

PRAY
FIRST



21 DAY
DEVOTIONAL

Week Three: Days 15-21

God gives us access to His power through prayer.

"I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you and I will establish my covenant with you."
(Leviticus 26:9)

The Old Covenant was a promise from God to His people that He was giving Himself to them. It was confirming His presence and was the assurance to his people that He was not going to forget them; that He would work on their behalf, listening and responding, multiplying them, not only physically but spiritually in all of their efforts. In establishing this covenant, He was confirming His faithfulness to the relationship He had with His children.

Day 15

"To you it was shown, that You might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides Him.
(Deuteronomy 4:32-37)

- The Lord is steadfast and His love enduring to those who turn to Him in response and in agreement with his promise of blessing in exchange for a devoted, sold out, obedient heart.
- When God makes a covenant with His people, it is never broken. Even thousands of years later, we as Christians strive to obey His word in response to His faithfulness and devotion, just as He expecting the Israelites to do.
- God's character never changes. He is as faithful with us today as He was back then.
- The coming together of God the Father with His children in covenantal agreement is where our power lies.

Let's pray Scripture back to God:

Heavenly Father, thank You that You are unchanging. Thank You that we can live in full assurance of Your dedicated love towards each one of us. We know that You are our Lord and our God; You are faithful, keeping Your covenant of loving devotion for a thousand generations with those who love You and keep Your commandments. (Deuteronomy 7:9) We acknowledge that because You have the power to forgive our sins, we confess our sins, because you are faithful to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness today and everyday. (1 John 1:9) And we believe today that living righteous loves before our God holds power in our relationships, in our work, in our church, in our communities, and in our world. In Jesus' Holy name, we pray. Amen.

Day 16

“The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.” (Jeremiah 31:31)

“In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” (Luke 22:20)

“...and from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world. All glory to Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us.” (Revelation 1:5)

The New Covenant. Same God. New life. Unlimited access. Deep relationship. Constant prayer. Constant conversation. Profound forgiveness. Transformed heart. Jesus.

- The power of relationship between a loving God and His needy children is a meaningful, mountain moving convergence.
- We can run to God with every hardship, heartache, victory, joy because He made a way. The way is Jesus. We are welcomed into His presence with open hands and open hearts, unashamed.
- The very act of praying affirms that God is King of the world, King of our hearts, and King of our circumstances. It links our hearts all the way back to the Old Covenant and right into the New, again and again.

Let's pray Scripture back to God:

Lord God, there is power in who You are, in Your faithfulness, in Your promises, in Your devotion; and we rely on Your faithfulness and Your unchanging character to underscore every bit of our meager faith. Father, the blood of Your Son Jesus was poured out for us. Please, we pray, that You would use us and our lives as a witness to our families and friends, to the lost and searching, to the ones who are close and to those who are far, that You can move mountains, Lord. We pray that we, as Your children, will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe in Him; the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:19-20) Father, we pray that whatever we do today, whether in word or deed, that we do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:17) In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Day 17

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” (Acts 2:1-4)

“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (Matthew 3:11)

The Day of Pentecost was a day to commemorate when Israel was given the Law. So “on the Old Testament Day of Pentecost, Israel was given the law; on the New Testament Day of Pentecost, the Church received the Spirit of Grace in fullness!” (Guzik) What a God to so perfectly bring things full circle and point it all back to our Lord Jesus.

- Fire usually had to do with purification, 1 Peter 1:7, “so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ...”
- In the Old Testament, there were times when fire came down to consume the sacrifice to show God’s pleasure and power. Here, God is sending fire from Heaven to land on His people, His “living sacrifices”. Romans 12:1, “therefore I urge you, brothers, on account of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.
- As we live today, let’s remember that we are living sacrifices; that we please a holy God and that just by living in the Spirit, we are worshiping Him.

Let’s pray Scripture back to God:

Lord God, thank You that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is living in us and that You who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to our mortal bodies because of the Spirit who lives in us. Thank You that we are not bound to the flesh, to live according to it because we believe that if we live according to the flesh, we will die; but if by the Spirit we put to death the deeds of our sinful nature, we will live. We believe that those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. (Romans 8:11-14) Thank You that we are Your temple, God, and that Your Spirit dwells in us. (1 Corinthians 3:16) Thank You that when we turn to You and listen to You, You pour out Your Spirit on us and make Your words known to us. In Jesus’ Holy name, we pray. Amen.

Day 18

The sword of the Spirit

“...and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...” (Ephesians 6:17-18)

Spiritual warfare. Scripture tells us that we “do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12)

- It is way too easy to get lost in the idea that we are fighting against what we can see. Therefore, grudges grow, hurt deepens, and wounds fester.
- We have to remember before our feet hit the floor each day that we are a part of God’s great army.
- Psalm 24:8-10 says, “Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!”, describing God as strong and mighty. He is the Lord of hosts, referring to His vast armies of saints and believers. We are a part of that army. Our eyes, though need to be lifted to Him for our help and for the constant reminder that this darkness is not the end and that our hearts, reactions, and thoughts are not bound to this world. That happens when we pray.

Let's pray God's word back to Him:

Lord God, thank You that we can be strong in You and in Your mighty power. Today, we put on all of God's armor so that we will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Today, we put on every piece of God's armor so we will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle we will still be standing firm. We pray that we stand our ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, we put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that we will be fully prepared. We hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil and put on salvation as our helmet. We take hold, today of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Lord, remind us to pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion, staying alert and being persistent in our prayers for all believers everywhere. (Ephesians 6:10-18) In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Day 19

Today, we'll meditate on the effectiveness of prayer because of the power of the One we are praying to.

"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." (James 5:16)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." (John 1:1-2)

Intercessory prayer. God is the Word. When we pray the Word into our circumstances and the circumstances of others, we are literally inviting the very presence, the hand of God into our situation. Prayer has the ability to change, cleanse, heal, repair, it brings fullness and integrity, because the Word of God brings power.

- We have the opportunity each day, because of the Holy Spirit within us, the Word, God Himself, to step in and claim victory over circumstances in our lives and the lives of others.
- Speaking Truth into our situations brings peace and a freedom from fear and that which threatens to bind us. It brings a new perspective and offers an unrestrained faith.
- We can step in and pray for all people, no matter the need, because as brothers and sisters in Christ, we each have the Holy Spirit working in us to invite God to make a change and bring healing and wholeness where there is brokenness and lack.

Let's pray Scripture back to God:

Lord, we did not choose You, but You chose us and appointed us that we might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last—and so that whatever we ask in Your name, You, Lord will give. (John 15:16) We believe that whoever believes in You will do the works You have been doing, and we will do even greater things than these, because You are with the Father, and You will do whatever we ask in Jesus' name, so that the Father may glorified in the Son. (John 14:12-13) We pray that out of Your glorious riches You would strengthen us with power through Your Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. And we pray that we, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's Holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. (Ephesians 3:16-18) In Jesus's name, we pray. Amen.

Day 20

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

“But Peter asked them all to leave the room; then knelt and prayed. Turning to the body he said, “Get up, Tabitha.” And she opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up!” (Acts 9: 40)

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Philippians 4:6)

- Prayer + Faith = Power
- When we marry prayer with faith, great power is unlocked.
- When we walk by faith and not by what is right in front of us, we allow thanksgiving in and peace grows.

Let's pray Scripture back to God:

Father God, give us the faith we need to pray boldly and fervently. Today, we believe and will walk in the knowledge that the Spirit helps us in our weakness. There are times, Lord that we don't know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. (Romans 8:26) Where there is doubt, show us and cause Your Holy Spirit to guide us out of it. Father, help us to watch and pray that we may not enter into the temptation that each of us has that so easily ensnares and causes us to lose faith. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Matthew 26:41) Search us, O God, and know our hearts! Try us and know our thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in us, and lead me in the way everlasting! (psalm 139:23-24) Help us to trust You in everything today and not to put our security in this tumultuous world, but instead to put it in Your unchanging, unmoving love and character.

Day 21

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

“Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Before Jesus, there is no evidence of anyone using the term “Father” to speak to God. It was considered a very intimate way of addressing God. But that's what He is. “Our Father” whom we could go to for anything and with anything. And He'll love us. He LOVES us when we acknowledge Him for who He is.

- Today, let's acknowledge that we are children of the King.
- Let's remember and agree to put God's glory and His will and His kingdom first.
- God is inviting us to participate through prayer and faith that His will be done here on earth as it is in heaven.
- Bring every need to God, daily needs, big needs, small needs; He offers us Himself, His forgiveness, His acceptance, a place in Kingdom, all because He loves us.

Let's pray Scripture (and the Lord's prayer) back to God:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

I give You this day, Lord. This is the day You have made. Let my heart rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24) I believe that the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in me and that He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to my mortal body through his Spirit who dwells in me. So then, I am not in debt to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if I live according to the flesh I will die, but if by the Spirit I put to death the deeds of the body, I will live. (Romans 8:11-13) And I can do this because of You. I can do this because of Your Son dying on the cross for me. I can do this because of Your Holy Spirit that walks ahead of me, within me, and behind me, always. Praise You. In Jesus' Holy name, I pray. Amen.