

God is Love: A 31-Day Devotional

God is love and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

1 John 4:16



**Presented by the Deaconess Ministry
The Greater First Baptist Church
Mt. Pleasant Plains
Rev. Dr. Winston C. Ridley Jr., Pastor**

Message From Our Pastor:

With each rising generation comes the commensurate expectations for them to be and to do something newer, different and/or more ambitious than the generations that preceded them! This 31 Day Devotional written by the Deaconess Ministry of The Greater First Baptist Church of Washington, D.C. is evidence of this truth.

The noble purpose of this devotional is to be a reading resource that helps Christians grow in their faith and relationship with God by connecting with Him on a daily basis.

Of course, the original Christian devotional is the Bible—particularly the Psalms which are full of the praise of God and Proverbs which are full of the wisdom of God. But in early Christianity, believers sought to know and understand God through meditation and by learning from others. In this labor of love, the GFBC Deaconess Ministry attempts to share personal observations about God that they have gathered through their readings, prayers, meditations and walk with God.

May this daily devotional be like a spiritual version of the famous ice cream company's 31 flavors! If so, every day of the month you'll be able to declare along with the psalmist in Psalm 34:8 (NKJV),

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

Reverend Dr. Winston C. Ridley, Jr., Pastor
The Greater First Baptist Church
Washington, D.C.



Words from the President.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

John 3:16 KJV

The theme for the devotional is **Love**. God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to die for us so that we may have eternal life. God unconditionally loves each of us individually and collectively. His love reminds us that we must live and work together in harmony. We please God when we can support and assist others with life's challenges and give words of encouragement. As we do the work of the Lord, we should exemplify compassion and empathy.

Special thanks to each member of the Deaconess Ministry who submitted an entry for this devotional. Your effort is an attestation of your love of God and of this Ministry.

The vision of putting together this devotional is an example of how the Deaconess Ministry desires to show love by working together and sharing experiences.

Blessings to all who read it.

Deaconess Margaret (Gerri) Green
President
The Deaconess Ministry
The Greater First Baptist Church



DAY 1

Love is patient and kind, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude.
Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of
wrongs that others do.

Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil.

Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7 CEV

Christ tells us to love one another as He has loved us, but sometimes we tend to forget. It is said that patience is a virtue. A most wonderful example of patience is the ability to be slow to anger and show love towards others. So often we as humans show a side of our personalities that depicts anything but true love for others. For example, in the workplace, we should learn to love someone's successes without being envious of, or jealous of, their good fortune. When we see a co-worker get a promotion that we believe we should have received...we just can't understand why it wasn't given to us. We never stop to think that maybe that person was more qualified for the promotion. So instead of being congratulatory towards that person, we become bitter and non-supportive. If you had true and honest love in your heart, you would have extended congratulations to the co-worker and offered your support to their success. This is what it means to be a loving Christian who believes in the teachings of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

REFLECTION:

Think about how you can be a more loving person in the way Christ has instructed us.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come before you acknowledging that faith is Your precious gift. Strengthen my belief in your love, knowing that you work all things together for the good of those who love you. Amen.

DAY 2

Put up with each other, forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you. Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together.

COLOSSIANS 3:13-14 CEV

Unfortunately, many times people in families have conflicts with one another. This can lead to parents not talking with their adult children, adult children not talking with their parents, siblings not speaking to one another, even cousins not communicating with the rest of their families. Even church members holding grudges with their fellow Christian brothers and sisters. To overcome this deep dysfunction, we must find a way to be patient and kind with one another. We must practice patience and love. The only thing that is important is believing in brotherly love with each other. Don't hold on to things that are so unimportant that it makes you waste precious time while we're here on earth. Time is so precious, and life is such a fleeting event. Things can happen in the blink of an eye, and golden opportunities to repair broken relationships can elude you so quickly. If you feel that someone has wronged you, speak to them, clear the air, forgive them, and move on knowing that you have practiced forgiveness as Christ has forgiven us.

REFLECTION:

Think of how you can mend a broken relationship with someone. Whether you need to forgive someone for their wrong against you, or if you have wronged someone and need to beg their pardon and ask for forgiveness.

PRAYER:

O gracious and forgiving Heavenly Father, I come to you now Lord, asking that you show me the way to live more like your Son Jesus, who taught us the virtue in forgiving and being forgiven. Please Father, help us to be more loving and Christlike. Amen

DAY 3

Be sincere in your love for others. Hate everything that is evil and hold tight to everything that is good. Love each other as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself.

ROMANS 12:9-10 CEV

The apostle Paul has given us excellent ideas and guidelines for living a life filled with Christ-like love. He advises us to love and live peaceably with everyone. Be happy with those who are experiencing happiness, cry with those who are experiencing sadness. Be empathetic, in other words, live a life where we believe in hospitality towards our brethren, empathizing with those who are experiencing difficulties along their life's journey. Love others authentically and genuinely, forsaking selfishness. Our example for how to love is Jesus. We must love our enemies and pray for those who may be practicing evil. For we know that evil is Satan's work, to keep us from living the life that Christ wants us to live.

REFLECTION:

How can we apply Paul's teachings on living a life that is more Christ-like, especially when it comes to truly and genuinely loving our brethren?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I ask that you endow me with genuine love for everyone, not fake love. Please let me turn away from all that is evil and hold steadfast to all that is good. Please instill in me that love conquers hate. I ask this prayer in the name of your darling Son Jesus the Christ. Amen

DAY 4

Hatred stirs up trouble; love overlooks the wrongs that others do.

PROVERBS 10:12 CEV

How sad that in today's world, there is so much war and conflict. And do we know what brings about so much conflict? Hatred...pure unadulterated hatred. Nations of the world are at war with other nations, simply because they are so busy hating one another. There is hatred between religious sects, hatred between races, hatred between ethnic groups, and more. When one faction determines that they are the supreme being, they are constantly trying to oppress those that they deem inferior to themselves (when, in actuality God is the Supreme being). This brings about constant wars. When King Solomon (et al.) wrote the book of Proverbs, it is believed the purpose may have been to bring divine truth to us so we could look at life through God's eyes. We need to apply this Proverb that teaches us that love can overpower all hatred and strife, whether it's in the world or in our personal lives wherever hatred and strife need to be overcome.

REFLECTION:

Think about how you can use love to resolve conflicts in your life.

PRAYER:

Lord God, please hear my prayer. My country is suffering right now from despair and hatred. Everyone is divided and our leaders who are supposed to bring this nation together are the ones covered in deceit and greed. Father, I ask you to please heal our world, bring love into the hearts of those who are tasked with governing your people. Put love in their hearts to have compassion for their fellow men. This I ask you Lord. Amen.

DAY 5

Show love in everything you do.

1CORINTHIANS 16:14 CEV

We have been taught from an early age that God is love. Our parents taught us as children to say our prayers every night as we get into bed. We have gone to Sunday school where our teachers have expanded on that teaching that we received in our religious homes. We've listened to the preacher each Sunday during service, we've attended Baptist Training Union sessions, and we attended prayer services. So, my question is...we've been taught to love one another as God has loved us, so why have we departed from our teachings and strayed from loving our fellow man? We should let love be the determining factor in everything that we do. Going out of one's way to help someone, treating others with kindness, even when they are strangers, being accepting and non-judgmental. We need to practice agape love...the highest form of love, the love of God for man, and of man for God.

REFLECTION:

In what way can you be more loving toward those with whom you come in contact. What are some of the ways that you can show them love?

PRAYER:

God, I pray for the spread of your love to all mankind. I pray that the fruit of our lives would be today...and every day...the spread of your love in the world and the overflow of your love in us. I pray for all this according to your Word. Amen.

DAY 6

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

James 5:16 KJV

In this passage God is speaking directly to Christians. He is imploring us to take advantage of the opportunity to pray for each other and to understand there is great power and healing in prayer. Acknowledgement of our faults in prayer is an act of love that will draw us closer to God and to each other. Pray for those not just in our circle but rather for everyone, looking for moments to show love and the way to salvation and forgiveness.

REFLECTION:

Are you taking the pain and faults of others to God in prayer?

PRAYER:

Lord, help us to pray as you have instructed us to do, to believe and to trust that our prayers have great power and are working. Amen

DAY 7

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23 KJV

Oftentimes, like Jeremiah the author of this book, we find ourselves lost in mourning and in great grief, from the loss of a loved one, a troubled marriage or a wayward child. Whatever the case we can be left feeling hopeless, unable to get out of bed because of such agony. Feeling disorientated and alone, we might even question God's presence. When we are in this state, we are not seeing God but once we turn our focus back to Him, we will realize that he never takes his eyes off us. His unfailing love will never end and each morning He restores us with new mercies to get us through the most difficult day.

REFLECTION:

When in despair, look to God, He's always there.

PRAYER:

Our God thank you for your many blessings, great is your faithfulness. All we have needed your hand has already provided. We praise your Holy name. Amen

DAY 8

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Revelations 21:4 KJV

Most of us have suffered the loss of a loved one. Some left us suddenly, while others may have been ill over a long period of time. In either case, we are often left in great despair, grieving in sorrow, and even crying bitterly in anguish. When we are going through the difficulties and tragedies that this life offers us, remember this scripture is a small view from God, with a promise of big hope for the future. This temporary life that we know will come to an end. The day is coming when all wrong will be made right, our loving Father will comfort us, turn our sorrows into joy, and He Himself will wipe every tear from our eyes. What a day, a glorious day that will be! May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.

REFLECTION:

Life without the curse of sin awaits us on the other side.

PRAYER:

Dear Father God, the one who holds the future and our hands, thank you for all things, now and to come, Lord Jesus. Amen

DAY 9

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

1 John 3:18 KJV

Have you ever had someone tell you they would do something for you then not follow through on their promise? Better yet, have you said you would visit a sick friend, call an elderly neighbor, or take a child to the playground, and didn't? The truth speaks volumes, and your word is your honor. If you say you're going to do something, do it. Words are meaningless without actions. So, no more sloppy agape, show your love.

REFLECTION:

Are your promises lacking actions?

PRAYER:

Father may my love be shown in and through my actions. Amen

DAY 10

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DAY 11

The Lord says, "If you love me and truly know who I am, I will rescue you and keep you safe..."

PSALMS 91:14 CEV

This is an example of God's love for us. He is our deliverer, our savior, and has shown His love for us by promising to keep us from danger and evil...to keep us safe. All He asks of us is to love and acknowledge Him. This is His promise to us if we reciprocate His undying, unconditional, unequivocal, love for us. All we must do as loving, believing people is to love Him by raising His name above all else...praising Him for His goodness and mercy. This lets Him know that we understand that He is the great "I AM". Praising Him lets Him know that we believe He is the Lord of all creation and that we love Him with unfailing love. We must put all our trust in Him, and Bless His Holy name. He declares that He will be our protector and our guide, just because He loves us, and we love Him. This is the truest and most authentic example of love.

REFLECTION:

In what ways can we continue to show God that we love Him and continue to Bless His Holy name. How can we affirm true love for Him?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, God of all creation, You are our Rock, our Rescuer, and our Refuge. You know all our needs, and in exchange for our love for You oh Heavenly Father, when we are in our darkest moments, You are there to help us and provide for us. And for this, dear God, we are truly thankful. Amen.

DAY 12

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

John 15:9 KJV

Living across the street from a park affords many opportunities to see and appreciate some of God's beauty in nature. One can see the graceful deer roaming about, squirrels scurry around hiding nuts, and hear the melodies from the birds. There we also find the majestic trees that brings to mind the poem entitled "Trees" written by Joyce Kilmer in which he declares that no art can outdo one of God's creations. The last two lines of the poem: "Poems are made by fools like me, But only God can make a tree."

One of the ways God displays His love for us is by surrounding our environment with beauty. How often do you view a sunrise or a sunset or stop long enough to hear the birds sing, or watch the snow fall realizing that no two snowflakes are alike? Only a God who loves and cares for us can do these things. He loves us unconditionally and we are to continue in His love.

REFLECTION:

Psalms 29:2, 96:9 and 1st Chronicles 16:29 all state that God is to be worshipped in the beauty of holiness, praising His majesty.

PRAYER:

Dear Heavenly Father, help me to see your mighty power and glory and share this love with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 13

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.

1 Corinthians 13:13 KJV

Being born on the 13th day of the month, numerous references have been made that it was bad luck. Unexplained fears surrounding the number 13 are a primarily western construct. According to the Stress Management Center and Phobia Institute in Asheville, NC, more than 80% of hi-rise buildings in the United State do not have a 13th floor. The vast majority of hotels, hospitals, airports, and cruise ships avoid using the number 13 for rooms, gates, and decks.

The word luck does not appear in the Bible. God used chapter 13 of 1st Corinthians to give an important message on love. In that chapter, we find that we may have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and enough faith to remove mountains, we are nothing without love. We are to love others including those who do not love us. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King said only love can conquer hate.

REFLECTION:

When was the last time you showed love to someone who was acting ugly towards you?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, help me to love others as you have loved me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 14

He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.

1 John 4:8 KJV

At the Senior Center, the nutritionist took the class on a field trip to an apple orchard. Some picked apples and others purchased fresh vegetables. The nutritionist picked and paid for more apples than she needed because she wanted to have some to share with others. Watching her so cheerfully do this was a display of love for others.

John, whose dominant spiritual attribute is love, reminds us that we ought to love one another because God loved us first. If we truly love others and live as Christ did in this world, we will not be worried about the day of judgment. A real love for others will chase those worries away. Love God and love each other.

REFLECTION:

What did you do today to express your love for God?

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank you for providing the ultimate self-help book, the Bible. In Jesus' name, Amen

DAY 15

We love each other because He loved us first.

1 John 4:19 NLT

We all love gifts. Gifts that come with a bow on top and the gifts that come in a small blue box. God gives us a gift each day, that's why we call it the present. One gift He has given us is His love. God wants us to love because He first loved us. God is love and He wants us to love Him and love each other. God demonstrates his love by sending his only son to die on the cross for you and me, that's love.

Once we know what the love of God feels like, we find it a little easier to give more grace, have less road rage, and see the good in others. Now that we know what the love of God looks like, we can serve others, feed the hungry, and be kind.

What can separate us from the love of God? (Romans 8:38-39). Nothing can separate us from the love of God because He is alive and His love is everlasting. Praise the Lord!

REFLECTION:

How has God's love sustained you?

PRAYER:

Thank you, Lord for seeing the best in me and deciding I'm worth loving completely. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 16

For I hold you by your right hand – I, the Lord your God. And I say to you, “Don’t be afraid. I am here to help you.”

Isaiah 41:13 NLT

As a little girl growing up in DC, my father would often walk to the corner store. He would announce to my mother “we will be back; we are going for a walk” and he would say, “let’s go, Shorty!” and take me. I loved going with him because it was just the two of us. His large, strong hand would hold my right hand tightly. The walk to the store was my time to talk to him about anything. I knew nothing would happen to me because I was safe with my daddy. As I got older, and the walks stopped but the talks continued. He always listened and helped me through situations. He assured me to always do my best and not be afraid.

In Isaiah 41:13, God tells Israel, I will hold you by your right hand so don’t be afraid, I will help you. God is our refuge and strong tower. We can stand on his promises to trust in Him. He will help us and keep us safe. Knowing that He holds our right hand lets us know we can be confident in the one who knows and sees all. God’s love for us is so incredible. He cares so much for His children. If we trust in God and lean on Him to help us through life, we would be much happier people.

REFLECTION:

How does trusting in God give you a sense of safety? How would knowing you are safe in God’s hands change your spiritual walk/perspective with Hand?

PRAYER:

Thank you, Father, for loving me and letting me know how much you love me and take care of me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

DAY 17

I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.

John 15:1-2 NLT

God is the gardener. Jesus is the vine and our job as branches is to stay connected. God loves us so much that He will do whatever it takes if we would just be in a lasting relationship with him. God will take care of the fruit. He will cut away dead things in our lives and prune us so that we may continue to grow and be fruitful. How do we stay connected, by talking to God, singing songs of praise and worship, reading and studying his word, and trusting and relying on him. Doing these things will strengthen and develop a relationship with our God.

REFLECTION:

What have you done to have an authentic relationship with God?

PRAYER:

Lord, thank you for loving us and wanting us to become better and more fruitful by staying connected to you. Amen

DAY 18

For the Lord disciplines those He loves, and he punishes each one He accepts as his child.

Hebrews 12:6 NLT

Growing up in the Washington household, on many occasions this statement was said to me, and I find myself saying it to my own children, "I am fussing at you because I care. If I didn't, I would let you do whatever you want to do!" Our parents disciplined us because they loved us and didn't want anything to happen to us. They were able to see that we were going down the wrong road. They wanted the best for us and wanted us to live a life that was pleasing to God. This verse reminds us of God's love for us. He disciplines His children because he has a purpose for us. He wants us to grow in grace, wisdom and knowledge of who Jesus Christ is and to become more like Him. Sometimes we become afraid or discouraged when our Heavenly Father disciplines us, but it's done out of deep love for us.

REFLECTION:

Think about the times you were upset when God reprimanded or disciplined you and determine how that was an act of love.

PRAYER:

Dear Lord, thank you for your unconditional love. For this, I am grateful.
Amen

DAY 19

He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young.

Isaiah 40:11 NLT

This passage shows the love and compassion of our Lord. We belong to the Lord, and he will meet our every need and shield us from danger, protect, guide, and provide for his flock. He takes his time with us by listening as we cast our cares on him. He moves softly and calmly not to frighten us away but to draw us closer to him. Our Shepherd takes care of **all** of us, and he has a special place in his heart for babies, seniors, those new to the faith, the least and the left out. When we become weary and exhausted, the Good Shepherd will lift us up and hold us close to his heart.

REFLECTION:

How does it make you feel to know that the Shepherd loves His lambs deeply?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I am so grateful for your love and compassion. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DAY 20

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV

God uses circumstances, things, and people to test you and you don't know what to do or how to feel. You can choose to trust God or trust yourself. Trusting in yourself can have negative results. But, when you trust in God, your results can be better than what you expected. Feeling God's love and embrace assures us that He is there for us.

REFLECTION:

When the enemy comes upon you, who will you trust? God or yourself?

PRAYER:

God, allow my heart to trust in you with every area of my being with directions only you can give. Thank you for loving me and never letting go of my hand.

DAY 21

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26 NKJV

This blessing is said in some churches and is definitely said at the Greater First Baptist Church, but do you grasp its full magnitude? Numbers 6:24-26 tells us that God will keep us, be gracious to us, and give us peace. Peace is a gift that only God can give and given to those who choose to accept it. God's protection, provision, peace, comes with His unconditional love.

REFLECTION:

How does this blessing strengthen you?

PRAYER:

God, you're my peace. I feel your presence upon my heart.

DAY 22

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and hope.

Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV

God knows everything about us and our path in life. It's hard to accept the circumstances that sometimes occur in our lives but we're to at least accept them, be thankful, and not to worry. God still loves us and wants to teach us something. Put your hope in the future of the One who created you and knew your journey before you made your presence into this world.

The AWESOME God we serve will keep us on the path that we're walking. God's love will never give up on us. Remember it's not the past we should be concerned about but it's knowing our future has hope. As we keep that hope, we can rest assured that God's plan will be completed.

REFLECTION:

How can you seek the Lord with your whole heart and find out the plan He has for your life?

PRAYER:

God, as you have my life planned, remind me that you will never leave nor forsake me.

DAY 23

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

Ephesians 3:20 NKJV

Have you ever been in a situation where negative things arise, and you don't know how you were going to figure it out? The burdens increase and you begin to cry and complain. You feel like you're on a baseball field, up to bat, and you keep striking out?

Go to God in prayer and cast your cares on Him. God can do way more than we can ask or think because He knows what is best for us. He will help us get through the storms with His strength and everlasting love. **GOD WILL WORK IT OUT!**

REFLECTION:

Think of a time when God answered your prayer beyond your expectation?

PRAYER:

God, you're a deliverer and always on time. No one can love me better than you! Thank you JESUS!

DAY 24

Our Lord, you bless everyone whose sins you forgive and wipe away. You bless them by saying, "You told me your sins, without trying to hide them and now I forgive you."

Psalms 32:1-2 CEV

Thank you so much. I am grateful. I appreciate you. I am thankful.

These are some phrases used to describe a person being forgiven for something that they did and had great remorse. I know when I didn't do something the Lord explicitly told me to do, I felt so terrible, and I asked the Lord to forgive me. After much prayer and repentance, God heard my apology, forgave my sin, and wiped it away. Because He is my father and I have a relationship with Him, I didn't try to hide what I did from Him, I now have a sense of relief and joy.

When we make negative choices, we are not pleasing God. We may feel that we're not forgiven or won't be forgiven of our sins. Remember we're not perfect, we will make mistakes. When we ask for God's forgiveness and try not to do it again, we have another opportunity to start again no matter how many times. That's love!

REFLECTION:

How does the forgiveness of God strengthen you?

PRAYER:

Thank you Lord for forgiving me over and over and over again. Amen

Day 25

Be still and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10 NLT

Standing in line to pay for groceries, I told the cashier that 2 items were on sale, but I didn't have the weekly circular with the coupons. The cashier said, "No problem, I got you, ma." Whew! What a relief, I thought. I didn't have to worry about not getting the discount.

Psalm 46:10 reminds us that God got us. We need to be still and let God take care of us as we trust in Him. The bible says He is the great I AM and we know He will be whatever we need Him to be. That's what a loving father does. He wants us to be still, calm down, and trust in Him. That's why He is worthy of honor and praise.

REFLECTION:

Think about a time when God told you **I got you?**

PRAYER:

Thank you for the way you bring peace to our spirit in times of need.

DAY 26

Praise the Lord, all you nations. Praise him, all you people of the earth. For his unfailing love for us is powerful; the Lord's faithfulness endures forever. Praise the Lord!

Psalm 117 NLT

This chapter highlights three key understandings.

1. God's salvation is for all nations...everyone, not just for some.
2. He has unlimited love towards us.
3. His faithfulness lasts forever.

That's a shout right there! Hallelujah!

REFLECTION:

Make a list of the things God has done for you in the past hour then give God the highest praise!

PRAYER:

Lord, I thank you for your everlasting love. Amen.

DAY 27

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desire.

Psalm 37:4 NLT

A Theory of Action describes how an organization intends to work to create the outcomes it wants. Another definition is a link between cause and effect. If we take a particular action, then we expect that action to have specific effects. Typically, a Theory of Action is written as if/then statements.

Psalm 37:4 says if you delight in the Lord, then He will give you your heart's desires. That sounds so simple but what does that really mean? To delight in someone means to experience pleasure and joy in their presence. The only way this can happen is if we develop a deep relationship with them. That's what the Lord wants us to do. He wants us to get to know Him better and be faithful in our relationship with Him. As we spend time with Him, study His word, and stand on His promises, then we will experience His great love for us and receive the desires of our heart in His time.

REFLECTION:

What have you done to experience your heart's desires for God?

PRAYER:

Thank you, Lord for allowing me to spend time in your presence and receive your love. Amen.

DAY 28

The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand.

Psalm 119:30 NLT

This verse spoke to me because God is caring and thoughtful. When His word is being taught in a way for all to understand. His word shines bright and lights the way to guide us. Jesus spoke in parables to the disciples to understand. A teacher has a way of presenting the word of God that is made clear, illustrated, giving examples so even the simple can understand. We even have bible apps, different versions that will help us deepen our walk with Christ. With the help of bible study, Sunday School, the Pastor's sermons, God's word will be light that will lead and guide us on our journey. Thank you for all who make your word clear.

REFLECTION:

How has the word of God been a light to you? In what ways have you applied it to your life?

PRAYER:

Thank you for sending a teacher to teach even the simple to understand how much you love and care for your people. Amen.

DAY 29

I love you, Lord; you are my strength.

Psalm 18:1 NLT

Have you ever been weary, tired, and don't think you can make it? Have you said, "If one more bad thing happens, I'm going to lose my mind!" Just when you are ready to throw in the towel, you receive enough energy to get out of bed, or get another idea, or get some sleep to start all over again. Well, that is what the Lord will do. He loves us so much that he will be our strength that will allow us to continue the journey. He will give us exactly what we need...a word of encouragement, a smile, a financial blessing, or to be seen, valued, or heard. Sometimes the Lord tells us to just rest and start over in the morning. We are to meditate on God's word and reflect how He has brought us through. We are to think on the many blessings God has given us and the gift of today. Meditate on these scriptures. I guarantee it will bless you.

- Nehemiah 8:10 - The joy of the Lord is my strength.
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 - The word of God says the grace of God is sufficient and made perfect in our weakness.
- Isaiah 40:29 - He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

May God's words strengthen you and may you feel his unfailing love.

REFLECTION:

In what areas of your life do you need strength from the Lord?

PRAYER:

Lord, thank you for knowing exactly what I need and loving me enough to bless me with it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 30

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 NIV

Since Jesus died on the cross and rose on the third day, we have freedom. No more bondage, but rather freedom to do what we want. However, in doing what we want we must be careful not to follow the desires of the flesh. The spirit and the flesh are opponents. You either follow the flesh or the spirit, there are no other options. Be mindful, there are consequences to our poor choices. We will reap what we sow. On the contrary, following the spirit pleases God, and we will do as we are commanded by serving and loving one another. We will pay close attention to the needs of others and seek ways to better the life of our brothers and sisters. We are recognized as Jesus' followers by our love.

REFLECTION:

Which opponent is winning today, the flesh or the spirit?

PRAYER:

Dear Heavenly Father, help us to walk in your spirit. Amen

DAY 31

May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

2 Thessalonians 3:5 NIV

Spiritual, professional and peer are a few different types of mentorships we may seek guidance from depending on our needs. A mentor is someone you have a trusted relationship with who will advise and encourage you with challenges and goals to keep you on track for that specific need. The reason for different mentors is simply because one person cannot be an expert in everything. Wait, except for the One, whom Paul is praying to here in the scriptures. Paul knew the people needed prayer as they faced problems to clear away obstacles from their hearts and direct them to love God. There is no better mentor than our Heavenly Father in whom we are secure and covered by His unfailing and abundant love.

REFLECTION:

Are we praying for the hearts of others?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father may your love direct us to be a reflection of you.
Amen

Key to Bible Translations

CEV – Contemporary English Version

KJV – King James Version

NIV – New International Version

NLT – New Living Translation

Special Thanks

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