



# 21

## PRAYERS

### FOR HEALTHY

### RELATIONSHIPS

## PRAYER AND FASTING

Congratulations and thank you for joining us in *21 Prayers for Healthy Relationships!* We are excited to see what God will do in your life through this time of prayer.

To supercharge your 21 days of praying for healthy relationships, please join us in a **3 DAY FAST** starting August 28-30. Start your fast Monday morning and end Wednesday evening. Challenge yourself to take on a medium to high level of commitment (as listed in the box below).

# NEW HOPE WINDWARD 3 DAY FAST

Starts Monday Morning & Ends Wednesday Evening

*August 28 - 30*

*Low Commitment*

✓ *Check 1*

*Medium Commitment*

✓ *Check 3*

*High Commitment*

✓ *Check 8*

**NO TV**

**NO SOCIAL MEDIA**

**NO COMPLAINING**

**NO SWEETS**

**NO ALCOHOL**

**NO FAST FOOD**

**NO FOOD**

**OTHER:**

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Fasting is biblical and a spiritual discipline that deepens our relationship with God. In the Bible, fasting is a voluntary act of self-denial, symbolizing humility and seeking God's guidance. Jesus Himself set an example by fasting for 40 days! Fasting forces our reliance on God's strength as we seek Him and His wisdom, with purpose and dedication in our church-wide **3 DAY FAST**.

## CREATING A LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER

Prayer is most effective when it isn't something we do every now and then, but when it's a lifestyle we cultivate daily. To understand how to have a lifestyle of prayer, we can look at the example Jesus gave during His life on earth.

***But Jesus would often go to some place where he could be alone and pray.  
-Luke 5:16 (CEV)***

### **HAVE A CERTAIN TIME**

Jesus got up early in the morning to spend time with His Heavenly Father. Make a daily appointment with God—whether it's first thing in the morning, at lunch, or in the evening—and faithfully keep it.

### **HAVE A CERTAIN PLACE**

Jesus had a specific place He went to pray. Having a designated place to pray helps us remove distractions and frees us to worship and pray out loud.

### **HAVE A CERTAIN PLAN**

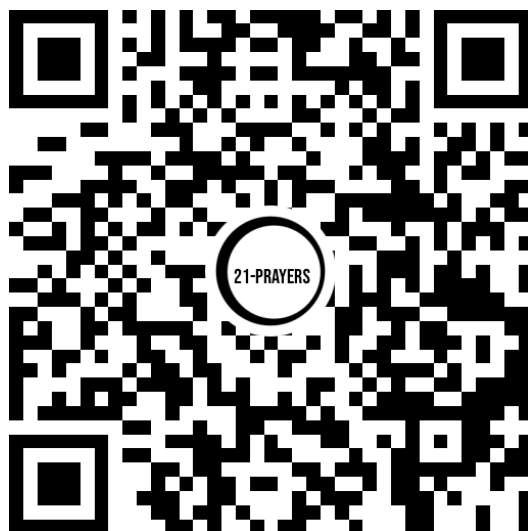
When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He gave them a prayer outline. As we pray every day, our plans for our prayer time can vary, maybe including worship music, Bible reading, and quiet time to listen to God. It doesn't always have to look the same; it just helps when we have a plan for connecting regularly with God.

### **HAVE A SYSTEM TO HELP**

The devotions, prayers and applications, in this guide are also available on your phone, via the **YouVersion Bible App**.

We HIGHLY encourage you to download the FREE YouVersion Bible App on your smartphone.

Scan the QR code now to get access to the 21 Prayers For Healthy Relationships Page. From the page you can learn how to set up daily reminders and other helpful tips!



## DAY 1: GATHERING TOGETHER

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.* -Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)

“Welcome Home!” For many of us, it’s been a while since we were in church, in person. Months and months of coffee, pajamas and online church have taken the place of getting up, dressing up, and gathering to meet with fellow believers.

As the church doors have reopened, let’s get our hearts ready and remember why we gather in community with others.

What are some of the great benefits of meeting together (instead of just virtually)?

- We stir each other up to love and on to doing good works.
- We encourage each other and lift each other up.
- We need to be together – especially as the Day of Christ’s return draws near.
- We hold each other accountable and need to see each other face to face and eye to eye. It keeps us walking on the best and highest paths.

**Reflect:** What does church look like for you right now? Do you expect this to change in any way? As you look ahead, in what ways could you add more fellowship, community, and gathering to your week? Will you be joining a Relational Vampires Small Group? Sign up at [NHWW.org](http://NHWW.org).

**Prayer:** Lord, please help me to get back into regular fellowship with other believers again. It’s so easy to pour a cup of coffee and watch online but it’s not the same as worshipping together with believers. Would you give me the grace and the faith to gather again with Your people?

## DAY 2: THE SWEET SOUND OF HARMONY

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.* -Psalm 133:1-3 (ESV)

**Peaceful. Harmonious. Quiet. Stillness:** Most of us love these words. Yet we live in a world that is rarely any of these things. So often, we turn on the news and get bombarded with chaos, noise, violence, fighting, crime, and a huge lack of harmony in our world. We

may be living in one of the least harmonious times in recent history. There is not a lot of harmony around us these days. God didn't create us to live at odds with others. Instead, God loves it when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity. Harmony is like fresh anointing oil and the first dew of the day. Harmony is a sweet blessing from God and to God. He designed us to live in harmony. So, let's invite Him to build more harmony into our lives today.

**Reflect:** What does harmony look like in your life? Are there any people who make it difficult for you to live in unity? Is there anyone you need to forgive to live in more harmony with them?

**Prayer:** Father, I ask You to show me how to live a good and pleasant life – dwelling with my brothers and sisters in unity. Reveal to me today ways I am not promoting peace and building better relationships. In Jesus name I pray, Amen!

### DAY 3: COULD YOU SHARE THE LOAD?

*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. -Galatians 6:2 (ESV)*

Doubling the help doubles the fun and lightens our load. We can complete our projects by ourself, but working alongside someone makes everything much better and more enjoyable. What might this look like in your life today? Who, in your sphere of influence, could use a helping hand? It doesn't have to be grand or expensive. It can be a simple task.

Maybe you could ...

- Offer to babysit for a young mom
- Drop by or call an elderly friend who lives alone
- Take a meal to someone who is sick (L&L Counts!)
- Text a friend who has been on your mind
- Mow someone else's yard or take their trashcan to the curb
- Send a text, card or note in the mail

**Reflect:** Spend a few moments brainstorming ways you can lighten the load of those around you. Who can you help? Serve? Encourage? Support? Now, do at least one kind act for someone else today.

**Prayer:** Lord, would you make me more aware and sensitive today to the needs and the burdens around me? If You show me, I will be faithful to reach out and lend a helping hand. Amen!

## DAY 4: KNOW ANY “KNOW-IT-ALLS”?

*A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.*  
-Romans 12:16 (ESV)

None of us like “know-it-alls,” but have you noticed we can all be “know-it-alls” at times? We all have the propensity to get a little proud on certain topics and feel the need to interject our great wisdom. Whether we mean to or not, all of God’s children have to guard against being a little wise in our own eyes.

- What’s the cure for thinking a little too highly of ourselves? Humility.
- What’s the cure for dealing with others who get prideful with us? Love them, be patient with them, and pray for them.
- Why do these things? Because we are never more like Christ than when we live in humility and don’t share everything we know.

When we really “know-it-all” about something, we don’t have to expound, push our way to the front, or get loud. We can rest in the fact that we understand and wait for others to ask for our opinion.

**Reflect:** Think about how you typically deal with others – at work, at church, in your family. Are you a know-it-all? Do you often have to express your opinion and your wisdom? Or are you more humble, willing to let others share what they know?

**Prayer:** Oh, Father, You know it all! You are the only Person who does! Give me the grace to deal with others in humility. I want to be more gentle and less pushy today. In Jesus' name, Amen!

## DAY 5: SHOW HOSPITALITY

*Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*  
-Hebrews 13:1-2 (ESV)

It was the most amazing thing. We were brand new to the town and the church, and the people had no idea who we were, but they reached out anyway. One couple invited us to Sunday lunch. Another family brought us cookies to welcome us. Others called and asked us to come to their homes. We felt so loved, so included, and so well-received.

Truly, we were shown hospitality. And yet we were the strangers. Have you ever been on the receiving end of hospitality? It’s a wonderful gift for sure. Maybe you’ve been on

the giving end of hospitality as well. It's also a treat!

The Bible tells us to show love and hospitality to others. It's to be a part of who we are and what we do. We may never be acting more like our Savior than when we give in this way.

**Reflect:** Think about your life right now. What might hospitality look like for you? Is there anyone you need to reach out to, call, invite, or include? What is God leading you to do?

**Prayer:** Father, would You give me eyes to see, ears to hear, and hands willing to work? Make me more aware of chances to show hospitality and kindness. When opportunities arise, lead me, and remind me to follow through. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## DAY 6: WORDS MAKE SUCH A DIFFERENCE

*Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. -Ephesians 4:29 (ESV)*

Remember the blue character with the floppy ears from the Winnie the Pooh series? His name is Eeyore. Negative. Pessimistic. A downer who always saw the glass more empty than full. Eeyore was sweet, but he was the most unhappy sort of fellow.

We all know some real-life Eeyores. To talk to them feels like someone puts a wet blanket over the relationship. Negative, critical, and discouraging. Their words and their attitudes can bring us down. Compare that to someone that is encouraging and uplifting. When they greet us with a smile, a handshake, or a kind word, we always feel better after seeing them.

Our words make such a difference. We must honestly consider how the things we say impact others. Do our words tear down or build up? Do we inspire others, or do we deflate them? May the words of Ephesians 4:29 be said of us; that we build up, use fitting words, and give grace to all who hear us speak.

**Reflect:** Consider your words and conversations over the past couple of days. Who have you talked to? What did you talk about? Were your words encouraging or discouraging? Is there anything you wish you had said or had not said? Who can you encourage this week?

**Prayer:** Lord, would you help me use my tongue and my words for good? I want to honor You and honor others with every word I utter. Help me encourage someone each day this week. In Jesus' name, Amen!

## DAY 7: SORRY TO INTERRUPT

*Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

*-James 1:19-20 (ESV)*

We all want to be heard and to let others know we hear them. Sometimes, even with our best intentions, our "active listening" and attempts to comment to show we care can be interpreted as being disruptive or impatient.

The fact is, it's hard, at times, to be a good listener. To be a person who is quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry is to be like our Savior, but these are not always easy traits for us to emulate, especially if we are more extroverted. Here are some great questions we can ask ourselves to help be better listeners:

Are you an interrupter? Ask God to show you and help you as you work on this issue.

Are you a great listener? (We love you and are so grateful for you!)

Are you somewhere in between? God can work with you to get better as well!

**Reflect:** Think about the conversation styles mentioned in today's devotion. Be candid with yourself as you consider: Are you quick or slow to listen? Are you quick or slow to speak? Are you quick or slow to anger?

**Prayer:** Lord, thank You for creating me as You have. Would you grow me, mature me, and make me a better friend and listener? Especially when I'm in having a disagreement with someone. Help me to be quick to listen, slow to speak so I can be slow to become angry. In Jesus name, Amen!

## DAY 8: BEEN OFFENDED LATELY?

*Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.*

*-Proverbs 17:9 (ESV)*

Let's start with a little quiz today. Honestly answer each question below:

- When was the last time someone left you out? What happened?
- What was the last mean/cruel thing someone said to you?
- How did someone intentionally or unintentionally hurt you in recent days? What happened?



All of these things are painful. Life and relationships bring about hurt and offense. There is no way to get through this life unscathed and unaffected. Because of this, it is also so easy to hold on to a grudge, or nurse an offense for weeks, months, and even years. Getting offended is easy. Often, forgiving is not. Forgiveness doesn't mean you're endorsing what they did to you. It's not saying what they did wasn't painful. Forgiveness is freeing! It's cleansing and healing. Forgiveness brings about incredible freedom that is lost when we hold onto an offense. Quite frankly, we forgive for the sake of our souls. To forgive is to get back your life, joy, and hope.

**Reflect:** Go back to the three questions at the first of the devotion. Think about when you were left out, talked to meanly, or intentionally hurt. Now, go back over each one and ask God to drain your anger and hurt. Invite God to help you forgive these offenses. Lay them down and get your life back!! Let God handle those who hurt you.

**Prayer:** Lord, would You give me the grace to let go of all offenses in my life? Help me choose to forgive. Free me to forgive, restore, release, and give up my right to an apology. I will entrust my offender to You. I'll let you handle those who've wronged me. You are much better at justice than me. Today I forgive others as you have forgiven me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

## DAY 9: LOVING YOUR ENEMIES

*But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. -Luke 6:27-31 (ESV)*

Consider a few of these while you soak in the scripture above:

- Love your enemies.
- Do good to those who hurt you.
- Bless those who curse you.
- Pray for those who abuse you.
- If someone strikes you on one cheek, offer the other as well.
- If someone wants your coat, give them your shirt also.

These things are so foreign to the way we are bent, but they are so like our Jesus. He did all of the things while He was here on Earth. What if we made Jesus our role model today, no matter how unnatural His instructions may seem?

**Reflect:** As you think about some of these challenging instructions from Jesus, which one is hardest for you? Which is easiest? Why?

**Prayer:** Jesus, will you give me the courage and the strength to behave like You? You were and are such a great model. I want to be more like You. I don't think it will be easy, so I ask for your grace to love those who are difficult to deal with. In Your name I pray, Amen!

## DAY 10: DRESSED IN COMPASSION

*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*  
-Colossians 3:12-14 (ESV)

We don't only need to pick out our physical clothes in the morning. Spiritually, we also need to think about how we dress. How do we dress in our hearts, in our minds, in our attitudes, in our emotions, and our relationships? Are our thoughts, words, and decisions beautiful and flattering? How are we spiritually clothed? The Bible suggests a few "clothing" items to include in our spiritual wardrobe:

- Are we wearing kindness, humility, and patience?
- Do we give others room to fail?
- Are we wearing lots and lots of love?
- Do we remember how much God has forgiven us?

**Reflect:** How's your fashion? Are you a person who dresses well and always looks good? How about spiritually? Are there some items you need to add to your spiritual wardrobe?

**Prayer:** Lord, will you remind me to clothe myself with these wonderful traits each day? I want to dress up with your compassion, kindness, mercy, patience and grace daily. Above all, help me put on love towards others as you love me each and every day. In Jesus'

## DAY 11: IRON THAT SHARPENS

*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.*

-Proverbs 27:17 (ESV)

We all love to have pencils with super sharp edges and a fine pointed lead tip. Those pencils will not get that way on their own. Similarly, the Bible tells us that some friends

can be the sharpeners in our lives. They can refine our dull edges, challenge us to grow to become better!

Do you have any friends or people who sharpen you? If not, take some time to invite God to bring friends and mentors like this into your life:

- Friends who sharpen you and encourage you.
- People who make you better and smarter.
- Those who push you further than you ever thought you could go.

**Reflect:** As you think about your own life, who are you sharpening? Who are you challenging and inspiring? A child? Grandchild? Student? Friend? Someone in your small group? Ask God to make you the kind of person who makes others better and lifts others, and write out a prayer.

**Prayer:** Lord, I need more iron and more sharpening in my life. I do not want to be dull and without purpose or passion. Bring some individuals who will challenge and inspire me to do greater things in my life and help me to attend Church regularly to be sharpened in Jesus' name, Amen.

## DAY 12: HAPPY TOGETHER

*Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. -Romans 12:15 (ESV)*

When the world would have you be jealous of the successes and blessings that others receive, the Bible tells us to rejoice with them. This can be challenging, but can make all the difference in our relationships. Why is this such a hard thing for us to do at times?

The Bible also tells us to weep with each other. Sometimes that comes easier for some than others. But showing compassion, support, enthusiasm, and celebrating the good fortunes of others can be tough!

Think about it. How hard is it to celebrate when:

- They get the promotion we wanted?
- The doors open for them suddenly?
- Their husband or wife gets a big raise?
- They buy a new house, a boat, or both?
- They head to some exotic destination—again?
- They get a wonderful new spouse, baby, grandchild, or book deal?
- They get whatever “it” is that we desperately desire.

**Reflect:** Ouch! This one cut so close to home for me. Maybe you too? Read back over the devotion and write a response. What is God showing you today? Who can you rejoice or weep with this week? Reach out to them.

**Prayer:** Lord, this can be hard. Especially with certain people, but I ask You to help me to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Enable me to give others what I'd like for them to give back to me. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

## DAY 13: STIRRING THINGS UP

*A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.  
-Proverbs 16:28 (ESV)*

Gossip. Strife. Slander. Separation. These can end of a close relationships. It's so easy for our tongues to get us into trouble. We open our mouths and plant doubts, questions, and even negative images about someone else. It seems innocent at the time, but it comes back to bite us later. *Whisperers separate close friends.*

We have all been on the receiving end of this. If you've lived long enough, you have had someone whisper about you unfavorably. Maybe they never intended it to hurt you or get back to you, but it did. Most likely, we have also all been the "whisperer" who criticized someone else's character and good name. We have uttered words we immediately regretted and wished we could take back.

What if today we asked God to change us into people who only plant good things and good words with our tongues? What if we only planted seeds of compassion, kindness, and encouragement? What if we sought only to lift others? How might this change our lives?

**Reflect:** Are there any ways you have been using your tongue poorly? If so, what changes do you feel God is calling you to make? In what ways can you protect yourself from being a gossip and a slanderer?

**Prayer:** Lord, would You help me be a person who whispers good and not evil? Would you help me to use words that bring life? I'm going to need your assistance on this one! In Jesus' name.

## DAY 14: FILLED TO OVERFLOWING

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*  
-Colossians 3:16 (ESV)

Imagine filling a large water bottle in the sink and walking away, then coming back to fresh cold water flowing over the top onto the rest of the sink. Filled to overflowing with fresh water spilling out all over the place, this is a beautiful picture of the Christian life. We are to have the word of God dwell in us so that we are overflowing with joy, hope, and wisdom. When we let the message of Jesus, in all of its richness, flood our hearts, the overabundance will be amazing!

What will the overflow look like?

- We will teach, admonish, counsel, and instruct others with incredible insights.
- There will be a song on our hearts and maybe on our lips.
- Thankfulness to God will swell up within us.
- We will be filled to the brim with hope.

**Reflect:** As you think about my big water bottle overflowing in the sink with fresh water, can you relate? Are you a water drinker too? How about spiritually? How full are you of Jesus and His word? List 3-4 things you might do today to fill up more. (Pray, spend time in the Bible, read great inspirational books, listen to Christian music or podcasts).

**Prayer:** Father, I want to be filled up to overflowing with You, Your love, Your hope, and Your word. Would You fill me today? I need You and Your power all over my life. In Jesus' name.

## DAY 15: OPEN YOUR HOME AND YOUR HEART

*Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.*

-1 Peter 4:9 (ESV)

The Bible tells us to cheerfully share a meal with those in need and offer them a place to stay. We are to open our homes to others without grumbling, but we often don't. Perhaps we think it is too much trouble, too expensive, or we don't have a nice enough house to host events. In the end people don't care what we make or how clean our house is, they just want to be included and invited over.

Let's challenge ourselves to host in spite of our insecurities:

- Pray about it.
- Plan something.
- Set your budget.
- Host a party, cookout, small group, or even have a movie night.

Quit overthinking it, and do it! Take the plunge and make someone else feel loved, invited, and included.

**Reflect:** Would you be comfortable inviting someone over for grilled cheese and popcorn? What would you like to serve? Who could you invite? What sorts of things could you do together? Write some of these ideas down. Then, invite one friend or family over. (I dare you!)

**Prayer:** Lord, would you embolden me to reach out and be hospitable to others? Give me such a love for someone that I will invite them over. Help me get over anything holding me back. I want to love by showing hospitality without grumbling. In Jesus' name, Amen!

## DAY 16: GENUINE AFFECTION

*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*  
-Romans 12:10 (ESV)

The Bible instructs us to love one another with brotherly affection. The Passion Translation puts it this way, “Be devoted to tenderly loving your fellow believers as members of one family.” Additionally, we are to outdo each other by showing honor. To honor someone is to make them feel valued and special. Honor and affection don’t have to be grandiose or time-consuming, but intentionality is necessary.

Consider doing some or all of the following:

- Offer to pray for a friend and do it.
- Invite someone for coffee or lunch.
- Ask someone to go with you to Church.
- Host a game night, a football party, or beach gathering and invite guests.
- Send a text or email to let someone know you are thinking of them.

**Reflect:** Make a list of 2-3 people you will show affection and honor to this week. Beside each name, list one way you can do this. For example, you may send a kind text message

– one to each person. Pray over these actions. Then, do them! Follow through. You will not only bless someone else, but you will also receive a blessing for your kindness. There is great joy in giving to others.

**Prayer:** Lord, will You give me a greater awareness of others' needs, hurts, and concerns? I want to be more affectionate, kind, and honoring with my actions, but I will need Your help to do so. Please help me to follow through with what I chose to show affection and honor this week. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## DAY 17: YOU'RE IRREGULAR PEOPLE

*I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*  
-Ephesians 4:1-3 (ESV)

We all have favorite friends, and we have challenging friends. We must treat them all with grace and bear with all of them. Think about Jesus and the 12 disciples. Some of these guys were much easier to like than the others. However, Jesus treated them all with humility and gentleness, even Judas who He knew would betray Him!

That is what we must do as well. At that family dinner, when we're seated next to that relative who absolutely drives us nuts, we must show grace.

**Reflect:** As we conclude today, I want to invite you to make two lists. In the first list, write down the 2 to 3 people you love and appreciate most. Write down the 2 to 3 people who bug you, test you, and challenge you the most in the second list. Now go back and pray for every single one of these people. Ask God to bless them and meet their deepest needs.

**Prayer:** Father, would You help me treat my favorites and my challenging people with equal kindness this year—especially during our gatherings. Close friends and family can sometimes be the hardest to get along with. I ask for extra grace this year. To love them like you love me. In Jesus' name, Amen!

## DAY 18: HUMILITY MATTERS

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*  
-Philippians 2:3 (ESV)

In our relationships, we also need to have purpose and focus. Instead of living for ourselves, our ambitions, and our fame, we are to count others as more important than us. We are not only to look out for ourselves and our interests but also for the interests of others.

How can we possibly do this? What does this look like?

- First, regularly talk about issues and people with God.
- Second, be honest with God about how we feel and what is challenging with others. Discuss everyone and everything with Him.
- Third, check in with Him during the day when people issues arise.

Pastor Adrian Rogers had some great advice when dealing with others, “Keep your gaze on Jesus, and your glance on everyone and everything else.”

**Reflect:** Complete this sentence. I can gaze at Jesus more readily and more easily by ...

**Prayer:** Father, would You help me live to impress You most of all? Would You then give me the strength to be focused on interests of others? Especially when I'm disinterested. Thank You for caring about my interests. Now, help me care about others by showing interest and attention.

## DAY 19: DON'T OWE ANYONE ANYTHING

*Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.*  
-Romans 13:8 (ESV)

When we live our lives as/and with other Christians, we often find gracious forgiving people. While they may give freely and we are to accept with gratitude, it makes all the difference when we take the extra step to repay their actions or make amends. When we follow through on our debts, whether expected or unexpected it can unburden us and make us feel better. The process of identifying our debts and planning to make amends is called a personal inventory. Whether we do it daily or once in a while, making an inventory to ensure we "owe no one anything" allows us more freedom to love others.

*When we inventory we can start to ask ourselves?*

- *Do we owe anyone money? Could we begin to pay them back today?*
- *Do we still have someone's tools, chairs, dishes, or other items? Can we return them?*
- *Do we have some other debt we could repay? A service? A kindness?*



Why not pray over these things? Then, make amends as long as it will not danger ourselves or others. It feels so good to make amends and make things right!

**Reflect:** Look back over the inventory questions today. Write out your answers. Then, pray about each situation. Begin to repay and make amends today. You will experience so much freedom as you do this!

**Prayer:** Father, reveal to me anything I need to make right today. Show me if I owe anyone anything at all. I only want to owe love and honor, nothing else. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## DAY 20: A LITTLE SYMPATHY, PLEASE!

*Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. -1 Peter 3:8-9 (ESV)*

It is so easy to get consumed with our issues and problems as we go through our days. However, everyone we meet, do business with, talk to, and interact with daily, is also dealing with stuff. No one gets through this life unscathed, untouched, or unaffected. We all have hard things, painful things, and challenging things in our lives. That's where sympathy comes into play. The Bible encourages us to be sympathetic, loving, tender-hearted, and humble. We are to bless others with kindness and goodness – no matter how they act toward us. But how do we do this?

One of the best ways to show sympathy and kindness toward others is to remember I want others to show sympathy and kindness toward me. So, I give others what I need. I treat them like I want to be treated. Does it always work? No, but doing this gives me a clean conscience and the ability to sleep well at night.

**Reflect:** *Have you thought about the idea that everyone is fighting a battle? Does this give you more sympathy in dealing with others? How is God leading you as you think about these truths and verses?*

**Prayer:** Lord, would You make me a blessing to those around me today? As I seek to share Your love and kindness, would You assist me? Sometimes this is so hard, but I want to live like You want me to live. Help me to show sympathy, empathy and kindness to others today, Amen!

## DAY 21: FORGIVENESS

*For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

*-Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV)*

Author Lewis Snedes once said, *“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was you.”*

Forgiveness is a complicated, challenging, and incredibly necessary process. Let's think about the basics of forgiveness.

**What is forgiveness?** To forgive is to “let go of your right to punish another and choose (through God's power) to hold onto the other person rather than to hold on to his or her offense.”

**Why do we forgive?** We forgive because God endlessly forgives us and instructs us to forgive. If we want to continue receiving forgiveness, we must let go of offenses. Our bitterness and unforgiveness clogs up the pipes and prevents the flow of God's forgiveness in our lives.

**When do we forgive?** Over and over again. Every single time we are offended, and some offenses require us to forgive multiple times.

**Who do we forgive?** Ourselves and anyone who hurts or offends us. This may include God. If we were offended by something God did or did not do, we need to forgive Him.

**How do we forgive?** Pour out your hurt and offense in prayer. Cry it out. Write it out. Run it out. Or even yell it out. Then, invite God to drain all the pain, hurt, and anger. Pray for extra grace with your offender. Let it all go as God let's go of your sins. Get up and live.

**Reflect:** Is there anyone you need to forgive today? Why not talk this over with the Lord?

**Prayer:** Lord, would You reveal to me any unforgiveness I am holding onto today? As you reveal it, I will let it go. I want to live in complete freedom and wholeness today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*CONGRATULATIONS & THANK YOU! Our hope is that this devotional prayer guide starts you on a path to keep praying and making time to be with the Lord daily. We're so proud of you as you continue to grow in Loving God, Loving People and Making Disciples. -Pastor Dave*

NOTES



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