only be able to brag on God if stick close to who He is.

PRAYER

Joy-filled God, who has given us your Word not simply as a guide but as a way to encounter who you are, fill us with delight that is born from your great love. Help everything that we say, do and the way that we live be a way that others can meet you. Amen.

JULY 22

POWER TO SERVE

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses.”

ACTS 1:8

In 1879, a young inventor named Thomas Edison finally perfected the light bulb, but it was only the beginning. That invention within itself was useless without power. Once connected to a source of electricity, the bulb did what it was made to do, shine bright for the world to see.

That’s exactly what Jesus told His followers before He ascended to heaven. He didn’t send them out on their own strength or talent; He promised them power, and that power was the Holy Spirit. Without that power, they would burn out quickly. But with it, they would become living lights, illuminating the world with the truth and love of Jesus. As believers, we are called to be witnesses, shining the light of Christ through our words, actions and generosity. Yet we can’t do it alone. The Holy Spirit equips us with courage when we’re afraid, words when we’re uncertain and strength when we’re weary. The same Spirit that fueled the first disciples is alive in you today. When you feel unqualified or weak, remember, you don’t need to generate the light; you just need to stay connected to the power.

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, fill me with Your power today. Help me to be a bold and faithful witness of Jesus wherever I go. Let my life shine brightly for Your glory. Amen.

JULY 23

THE WALK OFF

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us”

HEBREWS 12:1

We’ve all watched a baseball game where the player comes up to bat and hits a walk off home run. As the runner circles third base and looks toward home plate, his entire team has come out of the dugout to greet him, there are smiles on their faces, fists raised in celebration, pats on the back and hugs as his foot touches home. Photographer Josh Noem collects these images and has them hanging all over his house.

He said, “I collect images of walk-off hitters rounding third because they are an image of heaven,” a great cloud of witnesses ready to greet us as our feet touch home.

It’s like the old gospel hymn, “When the Saints Go Marching In.” The chorus says, “O when the saints go marching in, O when the saints go marching in, O Lord I want to be in that number, when the saints go marching in.”

One day, God’s faithful will enter His glory with joy and victory. Our lives today should reflect that heavenly anticipation—living holy, loving others and walking in faith—so we, too, may march home with the redeemed. Keep your eyes on Jesus. He is your strength, your goal and your reward.

PRAYER

Lord, help me cast off distractions and sin. Strengthen my heart to run with endurance, keeping my eyes fixed on You. Amen.

JULY 24
THE HARVEST IS COMING

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

GALATIANS 6:9

Think about scrolling through social media. You post encouraging words, share inspiring stories, or support a friend in need, but it feels like no one notices. In a world that thrives on instant likes, views, and validation, it's easy to feel invisible and wonder, “Does anything I do even matter?”

Galatians 6:9 reminds us, that each act of kindness, every choice to forgive, every small effort to love and serve, is planting seeds in ways we might never see.

We live in a culture addicted to speed and results, but God's timing doesn't always match ours. The harvest may take longer than we want, but it will come. Like watering a plant, we may not see growth daily but consistent care brings life. Your faithful commitment to living missionally matters, even if the world doesn't notice right away.

So don't grow weary. Keep sowing love, encouragement and goodness. Keep choosing integrity, patience and grace. In God's perfect timing, your efforts will bear fruit far beyond what you imagine.

PRAYER

Lord, when I feel tired or unnoticed, remind me that my faithfulness matters to You. Help me to keep doing good and trusting Your timing for the harvest. Amen.

JULY 25
REFLECTION

Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is slow down. Scripture shows us that God often met His people in the in-between spaces, after the work was done and before the next step began. As you enter the weekend, create room to breathe, reflect and let God re-center your heart. Humility grows when we stop striving long enough to recognize God's steady presence. Give Him space, and He will speak.

Instead of a new Scripture text today, look back over this week's devotions and select the bible passage that stuck out to you. Use the SOAP method (at the front of the booklet) to read and study that verse's entire chapter a little closer.

QUESTIONS

Where have you noticed God at work in your life this week—whether through challenge, blessing or unexpected moments?

What is one area of your heart that God may be inviting you to surrender, soften or realign before a new week begins?

JULY 28

IT'S ALIVE!

*"For the word of God is alive and active.
Sharper than any double-edged sword..."*

HEBREWS 4:12A

In the comedy movie Tommy Boy, the two main characters, Tommy and Richard are driving down the road when, unfortunately, they hit a deer. Overwhelmed with sorrow and unsure of what to do, they put the deer in the backseat of their tiny car so that when they get to where they are going, they can give it a proper burial.

They are back in the car and have traveled a good ways down the road when all of a sudden, we see the deer's head pop up in the rearview mirror. They are shocked. The deer's not dead!

What ensues is incredible chaos as the deer fights and screams it's way out of the car and back into the woods.

Sometimes, I think this is how we treat God's Word. We act as though it's a historic document with not much to teach us and, suddenly, we are shocked when we are convicted by something that we read in its pages. Hebrews Chapter 4 reminds us that the word of God isn't dead and irrelevant, it's alive and active! It can cut through the sin of our lives more easily than even a sword. As a community of faith, we need to encourage one another to lean in to the Scriptures even when it's convicting, even when it reveals something about us that we'd rather not notice or see. We must remember that God's Word was given for our flourishing in Him. We should be grateful that it's alive and well.

PRAYER

Giving God, you have given us the gift of your Word, Help us to remind one another that your Word is not dead and irrelevant but alive to convict and guide us that we might follow the way that you have for our lives. Amen.

JULY 29

MORE BLESSED

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

ACTS 20:35

Each year, our church prepares meals for families in need during the Thanksgiving holiday. Many years, my family volunteers to deliver a box to a family that we have never met. One year, when we arrived, hands full of blessings, their children peeked shyly from behind the door, and the parents greeted us with warm smiles. As we handed them the meal, they pulled us all into a heartfelt embrace, tears filling their eyes. They thanked our church for thinking of them and for us being a conduit of blessing. In that moment,

I saw firsthand the truth of Jesus' words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Their gratitude filled my heart with joy far greater than any gift I'd ever received before.

On the drive home, my family reflected on what that encounter meant to us and under my breathe, I whispered a prayer: "Lord, I never want to live without generosity again."

When we give our time, resources, and compassion, we reflect the heart of Christ. And in doing so, we discover a deeper blessing, a joy, a purpose and a life aligned with Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for the joy of giving. Help me to live a generous life every day, reflecting Your heart and blessing others as You have blessed me. Amen.

JULY 30

TWELVE YEARS

“Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.”

MARK 5:22-25, 27, 29

It was a couple of years ago that I fell in love with these beautifully intertwined stories. We have Jairus rushing to Jesus because his twelve year old daughter is sick and dying. He falls to his knees and humbly asks for help. As they walk, not run, to the house, a large crowd presses in on Jesus.

A woman who has been bleeding for twelve years is in the crowd and reaches out to touch Jesus and be healed. If Jesus had run to heal the girl, this healing would have been missed.

As we slow down and open our hands and humble ourselves before God, we get to be a part of His work and His kingdom for His glory. We don't find Jesus hurrying in the Bible. In fact, He was markedly unhurried and present in whatever He was doing, not allowing even death to change His tempo or focus like in Mark 5:21-43.

This world moves at a really fast pace but that doesn't mean we have to. We need to move slowly enough to make sure that our eyes and hearts can catch what's around us, rather than having it pass us by. No one ever leaves this life saying, “I'm so glad I got everything done so quickly and proficiently.” But, we might just end up with the privilege of saying, “I'm so glad I slowed down and got to really live and love the world and the people around me.”

PRAYER

God, thank You for reminding us to slow down. We ask that You choose to use us to truly see the people around us. Amen

WRITTEN BY JESSICA COATES

JULY 31

PASSING IT ON

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

2 TIMOTHY 2:2

I remember my grandmother showing me how to cook a family recipe. She would show me each step, explain why it mattered, and then watch as I tried it myself. Later, I taught it to my children, and I hope they will pass it on to the next generation. This family recipe didn't end with one person; it continues to bless our family for years.

Our faith works the same way. It isn't meant to stay private or confined to what we know. Living missionally means to recognize that God calls us to intentionally share what He has taught us with others who can grow in it and pass it on.

In today's fast-paced culture, it's easy to focus on personal growth alone—on finishing our degree, climbing the career ladder, or improving ourselves. But Paul's message reminds us that spiritual growth has a ripple effect. When we invest in others, disciple them, and model Christlike living, the impact multiplies far beyond our own lives.

Faith that isn't passed on risks fading. Faith that is shared can transform generations. Your willingness to teach, mentor and guide others will plant seeds that last far longer than any personal achievement.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to pass on what You have taught me. Give me wisdom to guide others in faith, so Your truth continues to impact lives for generations to come. Amen.

WRITTEN BY SENTA HINZMAN

AUGUST 3

DANCE OF JOYFUL WORSHIP

*“Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.”*

PSALM 100:2

I love dancing, letting my body move gracefully across the stage with each step radiating pure joy. I take delight in how my movements flow with the rhythm of the music, every motion telling a story of freedom and joy. In those moments, the applause of the audience doesn't matter; I dance because the joy I feel in my heart compels me. Similarly, our worship to God should be a joyful, free expression of love and gratitude, unburdened by any expectation other than to honor Him.

When we think of worship, we often think of singing or praying, but worship can also be expressed through movement like a dancer whose every step is an offering to God. The dancer moves not for performance or praise but because the joy inside them compels them to act.

When we come before God with joy, our worship becomes an authentic reflection of our relationship with Him. It's not about how perfectly we perform or how others perceive us it's about giving God the glory He deserves with all that we are. Whether in song, dance or daily actions, let our worship be an expression of the joy we have in knowing Him.

PRAYER

Lord, help us to worship You with joy, just like a dancer freely moving with delight. May our hearts overflow with gladness as we come before You. Teach us to offer our whole selves in joyful worship. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WRITTEN BY SENTA HINZMAN

AUGUST 4

ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another...”*

COLOSSIANS 3:16

When I meet with a family who is bringing their child for baptism, I always speak with them about the communal aspect of raising a child in the faith. In our baptismal liturgy, there is a series of questions that the parents are asked about their faith. Have they turned from evil and aligned themselves with God? Do they trust Jesus and claim him as their Lord and Savior? Do they believe what is written in the Scriptures? But, then, the questions turn and are asked of the congregation. As these parents strive to raise this child in the faith, will we as the congregation come alongside them and shepherd and guide this child as well? Raising that little disciple isn't only the parents' responsibility. It's the whole church's responsibility.

In the letter of Colossians, the author encourages us to have the word of Christ dwelling within us that we might teach and guide one another. We weren't meant to live this life of faith by ourselves, to sit down and read Scripture always all alone, to try and discern on our own what God is asking us to do. We need one another to help us faithfully live this life of faith and to help us better understand what the Word means for our lives. When we make that commitment to children coming for baptism, we are also making it to one another in the life of the church. We are in this together, not alone!

PRAYER

Companion God, thank you for giving us one another to walk this life of faith together. May we faithfully guide and support one another as we raise not only children, but each other, in the faith. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

AUGUST 5

TESTED GENEROSITY

“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.”

MALACHI 3:10

The word “test” can feel risky. It makes us pause because it implies stepping out in faith without knowing the full outcome of the risk. Yet, God invites us to test Him. Not test Him in a way that questions His goodness but as an exercise of trust and obedience. He calls us to see what happens when we put Him first in every area of our lives, especially in how we manage the resources He has generously provided us.

Giving, whether tithing, serving others or offering simple acts of kindness, is not measured by the size of the gift or how flashy it may seem to others. Instead, it is measured by the sincerity and generosity of our hearts. When we give with a spirit of faith, testing God, expecting nothing in return but trusting God’s promises, we align ourselves with His purposes. Our obedience becomes a test of faith, revealing whether we truly believe that God is both willing and able to provide for our every need. In this way, giving transforms in our hearts from a duty into a doorway, a doorway to experiencing God’s abundant provision, His joy and His presence in ways that far exceed what we can imagine.

PRAYER

Lord, help me trust You fully with what I have. Teach me to give generously and cheerfully, knowing You are faithful. Let my actions reflect Your love and help me see Your blessings in every step of obedience. Amen.

AUGUST 6

GPS

“Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

JAMES 1:22

I am the queen of ignoring the GPS. I would normally turn right at the light, so why is it telling me to keep going and get on the interstate? Or, it’s taking me in a big circle around the edge of the city, but I’m going to go left like I normally would and shoot through town. My daughter often says, “Why did you even bother to put the address in there if you are going to ignore it?” What I have learned from ignoring the GPS, is that it is often trying to reroute me around traffic or a wreck. When I stubbornly choose not to listen, it ends up taking me longer and I always wish I would have obeyed.

James 1:22 reminds us not to merely listen to God’s Word but to live it out daily. Hearing without doing leaves faith empty, but humble obedience shows genuine trust. God calls us to be active participants—loving, forgiving, serving and speaking truth. His Word transforms us only when applied. Today, let’s not just study Scripture but practice it, allowing our lives to reflect Christ’s love and truth in every action and choice.

PRAYER

Lord, help me not only hear Your Word but live it faithfully. Teach me obedience, strengthen my actions and let my life reflect Your truth and love. Amen.

AUGUST 7

POWER TO LIVE BOLDLY

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

ACTS 1:8

Imagine being handed a flashlight in the middle of a pitch-dark forest. At first, it feels small and insignificant, but the moment you switch it on, the path ahead becomes visible, dangers are revealed, and others can see your light too. That’s what the Holy Spirit does in our lives.

Jesus promises that we don’t step into His mission alone. The Holy Spirit equips us to live boldly, speak truth and act with courage in a world that often feels confusing or overwhelming.

Our lives are surrounded by competing voices and endless distractions. Fear, doubt and busyness can make it easy to shrink back and keep our faith private. Yet God calls us to shine His light wherever we are at work, school, in our neighborhoods, and in our homes. When we rely on the Spirit’s power, our words and actions become a witness, pointing others to Jesus.

The challenge isn’t optional but required. It’s a promise that we are empowered to live boldly, not in our strength, but in His. Each step of obedience lights the way for others and brings hope into a dark world.

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, fill me with Your power. Help me to live boldly for Jesus, shining His light wherever I go and pointing others to Your love. Amen.

AUGUST 8

REFLECTION

Life doesn’t slow down on its own, we have to choose it. In Scripture, moments of pause became turning points where God reminded His people who He was and who they were called to be. As you step into the weekend, take time to breathe deeply and seek God’s presence. Humility grows when we release the rush and make room for Him. In the quiet, you may find that God’s voice is closer than you thought.

Instead of a new Scripture text today, look back over this week’s devotions and select the bible passage that stuck out to you. Use the SOAP method (at the front of the booklet) to read and study that verse’s entire chapter a little closer.

QUESTIONS

Where have you noticed God at work in your life this week—whether through challenge, blessing or unexpected moments?

What is one area of your heart that God may be inviting you to surrender, soften or realign before a new week begins?

AUGUST 11

REAL JOY

*“Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.”*

PSALM 100:2

There is a silly game that our family often plays where all of us sit with very serious expressions on our faces. It is one person’s job to say or do anything that they think might get us to smile. Each time someone smiles, they are out until the one hold-out frowner is declared the winner.

Sometimes when we read this passage from Psalm 100 and are in a hard season of our lives, we seem to imagine that the psalmist is declaring a round of that silly game, that no matter how we stepped into worship that day—whether angry, sad, devastated or depressed—by the end of the service, we should all be glad and joyful in the Lord or else. But, truly, this passage reminds us that it’s not about us putting on a fake front of joy in order to appease others or even God. It’s a reminder that when we think of all the Lord has done for us from creating us, claiming us as his own, rescuing us and giving us his unfailing love, it becomes difficult not to smile or feel some sense of hope and joy. While we could encounter God’s goodness on our own, it is even more fully realized when we worship together in the community of faith, each person’s spoken words, singing, praying and kindness a reminder of what God has done on our behalf and truly a reason to smile.

PRAYER

*Holy God, we thank you for giving us the community of the church to set before us who you are and what you have done, a constant reminder that even in the hardest seasons we have a reason to praise you and to smile with joy.
Amen.*

AUGUST 12

OVERFLOW

“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.”

LUKE 6:38

Jesus gives us instruction for living as generous people in the book of Luke. To understand His words, we must understand His culture. In Jesus’ day, people used clay jars to measure grain, olive oil or wine. A “good measure” wasn’t just filling the jar; it meant pressing down the contents, shaking it so it settled, and then adding more until it overflowed. The imagery was vivid and practical: generosity multiplies beyond what seems possible, leaving more than enough. Jesus’ words weren’t abstract; they reflected daily life in His culture. When someone gave generously, the expectation wasn’t a small, neat portion. It was abundance to overflowing. God’s blessings, like the pressed-down jars of grain, are overflowing, unexpected and tangible. God calls us to give with faith, trusting that God will return back to us our generosity in ways pressed down, shaken together and running over. Giving becomes a way to experience His abundance firsthand. Not always in the same manner, but with the same generous spirit.

PRAYER

Lord, help me give with faith, trusting Your blessings to overflow in ways I cannot imagine. Let my generosity reflect Your abundance and love. Amen.

AUGUST 13

THE ROUGH ROAD

"You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised."

HEBREWS 10:36

It had to be close to a 20-hour travel day, including flights, layovers and the drive to the middle of nowhere. The road to the African village where we were staying for the week was unlike anything us westerners had ever experienced. The holes and divots and rocks we drove over caused people to bang their heads on the windows and roof of the van.

Twice we had to stop for people because of motion sickness. We were supposed to arrive in the village for dinner, but as the time approached midnight, we were not a happy group of passengers. Finally, we saw lights up ahead and we began to hear voices. The van pulled up to the mission house and the entire village was there to greet us. Mothers and fathers, the elderly and children of all ages dancing and singing and holding signs, at midnight no less, to welcome us to their village. Our long and arduous journey was quickly forgotten and all we felt was joy and laughter and humility at this welcome from these people we had never met. It was a little taste of heaven after our hard journey home.

Hebrews 10:36 reminds us that perseverance is vital to receive God's promises. Humility helps us endure, trusting God's timing rather than our own. When we walk humbly, we surrender our pride, accept His will and grow stronger in faith. And sometimes the things we endure make our arrival all the sweeter.

PRAYER

Lord, teach me humility and patience. Help me endure with faith, trusting Your perfect plan and timing. Amen.

WRITTEN BY JESSICA COATES

AUGUST 14

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

"I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."

1 CORINTHIANS 9:22

Imagine being a translator at a global conference. You don't just speak your own language but learn the words, phrases and idioms of the audience so the message truly connects. As the translator you adapt, so you don't compromise the message, but make it accessible and understandable. That's what Paul models for us in 1 Corinthians.

In other words, he meets people where they are culturally, socially and personally without compromising the truth of the Gospel. His goal is not popularity but connection, guiding others toward Jesus in ways they can understand and embrace.

Life is fast-paced and fragmented. People are influenced by competing worldviews, skepticism and distractions. Sharing faith can feel challenging, especially when hearts and minds seem closed. Paul's example reminds us that effective witness often requires empathy, flexibility and understanding. It's about speaking, acting and loving in ways that resonate with others' realities while staying rooted in Christ.

We are called to be bridges, not barriers. By listening, learning and walking alongside people without judgment, we open doors for God's truth to be heard and hearts to respond.

PRAYER

Lord, help me meet people where they are with Your love. Give me wisdom, empathy, and courage to guide others toward You without compromising Your truth. Amen.

WRITTEN BY SENTA HINZMAN

AUGUST 17

LIVING OUT YOUR FAITH

“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.”

COLOSSIANS 3:17

As I look back on high school, I remember walking through the halls, balancing a busy schedule of homework, friendships, extracurriculars and a job. Each moment, whether talking to a friend or solving a tough math problem, was an opportunity to reflect my faith. I sought to carry Jesus’ love in every word I spoke and every action I took.

As a teenager, life is full of moments that feel small or ordinary, like a conversation with a friend or studying for a test. But, when we understand that each moment is an opportunity to live for God, it changes everything.

Whether you’re in class, hanging out with friends or dealing with challenges at home, every part of your day is a chance to honor God. The way you speak, the choices you make and the way you treat others can all reflect His love and grace. You may not always feel like a “grown-up” or like your actions matter, but each day is a chance to be a witness for Christ.

Remember, you don’t have to do anything perfectly, but you can do everything with a heart of gratitude, knowing that your actions can make a difference for God’s Kingdom.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to live for You in everything I do. Whether big or small, may my actions and words reflect Your love and grace. Thank You for the opportunity to serve You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

AUGUST 18

ANCESTRY

“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us...”

ROMANS 15:4

My grandfather loved history and, particularly, the stories of our family throughout the generations. Long before Ancestry.com, he traced our family’s genealogy back as far as he could research it by print. Then, he published some books for us to have long after he was gone. One of these books was written specifically for my brother and I, and it is stories of our long-extended family stretching back generations. There was no way we could have known what life was specifically like for our great-great-great grandparents. But, in this book, we have a way to read what’s been written and to learn from, and about, their lives.

In the book of Romans, Paul reminds us that the Word of God was not simply written as something we read at a distance as if it is not relevant to us. One of the main purposes for which Scripture was written was to teach us about who God is, what God has done, and who God desires us to be. The story of God parting the Red Sea isn’t just a nice tale about a fictional occurrence, it’s a true account of how God desires, and is capable, of clearing the way when He is trying to lead us to His freedom!

As we gather together in groups to study God’s Word, we must remind each other of the stories of Scripture, not simply for memorization’s sake but so that they might shape and teach us for the future.

PRAYER

Teaching God, You have given us your Word as a tool to encounter You, Your heart and Your desires for us as your children. Cultivate within us hearts that desire to learn from your Word all that you have to teach us. Amen.

AUGUST 19

GREATNESS IN SERVING

“The greatest among you will be your servant.”
MATTHEW 23:11

I have a friend, a pastor in Africa, whose life embodies the truth of Jesus’ words. He doesn’t measure greatness by titles, recognition or wealth. Instead, he serves his community with unwavering devotion. He builds homes for the homeless, giving families a place to call their own. He loves the fatherless, offering care, mentorship and hope to children without parents. He feeds the helpless, ensuring that no one in his community goes to bed hungry. I’ve seen him work tirelessly, often under the hot sun, yet he never complains or seeks praise. His life is a living sermon on what it means to serve selflessly. True greatness is found in humility and service, not worldly success. Leadership is not about being served, it’s about lifting others, meeting needs and reflecting God’s love in concrete ways. The pastor I know demonstrates this daily, showing that acts of love and service ripple far beyond what we can see. Serving others may not bring accolades, but it brings God’s blessing and joy in abundance. When we follow Jesus’ call to serve, we experience a greatness measured not by the world but by God.

PRAYER

Lord, give me a heart that serves like Yours. Help me care for the vulnerable, lift the hurting and reflect Your love in every act of service. Amen.

AUGUST 20

PUT YOUR NAME IN

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”
1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

I vividly remember sitting at a young adult conference where the speaker taught on this verse. I was in love and looking ahead to marriage, as were most of the college students around me. The speaker challenged us to take a few minutes to write these verses down, but he gave us the following instructions: “Write down 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and put your own name in every time it says love.”

After doing this and rereading the verses with our own name, he pointed out that if we truly humble ourselves we realize that we may be striving to have this kind of love but as sinful people we fall short. He then stood on the stage and reread the verses with Jesus’ name replacing the word love. When we put Jesus’ name in, this kind of love is true and possible.

Love and humility walk hand in hand. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Paul describes love as patient, kind, not proud and not self-seeking. True love humbles itself. It listens before it speaks, serves before it demands and forgives before it judges. Humility allows us to see others through God’s eyes, not through our pride. When we love with humility, we reflect the heart of Christ, who gave Himself for us. Let us strive to love this way, knowing we will fall short sometimes but Jesus never will.

PRAYER

Lord, teach me to love with humility. Help me lay down pride and serve others as You did. Let Your love guide my words and actions. Amen.

AUGUST 21

THE MUCK AND DIRT

“The greatest among you will be your servant.”
MATTHEW 23:11

At any job I've ever had, there are levels of leadership. It's usually something along the lines of a CEO or president at the top, a cabinet of leaders right under that supporting that main person and more employees each level down all assigned to their particular job. No matter where it is, there is always the expectation that there are certain tasks that that top guru does not do. For example, you'd never expect to see the CEO cleaning toilets or even making copies. And, yet, the most impactful leaders are the ones who do just that, who come alongside their employees and get right in the muck and the dirt with them, showing that no task is beneath them, that they are seen and known and loved.

Jesus is the CEO of all CEOs, and he was just that kind of leader. No task was too unimportant for him to do. He was God made flesh and yet, he spent his life doing what seemed to everyone else like the most menial tasks. He fished alongside his disciples, fed the hungry and knelt down and washed dirty feet like a servant. His call to anyone who followed him was to do exactly the same that the whole world might witness a different way to live and be transformed by him as well. So, are you willing to get down in the muck and the dirt for the sake of Jesus and his witness in the world?

PRAYER

Humble God, who poured out yourself to become like us, to live among us and serve alongside us, teach us to get down in the muck and serve with one another that others might see a glimpse of you in the way we live out our faith. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

AUGUST 22

REFLECTION

Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is slow down. Scripture shows us that God often met His people in the in-between spaces, after the work was done and before the next step began. As you enter the weekend, create room to breathe, reflect and let God re-center your heart. Humility grows when we stop striving long enough to recognize God's steady presence. Give Him space, and He will speak.

Instead of a new Scripture text today, look back over this week's devotions and select the bible passage that stuck out to you. Use the SOAP method (at the front of the booklet) to read and study that verse's entire chapter a little closer.

QUESTIONS

Where have you noticed God at work in your life this week—whether through challenge, blessing or unexpected moments?

What is one area of your heart that God may be inviting you to surrender, soften or realign before a new week begins?

AUGUST 25

FEEDING FRENZY

“Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

MATTHEW 4:4

If you participate in the planning, shopping, preparing or eating of food in your household, then you know that this is no small task. From toddlers whose preferences change from one moment to the next to teenagers who can eat you out of house and home to busy days that make healthy eating difficult to budgets that limit what we can afford, keeping yourself and your family fed is an incredible undertaking! In fact, if you added up all of the hours that you spend in a week centered around food, you might be surprised at the time that it commandeers in your schedule.

In this passage from Matthew 4, Jesus is being tempted by Satan and in the midst of his fasting, Jesus is commanded by Satan to turn rocks into bread that he might not starve. Instead of bowing to Satan’s request, Jesus quotes to him a passage of Scripture from Deuteronomy, a reminder that when God’s people were in the wilderness, they became hungry and God let them sit in that hunger for a little while before providing manna for their nourishment. It was to be a sign to them that their greater need was not for physical food in their bellies but for spiritual sustenance in their souls. Today, pay attention to how much time you spend planning, preparing, thinking about and eating food. What would it look like to spend an equivalent amount of time in God’s presence, praying or studying God’s Word?

PRAYER

Nourishing God, Your Word tells us that what we need most is not fuel for our bodies but food for our souls. May every mention of food this day bring about in us a surpassing commitment to the nourishment of our souls by Your Spirit. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

AUGUST 26

GIVING WITH PURPOSE

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

1 PETER 4:10

When I was a kid, I loved picking out birthday gifts for my friends. I would spend hours thinking about what would make them smile, and when I gave it, their joy felt like a gift to me as well. That simple act of giving has taught me a powerful truth: gifts are not just objects, they are expressions of love meant to bless others. The Bible calls us to a similar kind of generosity but with the gifts God has entrusted to us. Each of us has unique talents, abilities and resources designed to serve and uplift those around us. Whether it’s a word of encouragement, a helping hand or a skill we can share, our gifts become vessels of God’s grace when used faithfully. When we offer others our gifts with intention and love, we reflect God’s heart to a world in need. Our gifts, no matter how small they seem, can make a lasting impact and point others toward the One who gave them to us.

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for the gifts You have placed in my life. Help me use them wisely and with love, serving others as You have called me to. May my life reflect Your grace in all I do. Amen.

WRITTEN BY TREVOR MILLER

AUGUST 27

HUSTLE HARD

*"Humble yourselves before the Lord,
and he will lift you up."*

JAMES 4:10

It was rivalry week in our small town and people were poised on the edge of their seats to see which team would win. Earlier that summer, SMHS, who usually dominated, had lost their coach and was losing players and support. EMHS thought this would be the easy season to win. When they faced off early in the season, SMHS came out and fought hard and won the match. This was a wake-up call for EMHS. They were humbled. They got knocked off their high horse thinking it was going to be an easy season. But Jesus, in His sweet way, made their landing really gentle. He reminded them they still had to work hard if they were going to win. Rivalry week was soon upon them and EMHS came out the victor! Talking to some of the players after their celebration, they said that it was a gift that they lost earlier in the season because it reminded them that they couldn't take anything for granted. They had to stay humble and hustle hard.

True success begins with humility. God doesn't oppose ambition; He blesses hearts that depend on Him. "Stay humble, hustle hard" means we work diligently, not for our own glory but for God's. When we keep our hearts low before Him,

He directs our steps and honors our efforts in His time. Our hustle becomes holy when it's fueled by grace, not pride. As we grind each day, let's remember that promotion comes from the Lord.

PRAYER

Lord, keep me humble as I work hard. Let my effort honor You, not myself. Lift me only in ways that glorify Your name. Amen.

AUGUST 28

OTHERS FIRST

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves..."

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

A few years ago, our neighborhood was struck by a rogue tornado that whipped down our street and the next neighborhood over in just a few minutes of fury. When we opened the door after the storm, we were overwhelmed by how much there was to clean up just in our yard. As all of us stood outside staring at the devastation around us, trying to figure out what we were each going to do with our own yards, one of our neighbors revved up his chainsaw and began working not in his yard but on a tree that had fallen across the road. He kept asking, "What if someone down our street is hurt? How will the emergency crews get to them?" Together, we worked, not first on our own yards, but for the good of the neighborhood to be sure that everyone was safe and cared for.

In Philippians, Paul reminds us that our natural inclination is going to be to hunker down and take care of ourselves. We are going to want to clean up our own messes, take care of our issues and get our families well situated for the future before we ever look at helping anyone else. But as followers of Christ, living missionally means we are called to do exactly what that neighbor did, to pay attention to those around us and their needs first. How can you value someone else above yourself this week in your household, in your small group or at your office?

PRAYER

Holy God, you know that our tendency is only to look after ourselves. Create in us hearts that look to our neighbors and their needs first that we might reflect you in all that we do. Amen.

AUGUST 31

SERVING LIKE JESUS

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

MARK 10:45

At a school talent show, a popular student surprised everyone. Instead of showing off a skill, she decided to use her time to spotlight her classmates—cheering them on, helping with props and even cleaning up afterward. She didn’t perform to gain praise; she used her platform to lift others. That night, people didn’t just remember talents. They remembered her humility.

Jesus had every right to be served. He’s the Son of God, worthy of worship and honor. Yet, He chose the role of a servant. He healed the sick, touched the outcasts and washed the feet of His disciples. His entire mission on Earth was fueled by love and a willingness to lay down His life for others.

This verse reminds us that greatness in God’s Kingdom looks different. It isn’t about climbing to the top. It’s about kneeling to serve. It’s about noticing the needs around us and choosing to act. When we serve with joy and humility, we look more like Jesus.

In your home, school or friendships, how can you reflect Jesus’ servant heart today? Sometimes, the most powerful way to share your faith is through simple acts of love.

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for serving us through Your life and sacrifice. Help me to follow Your example with a humble heart and open hands. Amen.

WRITTEN BY SENTA HINZMAN

SEPTEMBER 1

CONVEYOR BELT CHAOS

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

JAMES 1:22

In the TV classic, I Love Lucy, there is a famous episode where Lucy and Ethel get jobs at a candy factory. The instructions are straightforward: as each chocolate comes down the conveyor belt, they are to wrap it without letting any candy get past them. What ensues is the iconic scene where the conveyor belt moves more quickly than they expected. Instead of simply picking up their pace and wrapping the chocolates faster, they begin to stuff chocolates in their shirts, hats and mouths in an attempt to clean up their screw up.

In his letter, James warns us that we have that tendency in our Christian life as well. Most of us who have been in the church for a while are pretty good at listening to Scripture. We could retell the major stories, quote Jesus’ most famous lines and maybe even articulate the greater, eternal truth that God is working toward in his Word. However, when it comes to following what Scripture has called us to do, we often aren’t as faithful. Instead, we listen to what the Word tells us and then we do our own thing. At first it seems OK, but soon the conveyor belt is moving quicker than we expected and we are panicking, hiding disobedience like chocolates where others won’t see! God’s Word calls us to find fellow Christians who can hold us accountable that we might not just hear God’s Word but also live it out.

PRAYER

Holy God, you have commanded that we not only hear Your Word but live it out. Bring alongside us other Christians who can hold us accountable to this call that we might live not in disobedient chaos but Your perfect faithfulness. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

SEPTEMBER 2

FREEDOM IN SERVICE

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.”

GALATIANS 5:13

When I first turned 16, I did not have my own car yet. I had a license, but it took a while to get the funds to match my new status. One day though, my dad handed me the keys to his truck with a smile. “It’s yours for the day,” he said. At first, I was thrilled, total freedom to go wherever I wanted, whenever I wanted! But the responsibility hit hard at the same time.

I couldn’t drive recklessly; I had to care for what was entrusted to me. In the same way, God gives us freedom in our lives, not freedom to do whatever we want, but the freedom to love and serve others. True freedom isn’t self-indulgence; it’s active love that is outward focused. We are called to live freely, yet our liberty finds its highest purpose when we humble ourselves and serve. Serving isn’t just about grand gestures; it’s in the small acts of kindness—listening to a friend, helping a neighbor or giving time to someone in need. Each act of love reflects the heart of Christ and demonstrates that our freedom has meaning beyond ourselves. When we serve, we discover joy that selfish freedom can’t offer us. Our lives become a testimony of God’s grace and mercy, and our liberty becomes a tool for blessing the world.

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for the freedom You’ve given me. Help me not to misuse it for selfish gain, but to serve others in love. Show me opportunities to humbly give, and fill my heart with joy as I reflect Your goodness to the world. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 3

QUIET TIME

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place to pray.”

MARK 1:35

During the summer between my sophomore year and junior year of college I worked at a church camp in the Appalachian Mountains. Each morning before breakfast, when the fog was still floating on the lake, every person at the camp would quietly spread out and sit for 20 minutes with a devotion sheet and a Bible. It was quiet and chilly and that kind of semi-dark that exists as the sun is just starting to move up in the sky. It was my favorite part of the day before the joyful chaos of camp began. It centered each of us as we invited the Holy Spirit to permeate all the remaining minutes of the day until we laid our heads on our pillows that night.

Even Jesus, the Son of God, prioritized time alone with the Father. In the quiet, He found strength, direction and peace. When life feels overwhelming, solitude with God restores our soul and refocuses our purpose. In our noisy, busy lives, solitude with God renews our strength and centers our hearts. Prayer isn’t a duty; it’s a lifeline. If Jesus chose to humbly sit before His Father and seek His will, then who are we not to do the same?

PRAYER

Lord, teach me to seek You early and always. Quiet my distractions. Meet me in stillness and refresh my spirit. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 4

ABUNDANTLY BLESSED

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

ACTS 20:35

Everywhere you go these days, whether the car wash, fast food restaurant, or ice cream shop, as soon as you pay, the cashier turns a little screen around and asks you if you want to leave a tip. Almost always, my immediate thought is, what did you do for me? Closely followed by, isn't that your job? I will never forget watching a video clip of someone asking financial guru, Dave Ramsey, what the correct protocol was in these situations. His response wasn't in percentages or dollars. It was simply, "I have never regretted an opportunity to be generous."

We worship a God who has been incredibly generous with us. When we were far off from Him in our sin, He chose to draw near to us by sending Jesus, God made flesh, to live among us, die the death that we deserved, and rise to new life again that we might have the hope of redemption and life forever with Him. He never for a second asked whether or not we were worthy of Him giving up His life on our behalf, and in fact we weren't. Living missionally means that God is calling us to be generous with others who cross our paths through a listening ear, responsibly meeting their physical needs, or even giving of our time to really see them. God doesn't ask us first to determine whether or not they are worthy. He reminds us that in the giving, we will be blessed abundantly more.

PRAYER

Generous God, you have modeled for us what it looks like to give to those who seem unworthy. Bring us into alignment with your heart that we might be blessed in the giving as well. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 5

REFLECTION

Life doesn't slow down on its own, we have to choose it. In Scripture, moments of pause became turning points where God reminded His people who He was and who they were called to be. As you step into the weekend, take time to breathe deeply and seek God's presence. Humility grows when we release the rush and make room for Him. In the quiet, you may find that God's voice is closer than you thought.

Instead of a new Scripture text today, look back over this week's devotions and select the bible passage that stuck out to you. Use the SOAP method (at the front of the booklet) to read and study that verse's entire chapter a little closer.

QUESTIONS

Where have you noticed God at work in your life this week—whether through challenge, blessing or unexpected moments?

What is one area of your heart that God may be inviting you to surrender, soften or realign before a new week begins?

SEPTEMBER 8

EVER BEFORE YOU

*"I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you."*

PSALM 119:11

I have a friend who felt called to help her girls embed the Word of God in their hearts. While practicing Scripture flash cards was great, she wanted a way for them to have Scripture constantly before them. God revealed to her a concept that became a small business called Verselets. They are bracelets that she handcrafts that contain the first letter of each word in a verse of Scripture, allowing adults and children alike to learn the Scriptures by heart and keep them ever before them on a daily basis.

Prior to this verse, the writer of Psalm 119 wrestles with how to stay firmly in the way that God is leading him. How could a mere human ever be faithful to all of the commands that God has for him? The psalmist's answer is Verse 11, that we must dwell so consistently in the Word that it becomes a part of us, written on our hearts. So fluently would we know God's Word that when we are scared we know a verse to whisper that brings us comfort; when we are stressed there is a reminder on our lips of God's eternal presence over all things; when we are grieving there is a text we call to mind that displays God's weeping alongside us. Let us seek this week to hide God's Word in our hearts through a bracelet, a post-it note on a mirror or a reminder in our phones and to encourage one another with words straight from his Word.

PRAYER

Giving God, sometimes we forget that Your Word is a gift that you have given to us to guide us on our way. Help us not to take that gift for granted but to use every opportunity to embed Your Word within us that Your words might be ever on our lips. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

SEPTEMBER 9

THE HEART OF HUMBLE SERVICE

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

JOHN 13:14-15

In 1940, during the World War 2 Blitz in London, volunteers known as "fire watchers" spent nights on rooftops, risking their lives to spot fires from bombing raids. They didn't receive recognition or pay, yet they served to protect their neighbors. Their quiet dedication reminds us that service often requires humility, courage and selflessness without all the glory. Jesus demonstrated the ultimate example of humble service at the Last Supper in the Gospels. Washing His disciples' feet, he performed a task reserved for servants. He showed that leadership in God's Kingdom is not about status but about love expressed through action. By lowering Himself, He taught that greatness is found in serving others. Serving others may not always be glamorous or acknowledged, but it is powerful. Every act of kindness, every small gesture of love reflects Jesus' heart. When we choose humility over pride and service over recognition, we participate in God's work in the lives of those around us. Today, look for ways to serve quietly and sincerely. Your actions, guided by love, can bring hope, encouragement and a meaningful expression of Christ's grace.

PRAYER

*Lord, teach me to serve others with humility and love. Help me follow Jesus' example and show Your heart through every act of service I do.
Amen.*

WRITTEN BY TREVOR MILLER

SEPTEMBER 10

KINDNESS IS KEY

“But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you”

LUKE 6:27-28

When my kids were little there was one book we read almost every night, *Mean Jean the Recess Queen* by Alexis O’Neill. Jean was a bully on the playground. No one played with her, and no one talked to her until a new girl came to school. Katie Sue was a tiny kid who wore glasses and had freckles. When Jean tried to bully her, Katie Sue asked why she was so bossy, and immediately turned the conversation around by looking at Mean Jean and saying come jump rope with me! Jean was startled; Jean was humbled. Until that day no one had ever invited her to play. Well, to everyone’s surprise Jean chose to jump rope with Katie Sue and the book tells us that from that day forward the playground was a different place. There was no more bullying, because everyone was having too much fun playing with their friends.

Bullying wounds deeply, but Jesus calls us to respond in a way that seems impossible—to love, bless and pray for those who hurt us. This doesn’t mean accepting mistreatment or staying silent; rather, it means refusing to let hatred take root in our hearts. When we love instead of retaliating, we reflect Christ’s strength and compassion, and great change can happen. His love can heal what cruelty breaks, turning pain into purpose. Kindness is key.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to be humble enough to love everyone you put in my path. Teach me to forgive those who mistreat me and give me courage to respond with kindness. Amen.

WRITTEN BY JESSICA COATES

SEPTEMBER 11

ORDER OUT OF CHAOS

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

GENESIS 1:1-2

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, a well-known Methodist pastor preached on this passage from the very beginning of Scripture. During a moment when all hope seemed lost and we were surrounded by uncertainty of what might happen next, the pastor focused in on a Hebrew phrase buried in these biblical sentences, *tohu wa bohu*. Even without knowing it’s meaning, you can tell that it sounds foreboding. It is the phrase that gets rendered in English “formless, empty, dark” or, in other translations, “a dark and formless void.” It points to the fact that in the beginning, before God began creating, all that existed was a dark, bubbling, and chaotic mess.

But, immediately after that is established for us, God speaks, “Let there be light!” And, suddenly, from the foreboding chaos comes order. For seven days and beyond, God works with the bubbling, dark mess and he calls out of it beauty, goodness and something that mere moments ago didn’t seem possible. It is a reminder that when everything feels like it is falling apart, right there God does his best work. In those same days following September 11, 2001, Pastor Fred Rogers encouraged us “to always look for the helpers.” Living missionally in the midst of a chaotic and broken world means just that, to be the helpers, the God-followers, the light-bearers who see chaos and, yet believe and point others to the fact that God can do something beautiful even there.

PRAYER

Creating God, we thank you for bringing order out of our chaos, giving us hope and new life in the midst of a broken world. Help us to live believing that you are at work even when it seems impossible so that we might point others toward you. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

SEPTEMBER 14

THE BLESSING OF GIVING

“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

ACTS 20:35

This verse makes me think of my children on Christmas morning, as they tear open a gift we carefully picked just for them. Because honestly, isn't the real joy found in that moment when we see their faces light up? There's a deep, lasting happiness that doesn't come from receiving but from the simple act of giving.

In Acts 20:35, Paul reminds us of Jesus' words: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” True joy doesn't come from what we accumulate but from what we share. Giving doesn't always mean money. It can be giving your time, your encouragement or even your presence to someone who feels alone.

Helping others doesn't just bless them, it also changes us. Each time we give, our hearts grow softer, and we become more like Jesus, who gave everything for us. When we give, we reflect His generosity to a world desperate for kindness and love.

So today, think beyond your own needs. Look for opportunities to give—a kind word, a helping hand or a listening ear. You'll find that in blessing others, you'll discover the deeper blessing Jesus promised.

PRAYER

*Lord, help me to live with open hands and an open heart. Teach me to see the needs around me and to give generously, not for recognition, but out of love. Shape me into someone who reflects Your giving heart every day.
In Jesus' name, Amen.*

WRITTEN BY SENTA HINZMAN

SEPTEMBER 15

GIVING CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.”

PSALM 29:2

For as long as I can remember, I have hated group projects. In every group there's the people who might be willing to contribute something but aren't going to overexert themselves, the people who are celebrating that they can just sit back while someone else does all of the work, and the people who deeply care and will put in all the time and effort to do the majority of the work to pull everyone across the finish line. What's frustrating about group projects is that most of the time each of these persons gets the same credit for getting it done.

In the days of the psalmist, there was a tendency for non-Israelite nations to say that everything good that was happening in the midst of creation was due to the myriad of gods that they believed were present and at work in the world. They would credit desperately-needed rain to the god of the harvest and the shelter of a shade tree to the god of creation. Seeking to correct this tendency, the psalmist reminds us that creation is not a group project among gods but the gift of the one, true God, and we must ascribe to Him what is His. He is the one who created every single one of us and He is powerful over all creation. As we live out our faith together, we must hold one another accountable to give God praise and the glory for His good gifts in our lives instead of giving credit to false sources.

PRAYER

Good God, You have given us all that we have from the gifts in our lives to the breath in our lungs. In the community of faith, may we help one another to give thanks to You for all of these good gifts instead of assuming we achieved them on our own or another's merit. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

SEPTEMBER 16

SERVING JESUS BY SERVING OTHERS

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

MATTHEW 25:40

A few months ago, a church leader in our kids ministry went out of their way to encourage and bless my children, spending time with them, praying for them and showing genuine care. Watching my kid respond to their generous attention, I felt it deeply in my own heart, it was as if the kindness had been extended directly to me. In that simple act, Matthew 25:40 came alive: when we serve and care for others, especially those who can not help themselves, we are serving Jesus Himself.

Jesus reminds us that serving the “least of these” matters profoundly. It doesn’t have to be a grand gesture; small acts of love, attention and encouragement carry eternal significance as well. Each thoughtful word, each helping hand and every moment spent in care reflects Christ’s heart to the world. When we serve others selflessly, we not only bless them, but we also participate in God’s work on earth.

Our acts of kindness, seen or unseen, are treasured by Him. Let us embrace opportunities to serve, knowing that in blessing others, we are in turn blessing Jesus Himself.

PRAYER

Lord, give me a heart to serve with love and humility. Help me see opportunities to bless others, knowing that in serving them, I am serving You. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 17

BETTER TOGETHER

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor... if either of them falls down, one can help the other up... Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

EPHESIANS 4:9-12

Recently I was at a wedding where the bride and groom stood before the pastor, hands entwined, ready to be married. As the pastor spoke about love within the marriage, he referenced Genesis chapters 1 and 2 where God, in all His creating, said everything was good! But, in Genesis 2:18 God says what is not good.

God created us for community and purpose.

In Genesis 2:18, He said, “It is not good for the man to be alone,” showing our need for connection and mutual support. In Ephesians, Paul reminds us that Christ gave gifts to His church—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers—to equip believers for service and build up the body of Christ. These gifts shine through love, humility and service.

God doesn’t intend for us to live in isolation; He calls us into relationship and equips us to serve. Just as Christ equips believers for unity, He equips them to strengthen one another in faith. A Christ-centered relationship isn’t about personal fulfillment but mutual edification—helping each other grow into maturity.

When we serve with grace and humility, we reflect the unity and purpose of Christ’s Church.

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for placing me in community and equipping me for Your work. Help me to humbly use my gifts to encourage others and glorify You. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 18

TRADING GOOD FOR BETTER

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?”

ISAIAH 58:6

Recently we took our son out of preschool for a week of family vacation. Much to his disappointment that week contained water day where the preschool teachers put sprinklers and water tables outside for the students to splash in. For weeks leading up to our vacation, he lamented that he was going to miss it, and we constantly reminded him that every day would be water day on our trip with the ocean and the pool at his fingertips! We knew our trip would ultimately be better than the 30 minutes of play he would have had at school, but it was hard for him to give that up and believe there was something better.

In this passage from Isaiah, God’s people proclaim that they have been fasting and, yet still God is not satisfied. If we read the context, what we realize is that they’ve been giving up things simply to make themselves feel miserable, because they believe that’s what it means to follow God sacrificially. Instead, God clarifies that what he is asking of them is to give something up that seems good so that they might have something better. He wants them to participate in setting people free in his name! When we live missionally, this is exactly what God asks of us too—to give up the distractions, the habits and the misused time that satisfy for a moment but leave us wanting. Instead, he invites us to do better, powerful and freeing work alongside him.

PRAYER

Holy God, what a gift it is that you have called us to participate in the work that you do of setting people free. Help us to give up whatever seems good in our lives, but is actually a distraction, so that we can receive the better opportunity that you have for us. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

SEPTEMBER 19

REFLECTION

Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is slow down. Scripture shows us that God often met His people in the in-between spaces, after the work was done and before the next step began. As you enter the weekend, create room to breathe, reflect and let God re-center your heart. Humility grows when we stop striving long enough to recognize God’s steady presence. Give Him space, and He will speak.

Instead of a new Scripture text today, look back over this week’s devotions and select the bible passage that stuck out to you. Use the SOAP method (at the front of the booklet) to read and study that verse’s entire chapter a little closer.

QUESTIONS

Where have you noticed God at work in your life this week—whether through challenge, blessing or unexpected moments?

What is one area of your heart that God may be inviting you to surrender, soften or realign before a new week begins?

SEPTEMBER 22

LIMITED VISION

*"Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path."*

PSALM 119:105

One summer at camp, I oversaw a cabin of young girls. Often the biggest hurdles for them to overcome was the fact that there was no bathroom in our cabin. Instead, rain or shine, light or dark, if someone had to use the bathroom, we had to hike a quarter of a mile down the mountain to the bathhouse. Every single week, inevitably someone had to go to the bathroom in the dead of night, and we had to show them in the pitch black that our flashlights wouldn't illuminate the entire path from the cabin to the bathhouse. It would only light a few feet before us at a time. We had to trust that as we walked, we would have the light we needed for the next stretch when we got there.

In Psalm 119, we are reminded that this is how God's Word functions. His Word is a lamp for our feet and light for our path, but often when God uses his Word to speak into our lives, He doesn't illuminate the entire upcoming journey for us. Instead, He gives us enough light to be able to see the steps we should take for the next few feet. We are called to trust that He will provide the light we need for the next stretch when we get there. As Christians, may we remind one another of this truth as we journey together so that we don't get overwhelmed by doubt and despair.

PRAYER

Illuminating God, you use your Word to speak truth into our lives and reveal to us the next steps you have for us on the journey. Help us to encourage one another when we so desperately want to see the whole path laid out. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

SEPTEMBER 23

RUNNING THE RACE WITH COURAGE

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith."

HEBREWS 12:1-2

My daughter faced a small but intimidating challenge, pulling out her first loose tooth. At first, she was scared and anxious, gripping the tooth nervously, unsure if she could do it on her own, but she was focused on one goal, having one less tooth in her mouth. She tried to stay focused and brave, wanting to do it herself, but eventually, she trusted my wife to help her. The Bible says that we, as Christians, are all invited into a spiritual race that is not a sprint but a marathon. This race of life has a way of presenting challenges that feel risky or uncomfortable, and we may hesitate to take bold steps of faith. Yet, perseverance means staying focused on Jesus. Like my daughter and her tooth, we cannot lose sight of the end goal, even if it means that we may need some help along the way. Living as generous disciples means that we step out in love and service to the world while always relying on God to guide and support us. Each act of obedience, big or small, moves us forward in God's race and allows His love to flow to us and then to others.

PRAYER

Lord, give me courage to take bold steps of faith and generosity, even when I feel afraid. Help me trust You and lean on others when needed, running the race You've set before me with perseverance and love. Amen.

WRITTEN BY TREVOR MILLER

SEPTEMBER 24

DELIVER US

“This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.”

MATTHEW 6:9-13

Jesus tells us in Matthew Chapter 6 when we pray not to heap up empty phrases because God knows what we need before we even ask Him. Jesus says instead to “pray then like this,” which He follows with The Lord’s Prayer.

First, we are to praise God for who He is and for what He has done. Second, we are to repent of the sins we have committed and the commands we have neglected. Third, we are to ask for the needs of others and then lay our own needs before Him. Finally, we are to yield our will and agenda to God’s will and agenda. Jesus is giving us a beautiful construct that leads to a real conversation with our Father.

Each phrase reminds us who God is and what we need most—His presence, provision, forgiveness and guidance. As we pray, we draw near to our Father, resting in His love and living for His glory. True prayer isn’t about getting our way but aligning our hearts with His. We can also bring our needs—daily bread, forgiveness and protection—trusting that our Father provides, pardons and preserves. This prayer reminds us that dependence on God is daily, not occasional. As we pray like Jesus, our hearts are reshaped to reflect His kingdom on earth.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for inviting me to call You mine. Teach me to pray with reverence, trust and surrender. Provide what I need, forgive my sins and guide me away from evil. Amen.

WRITTEN BY JESSICA COATES

SEPTEMBER 25

I’M COMING, LORD!

“I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.”

PSALM 84:10B

In the 1500s in Spain, Alphonsus Rodriguez suffered a great tragedy losing his wife and all of his children. In the aftermath, he took up residence at a monastery, but he was deemed too old to become a priest. After years of trying to figure out a proper place for him to serve, Alphonsus was sent to a local Catholic college and given the job of doorkeeper. Answering the door, greeting visitors, and delivering messages was his mundane daily work. However, every time that Alphonsus would hear the doorbell ring, he would shout out, “I’m coming, Lord,” and run to the door treating the visitor as if it was Christ himself.

So often when we think of living missionally, we think that we have to be able to recite tons of bible verses, have a special sermon prepared, or a dramatic testimony to share. But often what God wants from us is to follow after him and be open to opportunities to show through our seemingly mundane words and actions who we believe him to be. He wants to use us right where we are at our office, the grocery store line, the t-ball game and the restaurant to expose others to his light and his love. Alphonsus made such an impact on the students and visitors of that school that after his death, he was granted sainthood in the Catholic Church, a reminder that no matter where we are, no matter how ordinary it seems, God can use us to build the Kingdom.

PRAYER

God of presence, remind us that wherever we are, you are there, ready to use us for your glory even in what seems like the mundane. Even in the ordinary moments, help our hearts’ prayer to be, “I’m Coming, Lord!” Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO

SEPTEMBER 28

THE POWER OF SHOWING UP

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

HEBREWS 10:24-25

One of my favorite parts of camping is sitting around the campfire with the smell of the smoke, the crackle of the wood and the way the flames dance in the night. But have you ever noticed what happens if you pull just one log out of the fire and set it aside? On its own, it cools quickly, and the flame dies out. But when the logs stay together, they keep feeding each other's heat, burning brighter and longer.

This image mirrors what the writer of Hebrews tells us about Christian community. We weren't created to do life alone. When we isolate ourselves whether out of hurt or habit our spiritual flame can start to fade. God designed us to be together, encourage one another and challenge each other toward love and good works.

Every time we gather whether in church, a small group or a simple coffee chat we help keep each other's faith burning bright. Being together isn't just a good idea; it's a spiritual discipline that strengthens both us and those around us.

It's easy to believe that our absence doesn't matter. But by showing up, your smile, your presence and your prayers might be the encouragement someone else needs today. Together, we can help each other grow and reflect Christ more clearly.

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for the gift of community. Help me not to isolate myself but to make time for the people You've placed in my life. Use me to encourage others and to keep their spiritual flame burning strong. Teach me to show up, love well and build others up as we follow You together. Amen.

WRITTEN BY SENTA HINZMAN

SEPTEMBER 29

DIALECT

“...speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit...”

EPHESIANS 5:19

I am originally from Tennessee. When most people hear that news, I think they are surprised that I wear shoes, didn't marry my cousin and don't have a tremendously different Southern accent. In fact, most days, you'd never be able to tell that's my home state! However, when I go home for the holidays or another extended time with family, nearly always when I return, someone comments on how long my “I”s have become. Suddenly, my dialect changes, because I return to talking like the people I have been around, in the way I was raised.

The author of Ephesians points out that our behavior and actions throughout our lives will be greatly influenced by whether we are living by the world or by the Spirit. He acknowledges that living by the Spirit will happen more readily if we are regularly around other believers who are speaking to us with the words and spirit of the psalms, hymns and songs of our faith. In fact, when we come together as the body of Christ to worship, we are not simply hearing some songs and a message. By passing the peace of forgiveness, reciting the creed, singing songs about what we believe, digging into Scripture and sharing Communion, we are being shaped by the language and behavior of our faith. We are being reminded of, and picking up, God's dialect so that we will sound and act more like Him in the world.

PRAYER

Speaking God, thank you for giving us language by which you speak to us and we can speak to you. May what you speak over us shape us in such a way that we live out your dialect in the world. Amen.

WRITTEN BY RACHEL CAROSIELLO