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CFBC 21 Days of Prayer is adapted from Claude King's *AWAKEN* Prayer Guide.

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For other inquiries contact the author at One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234.

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Guidelines for a Daniel Fast

As you consider the potential for prayer with fasting, there are multiple methods for fasting. The following are guidelines one pastor shares with his church:

One meal each day—The fast is not about only giving up food, but also includes praying during mealtime. Jesus said, *“Could you not watch with me one hour?”* (Matthew 26:40). It takes about an hour to prepare a meal or travel to a restaurant or get ready to eat. So this time is a perfect opportunity to pray. Those who work in hot exhausting jobs cannot fast completely because they need their strength and stamina for physical exertion. However, they can sacrifice one meal a day for the Lord.

Two meals each day—Some people can pray for two hours each day, sacrificing two meals to the Lord.

Eat only veggies—The Daniel Fast involves giving up meats, desserts and snacks, eating only the food that Daniel most likely ate. While the fast doesn’t give extra time to pray, it is a commitment of the heart that when joined with prayer, moves the heart of God.

Give up television—Secular people might laugh at “fasting television” or “sacrificing television” but it is a commitment to God to place loyalty to Christ first above all else. This is a spiritual choice in response to Christ, who promises, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Matthew 6:33).

Give up sports—Giving up bowling league, golfing, fishing, jogging or other activity for a season (such as 40 days) to pray during that time is a choice. It places spiritual exercise above physical exercise. *“Bodily exercise profits little, but godliness is profitable for all things”* (1Timothy 4:8).

Give up pleasure reading—Beyond what you must read for your work or preparing for teaching the Word of God, pleasure reading could be turned into prayer time. You could consider laying aside reading the daily newspaper too.

Restrict mobile phone use and text messaging—While some of these communication devices are necessary, they are serious time robbers that could be placed aside for praying.

Use of cell phone or MP3 players—Some people have the opportunity to restrict their genre to Christian music only.

Facebook and other social media—These activities can consume huge chunks of time. Part of a fast could be to cease social media and use the time for prayer and intercession.

Other—There may be something that the Holy Spirit brings to mind that you could place aside for a season while you focus on more prayer.

Guidelines for a Daniel Food Fast

The Daniel Food Fast is for the body, soul and spirit. While some may want to consider alternate methods for expressing self-discipline for spiritual purposes, the following will assist those wanting to participate on a Daniel Food Fast.

The Bible teaches us that we are a spirit, we have a soul and we live in a body. The Daniel Food Fast affects all three parts of us as we enter into a period of time for focused prayer and fasting.

The Body—Certainly our bodies are affected as our diet is changed, for some in very dramatic ways, during the Daniel Food Fast. Many men and women experience detoxing from caffeine, chemicals and sugar. The symptoms are most often headaches, leg cramps, fatigue and malaise.

Most people lose weight during the Daniel Food Fast. And many report healings from diabetes, allergies, arthritis and cancer.

The Soul—Frequently referred to as "the flesh" in the Bible, the soul is also greatly impacted during the Daniel Food Fast. The soul is the seat of our emotions, intellect, personality and will. It is in the "soulish realm" where we experience cravings, frustration, anger . . . and even happiness.

During the Daniel Food Fast, your soul may very well rebel against the dramatic change in your diet. Experiencing and winning this battle over the flesh is often one of the most powerful lessons of the Daniel Food Fast.

The Spirit—Our spirit is that born-again part of us that surrenders to God and then abides with the Father and the Son. Our spirit is filled with the Holy Spirit when we yield to Him. During the Daniel Food Fast, we want to put our spirit in charge of the other two parts of us. When our flesh is acting out with a craving, we take control of it with our spirit (just as a parent takes control of a rebellious child).

What if you have health issues?

Fasting should never bring harm to the body. And if you have concerns, be sure to consult your health professional before going on the Daniel Food Fast or making any major dietary change.

The Daniel Food Fast is a very healthy way to eat! So health professionals will support this eating plan but might suggest a few modifications if you have health issues that need special attention. For example, pregnant and nursing mothers might get instructions to add fish, chicken and cheese into the Daniel Food Fast but otherwise stay the course. Diabetics may need to add more carbohydrates or include chicken and fish. Also, those who are especially active either through sports, bodybuilding or vocation may need to slightly alter the eating plan.

I encourage you to check with your doctor . . . and by the way, being addicted to Snickers and Coke don't count as a special need!

What is the Daniel Food Fast?

The Daniel Food Fast is a biblically based partial fast. It is a method of fasting that men, women and young people all over the world are using as they enter into the spiritual discipline of prayer and fasting.

There are two anchoring scriptures for the Daniel Food Fast. In Daniel 1, the Prophet ate only vegetables

(that would have included fruits) and drank only water. So from these scriptures we get two of the guidelines for the fast:

1. Only fruits and vegetables
2. Only water for a beverage

Then in Daniel 10, we read that the Prophet ate no meat nor any precious breads or foods and he drank no wine for 21 days. Of course, the vast majority of Baptists are total abstainers from alcoholic beverages. So from this scripture, we get a third guideline:

3. No sweeteners and no breads

Another important guideline is drawn from Jewish fasting principles, where no leaven is used during the fast. So that's why yeast, baking powder and the like are not allowed on the Daniel Food Fast.

Finally, with all the above puzzle pieces, we conclude that no artificial or processed foods nor any chemicals are allowed on the Daniel Food Fast.

When asked about the eating plan on the Daniel Food Fast, I often say it is a "vegan diet with even more restrictions."

Be sure to read the ingredients on labels of prepared foods to make sure they only include Daniel Food Fast friendly ingredients.

An important question to ask yourself . . .

During your Daniel Food Fast you will have many times when you might want to "stretch the rules" a little bit. For example, even though the guidelines say we are to drink only water . . . you conclude that herbal teas are vegetables and water is water and therefore you will go ahead and drink herbal teas during the Daniel Food Fast.

But I encourage you to learn a powerful spiritual lesson by asking yourself (examining your heart) the question, "Why do you want the herbal teas?"

My guess is that the answer will be, "Well, I just want them. I can't drink only water. I have to have something else."

The Daniel Food Fast teaches us to deny our "selves" and instead put our spirit in control over our flesh. As you plan your meals and eat your food, keep in mind that the definition of a fast is *to deny food for a spiritual purpose*.

Praying for Those Yet to Believe

As you pray for those yet to believe, consider some of these prayers.

1. Bring him to recognize his emptiness and purposelessness in life. Bring him to the end of himself so that he will turn to You.
2. Cause him to hunger and thirst for more in life.
3. Bring him to understand the truth of his condition without Christ and to understand what Christ has done for his salvation.
4. Bring conviction of sin. Allow the consequences of his sin to cause him to desire a different life. Let him become fed up with his life as it is.
5. Jesus, reveal the Father to him.
6. Father, exalt Jesus in his eyes.
7. Father, draw him to Yourself and Your Son Jesus.
8. Guide and create circumstances that create a need, and then show Your love through meeting needs through me or others of Your people.
9. Bring godly people into his life that will influence him for Christ.
10. Prepare circumstances where a Christian will have the opportunity to forgive him and thus reveal something of your mercy.
11. Lord, I care so much for this person you have my permission to allow him to offend me in such a serious way he knows he doesn't deserve forgiveness. Then enable me to forgive him to show him what Your mercy looks like that You may draw him to Yourself.
12. Open his ears to hear Your call.
13. Allow him to see the unity and love of Your people in a way that he is convinced that Jesus must be sent from You. Convince him that Jesus is indeed the Savior of the world.
14. Prepare his life to receive the planting of Your Word.
15. Protect him from Satan's attempts to blind him and steal away the Word that has been sown.
16. Reduce the cares of the world around him that could choke the seed planted in his mind.
17. Raise up intercessors in behalf of this person.
18. Reveal to me the time and the way for me to share a witness about you and to tell him about the good news of salvation.
19. Bring him under the hearing and influence of Your Word through teaching or preaching. Create in him an openness to listen.
20. Create opportunities for him to hear a witness for Christ from several different trusted sources. Use the timing and diversity of these witnesses to convince him that You are the Author behind them all.
21. Cause him to recognize his need for a Savior.
22. Lord, do whatever it takes to cause this person to seek after You. Break the hardness of his heart toward You.

My VIP's Who Are Yet to Believe

Over the course of these 21 days, make a list of people in your circles of relationships who are your very important people. Ask God to focus your attention on ones to emphasize. List people who do not yet believe in Christ *and* those for whom you do not know their relationship to Christ. Identify people who are family members, relatives, friends (past and present), neighbors, coworkers, classmates, people you associate or interact with on a regular basis, acquaintances you may not know well but you know their names or faces. Draw a star beside those for whom God has given you a special concern.

21 Days of Prayer Daily Prayer Guide

Day 1

Spiritual Awakening

God's Word for Today – Acts 19:18-20

“Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.”

Thoughts for Today

A spiritual awakening is a time when many people are changed by coming to faith in Christ. The result of such a harvest is the culture and the society are radically transformed. Paul's preaching and demonstration of the power of the gospel in Ephesus led to major change in many people's lives. In the last part of Acts 19, a riot broke out. The silversmiths were angry because so many people were turning to Christ that their business of making and selling false gods was suffering. That's spiritual awakening.

In the 1970's and 1980's, Angola Prison in Louisiana was known as the bloodiest prison in America. Most of those sentenced to Angola would die at Angola. The hopelessness of the prisoners led to unbridled violence. In 1995, Warden Burl Cain realized the only lasting change would have to be a moral reformation that starts in the heart. Prisoners came to Christ and began to share their faith with others. A reformation was underway.

In partnership with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, a program for training in Christian ministry was established inside the walls. Men began to grow spiritually and gain victory over sinful behaviors. They began to reflect Christlikeness in their actions and behaviors. They shared this good news and hope, and new life began to spread. Today Angola may be one of the safest and most peaceful prisons in the nation.

When Hurricane Katrina forced 2,000 New Orleans inmates to Angola, officials were afraid of riots. They called in the prisoners trained in Christian ministry. Within 24-hours, peace had come and perhaps 200 had placed their faith in Christ. Today, wardens at other prisons request transfers of these prisoners turned Christian ministers to spread the change to their prison. This is spiritual awakening. Do you believe the God who is transforming Angola can transform your community? That's what we are praying for.

It's Time to Pray

1. Pray for those who are lost and do not know Christ, that God will awaken their heart and that they will be saved.
2. Pray that God will increase your faith to believe that the change He brought to Ephesus in Paul's day and to an Angola in our day will begin to transform your community as people come to faith in Christ.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do over the course of the next three weeks to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

Day 2

Revival

God's Word for Today - Zechariah 1:1-6

"In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo:

"The LORD was very angry with your ancestors. Therefore, tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty. Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.' But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD. Where are your ancestors now? And the prophets, do they live forever? But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your ancestors?

"Then they repented and said, 'The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do.'"

Thoughts for Today

When churches conduct "revival" services, they frequently see many people place their faith in Christ. Consequently, many think of revival as evangelistic services. But revival is what God accomplishes with His people when they return to Him. Revival comes when God restores life and vitality to His people. Revival is evident when His power and presence is made know in a community. When genuine revival comes to God's people, God's activity becomes the talk of the town.

On a Wednesday night, I spoke about prayer to about 25 members of a church that had run about 50 in attendance for 50 years. At the end of the session, the pastor and people confessed they had not been people of prayer and they repented. I explained that when John the Baptist preached a message of repentance, he required "*fruits of repentance*." I asked, "What is the fruit of repentance for prayerlessness?" ...Prayer! So, we concluded in small groups of prayer. Many wept over their sin and pledged to pray.

That pastor resigned and a new one came a few months later. I was asked to speak again. The deacon chairman said, "We are not the same people we used to be. We took that prayer thing seriously." They had begun to pray in classes and services. Their mid-week prayer meeting became a real prayer meeting. They had been meeting weekly on Fridays to pray for a new pastor and God had sent them a man of prayer. I was excited to think what God might do with a praying people led by a praying pastor.

A few months later, a Methodist pastor asked if I had heard about the revival in this church I just described. I had not. He said the Methodists were praying it would spread their direction. I called the new pastor and asked what was happening. Inactive church members were getting right with God and reconciling with the church. Life and vitality had replaced apathy. People were coming to faith in Christ and the church was running 175 in attendance. Now they were on mission with God in their community and they were going to the world. That is revival!

It's Time to Pray

1. Pray that God will reveal His requirements for genuine revival in your church. Ask God to start that revival in your own heart and life.
2. Pray that the people of God at CFBC would experience a revival of faith and surrender to God.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

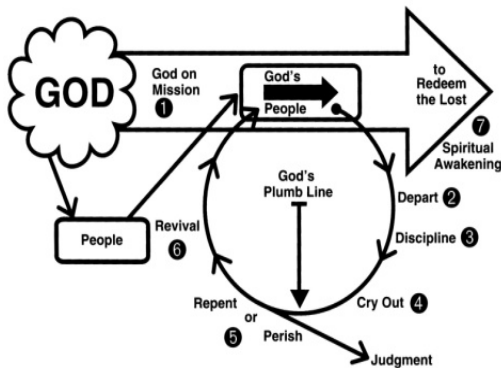
God's Pattern for Revival and Awakening¹

God's Word for Today - 2 Chronicles 7:13-14

“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

Thoughts for Today

The diagram below and the phases described below illustrate the connection between revival and spiritual awakening. When God disciplines us and we repent and return to Him, He revives us. He then can work through us to draw others to faith in Jesus.



- Phase 1 God is on mission to redeem a lost world, calling His people into a relationship with Himself. He accomplishes His work through them.
- Phase 2 God's people tend to depart from Him, turning to substitutes for His presence, purposes, and ways.
- Phase 3 God disciplines His people out of His love for them.
- Phase 4 God's people cry out to Him for help.
- Phase 5 God calls His people to repent and return to Him or perish.
- Phase 6 God revives His repentant people, restoring them to a right relationship with Himself.
- Phase 7 God exalts His Son Jesus in His people and draws the lost to saving faith in Him.

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to reveal where you are and where your church is in this pattern. Have you departed? Are you being disciplined? Are you crying out for help? Do you need to repent and return to Him? Are you ready to be used by God to draw others to new life in Christ?
2. Pray for the people of CFBC. Pray God would reveal where they stand with Him, and that He would call to their hearts and they would respond by seeking and surrendering to Him.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take to be of maximum usefulness to His kingdom?

1. Diagram and phases from Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King. *Fresh Encounter: Seeking God Together for Revival in the Land*, (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2006), p. 65. Reprinted and used by permission. Available at www.lifeway.com.

Making the Gospel Attractive

God's Word for Today - Read Titus 2:9-10

“Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.”

1 Peter 2:11-12

“Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”

Thoughts for Today

Your life is a living testimony of the power of the gospel. A sinful lifestyle or behavior can bring shame and discredit the cause of Christ. But Christlike living can demonstrate the power of Christ to change lives and make the gospel appealing to others.

My dad grew up on a farm. One day he went to help a neighbor plow his field. It was a hot and humid day as he walked behind the mule team and the plow. Dripping with sweat he got very thirsty under the blazing summer sun. Dad took a break to ask the farmer if he could get a drink of water.

The farmer spit out his tobacco juice and it began drooling down his chin. Then he told my dad to get a drink from the water jug under a shade tree. When my dad picked up the jug, he could see something growing on the inside. With this sight of a dirty jug and thinking of the farmer's tobacco juice on his chin, my dad decided he wasn't that thirsty and returned to his plowing.

As you pray and seek to reach out to those in your circles of influence, your life will be like a water jug. People who need Jesus Christ as Savior are thirsting for the Living Water. When they look at Christ through your “glass-jug” life, will they be thirsty enough to drink? Will they see the pure, clean Water of Life and decide to drink deeply, or will they see impurities and uncleanness that cause them to put off a decision for Jesus Christ? How clean is your water jug?

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to reveal to you anything in your life that might hinder others from choosing to follow Him. Ask Him to enable you to live in such a way that others will want what they see in you—Living Water.
2. Pray for our church to be a pure and sanctified example of what God has done in our lives and that others will be drawn to Him because of what they witness in CFBC.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

Revival and Harvest in Wales

God's Word for Today - Isaiah 40:1-5

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Thoughts for Today

Religious and church life had reached a low point in Wales in 1904. Church attendance was low and apathy and sinful behavior were high. Many were praying for revival. A young man, Evan Roberts, had been praying for 13 years. Sensing God's call to vocational ministry, he left working in the coal mines to go to school.

He sensed God gave him a message to share with his home church. On a Monday night, he shared a four-point message with 17 young people, and all responded with a desire to obey. They met the next night with more responding and attendance began to grow nightly. As Christians got right with God and others, God began to convict unbelievers of sin and many began turning to faith in Christ. In six months over 100,000 had professed faith in Christ.

Because so many people's lives were being changed, the society changed as well. Crime decreased so much that judges and policemen had little to do. Taverns went out of business because of the decline in drinking alcohol. That affected family life for the good. Even the animals in the coal mines had to be retrained because of the clean language of the converted miners.

Read Evan's four points and consider what changes you would need to make to apply these in your life.

1. You must put away any unconfessed sin.
2. You must put away any doubtful habit.
3. You must obey the Holy Spirit promptly.
4. You must confess Christ publicly.

It's Time to Pray

1. Pray for God to bring such conviction throughout your community that masses will put away sin and doubtful habits. Pray that God will guide and empower your witness and that of others.
2. Pray that so many people will come to faith in Christ that the society in your community will change for good as lives are changed for God's glory.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

Confession

God's Word for Today - Proverbs 28:13

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Thoughts for Today

In 1904, when a revival was sweeping through Wales, two men from London visited Wales to witness the move of God. When they arrived at the railroad station in Wales, they asked the ticket agent where the revival was. The agent placed his hand over his heart and said, "Gentlemen, it is here, underneath my buttons."

He was accurate. Revival begins personally when people are willing to confess their sins and repent of those specific sins.

Confession is agreeing with God, admitting it, calling sin what God calls it. Repentance is turning from the sin that you confessed. When a person is willing to do this, he/she is granted mercy and his/her fellowship with God is restored.

On February 17, 2008, Midway Baptist church in Jena, LA conducted a "revival meeting." Monday night God's Spirit moved powerfully but there were no outward decisions. As the service began on Tuesday, a lady stood up and said, "I can't wait. I have to get right with God tonight and with others." She openly confessed her ill will toward another church member.

That confession was the beginning of 1½ hours of confession and repentance. Revival broke out and it lasted for 9 weeks spreading throughout the parish involving other churches, denominations and across racial lines. Lives continue to be affected by the revival. A key to revival is to confess our sins and repent.

It's Time to Pray

1. Think about your life right now, exactly where you are and how you feel. Do you have unconfessed sin in your life? Pray for God to reveal such sin to you.
2. Confess, repent and claim 1 John 1:9 over your life..."If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
3. Pray about whether there is anyone you need to go to in order to do your part in restoring right relationships on earth. Your witness of repentance may impact the relationship of others to God.

What Is the Evidence?

God's Word for Today - 2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Galatians 5:19-25

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Thoughts for Today

Missionaries in the Shantung Province of China in the late 1920's began to wonder if many church members had only intellectually responded to Christ but had never repented and been transformed by Christ. An Evangelical Lutheran Missionary named Marie Monsen began asking people three questions:

1. Have you been born of the Spirit?
2. What evidence do you have of this new birth?
3. Have you been filled with the Holy Spirit?

When people began looking for the evidence in their lives that they had become new creations, some realized there was no evidence. Their lives were no different than the people around them. Convicted by their lost condition, many repented of their sin and placed their trust in Christ. Some church leaders and missionaries even realized they had never been changed by Christ.

Others knew they had faith in Christ, but they had no evidence of His power in their lives or in their witness for Christ. Many prayed, fasted, and cried out to God for the filling of His Spirit. They confessed and repented of the sins and impurities in their lives that quenched the Holy Spirit's work in and through them. As God began to reveal His power to change lives, the gospel began to spread, and a revival and awakening began to spread rapidly through the province.

It's Time to Pray

1. Examine the fruit of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit in your life. Are you a new creation? Have you been filled with His Spirit and power?
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?
3. Pray today by name for a person who has yet to believe in Christ as Savior.

Be Filled with the Spirit

God's Word for Today - Luke 24:45-49

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Acts 1:4-8

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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."

Ephesians 5:18

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

Thoughts for Today

Before Jesus returned to His throne in heaven, He told His followers to wait for the filling of the Holy Spirit. That filling occurred 40 days later on the Day of Pentecost. However, we also need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers our witness for Christ.

You can present yourself to the Lord for filling in one of two conditions. Imagine I'm holding in my hands two clear plastic containers. One is filled with dirt, rocks, and other things. The other container is clean and empty. Those containers represent the two conditions you can present to the Lord for filling.

The container filled with stuff represents a life filled with selfish desires, impure thoughts, sinful behaviors, broken relationships, and "idols of the heart" that distract you from your first love. When you bring a life like that to the Lord for filling, He says, "I'm sorry but I cannot fill and use a life like that."

The empty container represents a life that has been cleansed from sin and has learned to walk in victory over sin (see Rom. 6). It has reconciled broken relationships, put away idols of the heart, and been cleansed from impure thoughts. Self has been denied, crucified with Christ. When you bring a life like that to the Lord for filling, He says, "I've been looking for you!" Scripture says, "*The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to show Himself strong for those whose hearts are completely His*" (2 Chron. 16:9). A life emptied of the junk can be filled by His Holy Spirit, and that's the source of spiritual power.

It's Time to Pray

1. Think about the two containers described. Ask the Lord which one best represents your life. If it is the first container, ask God to cleanse you and guide you to prepare your life to receive His fullness. If it is the second container, humbly present yourself fully to Christ for filling.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

Reconcile Broken Relationships

God's Word for Today - Matthew 5:23-24

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”

Mark 11:25

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

Thoughts for Today

Your life is like a PVC pipe (or any kind of pipe). It is a channel through which Jesus—the Living Water—flows. On one end of your “pipe,” you must be connected to God by a saving relationship with Him through Jesus Christ, your Savior. On the other end of your pipe, you are connected to other people through relationships. God’s desire and mission is to work through your life in such a way that others will come to saving faith in His Son—that they would be reconciled to God.

However, if your pipe is clogged up, the Living Water cannot flow through it as intended. Sin can clog up your pipe. God’s holiness and righteousness cannot be revealed (flow) through a dirty life. If your pipe is clogged by sin, self, or the love of something that takes the place of your love for God (an “idol of the heart”), you need to get your pipe cleaned out. Clean out your “pipe” by confessing and repenting of your sin. Put away “idols of the heart” and return to your first love for God.

Another problem that can exist with the flow of Living Water through your life is a broken relationship with a person. This also creates a cap on the end of your pipe that stops or limits the flow. The person may not be willing to listen to you or receive the Living Water from your life.

Two kinds of broken relationships may be present in your relationships with others. In one case you may have sinned against the other person or group. In that case Jesus commands you to go and be reconciled. Seek forgiveness and make restitution if necessary. The other kind of broken relationship is where you have been offended (or sinned against) by the other person. If you are withholding forgiveness, your pipe will be capped. In this case you must forgive, no matter how serious the offence.

I’ve heard and read many stories of people who reconciled a relationship and that very action created the opportunity to lead the person to faith in Christ. Uncap your pipe and let Christ’s living water flow!

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to reveal any relationships you may have that need reconciliation or forgiveness.
2. Pray for those people today.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

Return to Your First Love

God's Word for Today - Revelation 2:1-5

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”

Thoughts for Today

Our intimate relationship with Christ and our concern for those He loves are dependent on our love for Him. If we depart from our first love, we need to return. Our renewed love for Him could change our world.

In 1727 Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf resigned from all his governmental responsibilities to provide spiritual leadership for a group of about three hundred people who had moved to his estate to escape religious persecution. Internal conflict was about to destroy the community. Zinzendorf and the elders drew up a covenant of brotherly union, and on May 12, 1727, the entire community repented of their divisions, reconciled with their brethren, and entered a covenant to live together in harmony.

On August 13, 1727, they had a significant encounter with their Savior at a Lord's Supper observance. During the service, they were deeply touched by their awareness of the sacrificial love of their wounded Savior. They determined that the best way they could express their love for Christ was to win for Him the souls for whom He died. Their battle cry was “to win for the Lamb that was slain the reward of His suffering.”

Following that encounter with Christ, the Moravian Brethren were possessed by a zeal for missions. They began a 24-hour prayer watch for the causes of the Kingdom, which continued for more than 100 years. During the following 25 years, they sent out more than one hundred missionaries around the world. Moravian missionaries were instrumental in leading John Wesley to genuine faith in Christ, and God used him as a key instrument in the First Great Awakening in America and the Evangelical Awakening in England.²

It's Time to Pray

1. Thank God for His love shown through Christ's sacrifice. Ask Him to reveal the quality of your love for Him and how to increase your love and your service to His kingdom.
2. Pray for missionaries around the world who are taking the Gospel to the lost.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

2. Adapted from *Come to the Lord's Table*, Claude V. King, Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2006, pp. 10-15. Reprinted and used by permission. Available from www.lifeway.com

Surrendered Lives

God's Word for Today - Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 John 3:16

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Thoughts for Today

Paul explained that God's mercy for us deserves the surrender of our lives and bodies to Christ as living sacrifices. Then John wrote that because of Christ's love for us, we ought to lay down our lives for others. As the Moravians began to pray for missions needs, they were told about the significant need for the gospel among the slaves in the West Indies Islands. As they prayed for laborers, Leonard Dober and Tobias Leupold sensed God calling them to go. But they were told that the slave owners would not permit them to preach to the slaves.

Leonard and Tobias came up with a plan. They would sell themselves as slaves so they could live and work among the slaves and lead them to faith in Christ. Count Zinzendorf said that was too high a price to pay and would not allow them to go. They insisted that God called them, so the community held a prayer meeting to draw lots and seek the Lord's will. The lot revealed that Leonard should go, and Tobias should wait. They continued praying and sensed God wanted David Nitschmann to accompany Leonard. The love for Christ caused these men to be willing to lay down their lives for others. When they reached St. Thomas Island, they found that the slave owners would allow them to preach to the slaves without having to sell themselves. And thus, the missionary work began that impacted the world.

Though God may not require you to lay down your physical life for His cause, His call to salvation is a call to lordship. Jesus is Lord. We are His servants. We need to be prepared to obey His every command because we love Him. And we love Him because He first love us and gave His life for our salvation.

It's Time to Pray

1. Thank God for all the mercy and grace He has shown to you. Now, I beg you to present yourself to the Lord as a servant who will obey his or her Lord's commands.
2. Pray for God to reveal to you how to live in a way that is entirely surrendered to His will for your life.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

The Blessings of Obedience

God's Word for Today - John 14:15-21

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

Matthew 7:21-27

Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and, in your name, perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Thoughts for Today

Hasn't Jesus made some wonderful promises to us? He has promised the Holy Spirit as our Counselor who will never leave us alone. He has promised us life in Him and in the Father. When we love Him and obey His commands, the Father will love us, and Christ will reveal Himself to us. When we love and obey God, He takes up residence in our lives to live in us and with us! Did you notice the importance of obedience in all those promises? Those who do not obey, do not love Him. And their experience with God will be very different.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the parable about the two builders. One built his house on a rock, and the other built his on sand. When the storms came, the house on the rock stood firm and the other was destroyed. He said our lives are like those two builders. Those who obey are wise like the man who built his house on the rock. When the storms of life come, we can remain strong through the tough times. Those who do not obey are foolish like the man who built his house on the sand. People like that cannot remain strong when the storms of life rage around them.

If God were to grade your obedience to His commands, what kind of grade would you receive from Him? Based on your obedience and what He has said in His Word, what can you expect from Him? Can you expect a strong life even during the storms? Can you expect Him to reveal Himself to you and take up residence in your life? Or can you expect to collapse when the storms of life come. Could you possibly hear Him say, “*I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers*” (Matt. 7:23)?

Jesus said, “*Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven, that person is My brother and sister and mother*” (Matt. 12:50). Though we are not saved by obedience and our good works, they are evidence that we share the family resemblance. They show others that we belong to His family.

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to evaluate your obedience. What does that reveal about your love for Him? Your relationship to Him?
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take to obey Him and experience His best?

The Power of Love

God's Word for Today - John 13:34-35

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 15:9-17

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

Thoughts for Today

The world will know we are followers of Jesus Christ by the love we demonstrate toward one another. This past summer I saw this reality during a trip to Sierra Leone (West Africa). I heard story after story of former Muslims who had come to faith in Christ. Their lives were so radically changed by Christ, they began to act like Him, and love like Him. They could not contain the good news of the gospel's power to change lives. I met one former sheik who had helped start 100 churches in the past four years. I visited one of those churches that was less than a year old. They already had plans to take this good news to five other villages around them.

I was told how over 35 (they quit counting) villages sent their Muslim leaders to ask the storytellers (church planters) to come to their villages. They saw the way people in other villages loved one another. They saw the way men treated their wives and children differently and they wanted that for their village. The love of Christ demonstrated through the lives of Christ-followers is a powerful testimony and makes the gospel attractive.

In *Concentric Circles of Concern*, Oscar Thompson said, “Love is meeting needs” (p. 157). Another demonstration of love I saw in Sierra Leone came through ministry to the needs of people. Following the civil war, a seed bank provided seed and farm tools to a community on the verge of starvation. Today, there is a church planting movement among the Susu people because the love of Christ opened the door. Storytellers offer to help dig wells (by hand), start schools, provide medical and dental care, provide job training, and a host of other access ministries to communities in need of the gospel. In six years, they have started over 3,000 churches and they are sending missionaries to other nations throughout Africa.

What does your love for others reveal? Would people know you are a disciple of Jesus Christ because of the sacrificial way you love?

It's Time to Pray

1. Pray that God will so fill you with His love that it will overflow to those in your circles of relationships. Pray that God will draw people to Jesus because of the love they see in you.
2. Pray that your faith will continue to grow and that the produce of that faith will be an attitude of love towards others.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

Survey Your World

God’s Word for Today - John 1:35-51

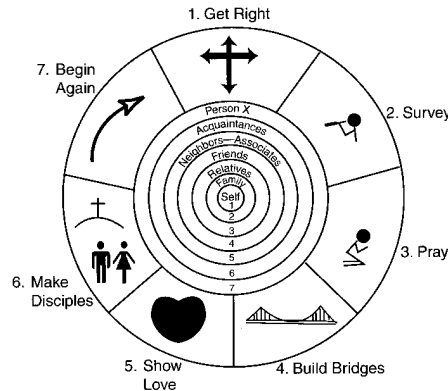
The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?” “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So, they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter). The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.” Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip. When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.” “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.” Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” He then added, “Very truly I tell you, you will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’ the Son of Man.”

Thoughts for Today

When Andrew and Philip met Jesus, they immediately thought of others in their circles of relationships who needed to meet Him. They immediately brought Peter and Nathaniel to meet Jesus. Today, I want you to begin thinking about the people in your circles of relationships who need to meet Jesus as Savior and Lord. List the names of people you know who need to be introduced to Jesus.

It’s Time to Pray

1. Ask God to remind you about the time you were first introduced to Jesus. Reflect on the change that Jesus has worked in your own life.
2. Ask God to begin identifying people you know who are living without a faith relationship with Jesus Christ. Think about those in the concentric circles of relationship illustrated below.³



3. W. Oscar Thompson with Carolyn Thompson Ritzmann and Claude V. King, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 95. All rights reserved. Reprinted and used by permission.

Praying for Those Yet to Believe

God's Word for Today - Matthew 7:7-11

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

James 5:13-20

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Thoughts for Today

Years ago I revised the book *Concentric Circles of Concern* by Oscar Thompson and Carolyn Thompson Ritzmann. In it, Oscar tells the story of one of his seminary students named Dick. Dick began making a list of the people in his concentric circles of relationships. He began to pray for his great aunt Alice. On her 83rd birthday, he sent her a birthday card.

Later he and his wife went to visit her in the nursing home where she lived. As he began to talk about what he was learning about relationships, he described the importance of a relationship with Jesus Christ. She began weeping. She had been a member of the church most of her life, but no one had explained how she could have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Dick had the privilege of leading his great aunt to faith that day. A few months later great aunt Alice entered eternity; and Dick asked, “Dr. Thompson, what if I had not listed her in my concentric circles? What if I had not done my survey?”⁴

After Dick listed his great aunt on his survey, he began to pray for her. As he prayed, God began to give him a special concern for her. He worked on rebuilding a relationship with her that became a bridge over which the gospel flowed.

The two Scriptures you read at the beginning of the day are wonderful promises regarding the power of prayer. As you think of those in your concentric circles (illustrated yesterday), begin praying for them. God wants to work through you, and one way will be through your prayers.

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to guide your prayers, according to His will, for the relationships and people you need to consider in your concentric circle.
2. As you pray, be sensitive to ways God may guide you to take action and reach out to those individuals.
3. Pray for protection over your walk with Christ so that you are living in a way that will impact others.

4. W. Oscar Thompson with Carolyn Thompson Ritzmann and Claude V. King, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 101.

Live with Urgency

God's Word for Today - Luke 16:19-31

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. “The time came when the beggar died, and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ ““No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

Luke 21:25-28

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Thoughts for Today

Jesus is coming again! Our redemption is drawing near. But people without the saving work of Jesus Christ are headed to horrible torment in hell.

In 2002, one year after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, I was asked by the North American Mission Board to consider being the prayer coordinator for the Strategic Focus Cities emphasis in New York City. I had been involved with prayer retreats and conferences in the city. Though my family could not relocate, I knew at the least I needed to pray. The Lord brought 1 Corinthians 7:29 to my attention: “*The time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none*” (KJV). My wife and family prayed and sensed God was asking us for a different measure of sacrifice. So, for over two years, I lived in New York for three weeks each month and spent the other week in Tennessee with my family.

Time is short and eternity is long. We've been warned what life without Christ will be like in eternity. The Lord wants none “*to perish, but all to come to repentance*” (2 Pet. 3:9). On my way to New York City, I realized that “time is short” could mean the Lord knows other attacks are coming. But then I realized “time is short” could mean that Jesus' second coming is near. Finally, I realized that life is short. Whether the Lord returns soon, or I face a tragedy or disease that could take my life, or I just grow old—any way my life on earth concludes—time to trust Christ is short. Then I realized I need to live my life with urgency. I can't afford to waste my time and life on trivial matters.

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to reveal to you the people around you who are headed to torment without Christ. Ask Him to give you a view of the masses around the world who are yet to hear about Jesus. Ask Him to give you His compassion for those for whom He died and ask Him to stir up an urgency in living for Him.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

Pray for Workers in the Harvest

God's Word for Today - Matthew 9:35-38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Thoughts for Today

When Jesus "*saw the crowds, He felt compassion for them*" (v. 36). The closer you get to Jesus and the more time you spend with Him, the more your heart will begin to beat with love for those He loves.

Think about the crowds Jesus may have seen in Israel 2,000 years ago. How large were they? Five, ten, or twenty thousand? Maybe more? Now think about the crowds you have seen live, in books or magazines, on television, or in the movies. Have you seen some of those crowds with hundreds of thousands of people? Have you seen crowds in the cities where masses of people go by continually? In our world the numbers of people in the spiritual harvest field are multiplying rapidly. Who will tell them the good news? Who will go? Who will have the privilege of reaping the spiritual harvest among them?

When Jesus saw the crowds of His day, He asked His disciples to pray for workers in the harvest fields. If you still have your Bible open to Matthew, take a look at chapter 10. Just after the disciples prayed for workers, Jesus told them to go into the towns and cities to preach the good news about His kingdom.

Today, keep your eyes open to see the crowds around you, in newspapers or magazines, or on the Internet or television. When you see a crowd, pray that God will call and send out workers to that harvest field.

It's Time to Pray

1. Pray for the workers who are already working to bring in a spiritual harvest. Pray for their protection, wisdom, spiritual and physical health, and fruitfulness. Pray that God will call and send workers. Pray that He will call some from your church and even from your family.
2. Give God permission to speak into your heart and to call and direct you to work in the harvest.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

Jesus' Final Command

God's Word for Today - Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Mark 16:15

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Luke 24:47-48

and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

John 20:21-22

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8

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."

Thoughts for Today

Final words of famous people are long remembered and often quoted. When a person knows he is on his death bed, he might even prepare a final statement of challenge to family and friends. Final words can have great significance for the next generation.

Jesus Christ came to provide salvation for all mankind. Following His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus spent forty days giving His disciples their final instructions to guide the church until His second coming. Not many of those words were recorded in the Scripture for us to read. But some were recorded, and they were perhaps His most important last words.

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave one final command to His disciples. He didn't want His disciples to miss this most important commission for the church. The future of His kingdom would depend on their obedience. Each of the Gospel writers records a variation of this command indicating that Jesus gave special attention to it during His final days on earth. You read those in the Scriptures above.

How faithful have you been to obey Christ's final command? Are you making disciples as you go about your daily living? Have you preached the good news? Are you talking with others about repentance and forgiveness that is available through Jesus Christ? Since Jesus was sent to seek and save the lost, are you seeking to point lost people to Him for salvation?

It's Time to Pray

1. Pray about sharing the Gospel and making disciples.
2. Talk to God about the status of your obedience to Christ's final command. If your obedience is lacking, confess your sin. Ask Him to guide and enable your obedience.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

Go Home and Tell

God’s Word for Today - Mark 5:1-20

They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!” For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you impure spirit!” Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.”¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside.¹² The demons begged Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.” He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened.¹⁵ When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well.¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Thoughts for Today

Think about the story this formerly demon-possessed man had to tell back home. That surely was a powerful testimony! When Jesus said we would be His witnesses (Acts 1:8), this is what He was talking about. A witness is one who reports on what he knows and has personally experienced. No one but you can tell your story as a personal testimony. And when you are filled with His Holy Spirit, you will have power in your witness to Him.

Reflect on all the good things God has done for you. What changes has Christ worked in your life? How is your life different because you have known Christ? Where do you think you would be had you not placed your faith in Him? This is as true for long-time believers as it is for new converts. (Make a few notes below)

It’s Time to Pray

1. Thank God for all the good things He has done for you. Be specific.
2. Pray about when and how you will share your story others. Are there people who knew your “before Christ” story that you need to tell?

A Testimony for Your “Town”

God’s Word for Today - John 4:28-30

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

John 4:39-42

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

Thoughts for Today

This story about Jesus’ encounter with the Woman at the Well is a powerful story of the change Jesus can make in a community in a very short period of time. Think about this woman. How long had she known Jesus before she began to tell her whole town about Him? What training had she received? This woman got a taste of “Living Water” and her life was changed. The Living Water bubbled up out of her life and became evident to those who heard her story. Like Andrew and Philip (Day 14), she immediately had to go tell others and bring them to meet Jesus for themselves. When many in the town believed in Jesus Christ, they had an experience of their own not just the words of another.

Yesterday, I asked you to reflect on your story. What have you experienced in your encounter with Jesus Christ that has changed your life? What is your testimony? Today, I want you to think about your “town.” Who are the people who need to hear your testimony?

It’s Time to Pray

1. Ask God to reveal the people in your “town” who may already be prepared to respond when they hear your story. Would they be people in your home, neighborhood, school, workplace, or gym? Or is your “town” the people who knew you in your “before Christ” days? Ask God for the boldness to share your story with your town. Describe or name the people God places on your mind and heart.

2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

The Coming Harvest

God's Word for Today - John 4:27-38

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus, the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

Acts 1:8

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."

Thoughts for Today

If you have fasted from food in order to seek the Lord in prayer for revival and awakening, you can identify with Jesus. The disciples were trying to get Him to eat, but He was preparing to reap a spiritual harvest of a city. His food was to obey the will of His Father. Sometimes a spiritual purpose will be far more important to us than taking time to eat.

Jesus' disciples were surprised when they found Him speaking to the woman. A Jewish man would not be caught in public talking to a Samaritan woman, especially a divorcee with five ex-husbands. What was He doing? The disciples may have expected a spiritual harvest when Jesus established His kingdom. Jesus essentially said, "Why wait? It's harvest time now!"

Let's hear His words for us. We could be saying something like this:

- Maybe awakening will come when all the churches experience revival.
- We can't expect a harvest when the lost world is so cold and hardened.
- He's delayed 2,000 years to come back. We don't need to rush now.
- We have tried before (fished all night). This isn't a good time.

One day Peter and his partners had been fishing all night. But Jesus told them to go into the deep water and drop their nets. They reluctantly obeyed and caught so many fish they nearly sank two boats! "*When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!'*" (Luke 5:8). That's the day Jesus called him to fish for men. Did you notice the great harvest of fish came before Peter confessed his sin? Sometimes God's kindness brings repentance (Rom. 2:4).

The harvest is the Lord's work. He has chosen us to be workers together with Him in this great task. He is bringing in a harvest in many places around the world. He is fully able to do that where we live also. Pay attention to His final statement of His final command to us and be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Jesus would say, "*Open your eyes and look at the fields, they are ready for harvest*" (John 4:35).

It's Time to Pray

1. Pledge your willingness to obey God and ask Him to bring in a great harvest for His glory. Continue to pray for workers for the harvest.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed.