

awaken



40 DAYS OF PRAYER
TO AWAKEN THE HOLY SPIRIT,
PRAYERS AND EVANGELISM
WITHIN YOUR HEART, SOUL, AND MIND

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awaken '26 registration

SEPTEMBER 17 - 20 | An all-parish weekend of spiritual awakening, renewal, and rededication with speakers Susanna Wright, the Rev. Dr. Michael Lloyd, the Rev. Canon Carrie Headington, and Jeannie McDowall.

There is no cost for the weekend, but registration is required. You may register for all of the weekend or individual portions. Please indicate in the registration if you currently belong to a group as our Friday and Saturday meals will take place in small groups.



REGISTER ONLINE | [SJD.ORG/AWAKEN](https://sjd.org/awaken)

40 days of prayer

A CHURCH AWAKENED BY THE SPIRIT



One of the great themes of the book of Acts is that God renews his people before he sends them into the world. As we journey through the Book of Acts this fall, our second Awaken Weekend is an opportunity for us to gather as a parish and ask the Holy Spirit to do that same renewing work among us. My prayer for this weekend is that God would deepen our love for Christ, strengthen our fellowship, and equip us to live more faithfully as *A Light for the City*.

Luke's picture of the early church has inspired Christians for centuries:

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

Awaken '26 takes place September 17-20, building on the joy of last year's inaugural weekend with expanded Thursday and Saturday evening gatherings. This weekend is the centerpiece of our fall journey through Acts. Together with our Sunday morning study and fall small group study, this weekend invites us to discover what it means to be a church filled with the Holy Spirit and sent into the world. Small groups remain at the heart of Awaken '26 because spiritual renewal isn't meant to happen in isolation. If you're not already part of one, we'll gladly place you in a group when you register.

As we prepare for Awaken '26, you are invited to journey through 40 Days of Prayer. In addition to this devotional for individuals and families, written by parishioner Susannah Webb, we will pray collectively on weekdays from 12-1 pm in the Chapel starting on August 10 and running through September 17. Jeanne McDowall, who led our weekday prayer time last year, returns as Chaplain of Prayer to lead us again. I encourage you to join us for at least one of the forty days as we pray that the Holy Spirit renews us as a parish and equips us to be *A Light for the City*.

Private prayer appointments with Jeanne McDowall will once again be available. Last year's participants described their time praying with Jeanne as one of the most meaningful parts of their Awaken experience. I encourage you to reserve a time early at sjd.org/awaken.

We're delighted to welcome guest speakers the Rev. Dr. Michael Lloyd, the Rev. Canon Carrie Headington, and Susanna Wright, who will help us explore the Holy Spirit, evangelism, and prayer through Acts 2, 4, and 5. Their biographies appear on the following page.

I am deeply grateful for the many volunteers on the Awaken team. My hope is that every member of St. John the Divine will join us to seek the Holy Spirit together. Whether through the 40 Days of Prayer, a small group, personal prayer with Jeanne, or the weekend gatherings themselves, I believe God desires to do something in each of us. I hope you'll make plans now to join us as God brings renewal, revival, and rededication to our lives and to the life of our church.

Faithfully,

Reagan+

The Rev. Reagan Cocke, Senior Vice Rector

how to use this prayer journal:

Over each of the next 40 days, we encourage you to take some time to connect with the Lord to awaken your heart, soul, and mind to the power of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and evangelism. This devotional is intended to serve as both preparation for our Awaken '26 weekend and a record of your own spiritual journey during this time.

Each day is organized in a series of paired exercises, which allows you to engage with as deeply as your schedule allows:

SCRIPTURE + PRAYER (3-5 MINUTES) | A reading is selected to reflect a theme of prayer, evangelism or the Holy Spirit followed by a prayer. For Sundays, the passage is taken from our lectionary Gospel reading.

REFLECTION + ACTION | Questions prompt you to survey where you are in your faith journey and calls to action provide a way for you to experience the day's topic.

GOING FURTHER | An offering of music enables you to enlighten your senses during your time of devotion. Book recommendations are offered should you wish to take a deeper dive into the subject matter at some point in the future.

We encourage you to adapt the use of this journal to your own schedule. And please use it as an invitation to ask others to join us September 17–20, or to help those come to know Jesus Christ for the first time, or, just maybe, again.

awaken '26 speakers



THE REV. CANON CARRIE HEADINGTON is an evangelist and apologist and serves as the Canon Evangelist for the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas. She speaks throughout the US and around the globe, sharing the abundant life found in Jesus Christ with spiritual seekers and Christians alike. Carrie is the founder of The Good News Initiative which provides resources in evangelism. She works with all Christian denominations especially Episcopalians, engaging in evangelistic speaking, apologetics, and equipping congregations to be the hands, feet, and mouthpieces for Jesus in their everyday lives. Carrie is a graduate of Oxford University with degrees in Theology, Evangelism and Apologetics. Prior to Oxford, Carrie received a BA from Yale University (major in History) and an MA from Harvard University in Education with a focus in Urban Poverty Policy. Carrie is married to Greg, founder of the Global Faith Project, a ministry serving inner city Dallas, Cuba, Northern Africa, France, and Latin America.



SUSANNA WRIGHT is a British storyteller, award-winning filmmaker, and published author who loves helping people to discover a vibrant prayer life and grow in spiritual maturity. Having spent over 21 years in full-time ministry and serving in marginalised communities across the UK, Susanna's messages are grounded, approachable, and honest. As a writer, her adaptation of John Bailie's classic *A Diary of Private Prayer* has sold over 100,000 copies and helps readers find language for faith in both the highs and lows of life. Susanna lives in a lovely cottage alongside the River Thames and is married to her wonderful husband of 28 years with whom she has two college-aged children. Alongside speaking internationally on prayer and spiritual growth, she also works on a slate of film and TV projects, loves studying the Bible, and is known to her friends as a fun-loving prayer warrior with pizzazz.



JEANNE MCDOWALL is an anointed and dedicated itinerant minister of Jesus Christ and long-time friend of St. John the Divine. She ministers and travels nationally and internationally as the Lord leads, across denominational and cultural barriers, preaching, teaching and demonstrating the Gospel with the power of the Holy Spirit. Brought up as a Mormon, Jeanne had an awesome encounter with the Holy Spirit over 30 years ago and became a spirit-filled Christian. She has four children and six grandchildren. God's word awakened her in the Holy Spirit, and her life since has been one of seeking and healing in the Lord, for herself and for others.



THE REV. DR. MICHAEL LLOYD is the Principal of Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford, a community that is committed to the historical Christian faith, while also being a constituent part of one of the world's leading universities. He was formerly the chaplain at The Queen's College, the University of Oxford, and the Director of Studies in Theology at Christ's College, Cambridge University. Michael has taught theology and doctrine at the University of Oxford, Cambridge University and St Paul's Theological Centre, London. He is the author of a popular-level systematic theology, entitled *Café Theology*, and a regular contributor to a theological podcast called *The GodPod*. Michael has given his academic life to the problem of evil. He wrote his doctorate on it, and he has contributed to the recently published *God, Struggle, and Suffering in the Evolution of Life*. Married to Abigail, he enjoys walking, theatre, puppetry and music – and has an inexplicable love of cricket. A friend once said of him that he has the unique ability simultaneously to raise and lower the tone of any conversation.

devotion author



SUSANNAH KOONTZ WEBB is a parishioner and serves as a Stephen Minister, member of The Order of the Daughters of the King, and a small group co-leader for the Hope of Glory Women's Bible Study. Originally from Maryland, she earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Michigan and completed two post-graduate residencies at the University of Kentucky. She has been a board-certified oncology pharmacist for more than 25 years. Following a decade of clinical pharmacy practice, research, and teaching in pediatric hematology/oncology at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Susannah runs a consulting business focused on expanding the use of cancer therapies in pediatric patients. Additionally, she advocates on Capitol Hill for healthcare policy issues related to the care of children with cancer. Susannah is married to George. Her personal interests include cooking and baking, entertaining, traveling, power walking, watching college and professional sports, attending the opera, learning new things, and appreciating both whisky (single malt scotch) and whiskey (bourbon).

what to expect



The Awaken Weekend is designed as a time of revival and renewal for our congregational life and for us as individuals. In the tradition of Faith Alive and Cursillo, it is meant to grow us closer to Jesus through prayer, worship, preaching, shared meals, and discussion.

Our guest speakers will use the early chapters of Acts of the Apostles for their presentations, focusing on prayer, evangelism, and the Holy Spirit. During times of worship we will lift our praises to the Lord who comes to dwell with us and in us through his Spirit.

We will also pray for one another and reflect on our faith in small group gatherings over fellowship meals.

By the conclusion of the weekend, it is our hope that all participants will:

- **HAVE BEEN PRAYED FOR,**
- **BE FILLED WITH AND HAVE EXPERIENCED THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND**
- **BE ABLE TO EVANGELIZE AND SHARE THEIR CHRISTIAN STORY.**

To maximize your experience during the Awaken '26 weekend, you are strongly encouraged to prepare over the next couple of weeks by:

- **UTILIZING THIS PRAYER JOURNAL DAILY**
(see page 5, How to Use This Prayer Journal)
- **DRAFTING YOUR SPIRITUAL TIMELINE**
(see pages 50-51, My Spiritual Timeline)
- **JOIN US IN THE CHAPEL AT 12 PM, FROM AUGUST 10 – SEPTEMBER 17, TO PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH AND THE WEEKEND**
- **SIGN UP FOR INDIVIDUAL PRAYER WITH JEANNE MCDOWALL**

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REGISTRATION

PERSONAL PRAYER SIGN UP

INFO & UPDATES



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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 | THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PRAYER

- 6:30 – 8:30 pm | Dr. Michael Lloyd and Susanna Wright | Church

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 | EVANGELISM

- 5:30 pm | Check-in opens
- 5:45 – 7:30 pm | Dinner with your small group
- 7:30 – 8:30 pm | The Rev. Canon Carrie Headington | HLC
- 8:30 – 9 pm | Time of prayer

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 | THE HOLY SPIRIT, EVANGELISM AND PRAYER

- 8:15 – 9:30 am | Breakfast with your small group
- 9:30 – 10:30 am | The Rev. Canon Carrie Headington | HLC
- 10:30 – 11 am | Break
- 11 am – 12 pm | Susanna Wright | HLC
- 12 – 1:30 pm | Lunch with your small group
- 1:30 pm | Afternoon off
- 6:30 – 8:30 pm | Night of Worship and prayer time with Jeanne McDowall | HLC

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 | REDEDICATION SERVICES

- Regular service schedule with the Rev. Dr. Michael Lloyd and the Rev. Canon Carrie Headington preaching
- 10:15 – 11 am | Adult education with Susanna Wright
Developing a model of prayer | HLC

day 1

AUGUST 9 | EVANGELISM

SCRIPTURE | ²²Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. (Matthew 14:22-24)

Our Gospel reading for this Sunday tells how Jesus sent his disciples into a storm while he retreated up on a mountain to pray. It likely was both exhausting for the disciples, having to row against the wind and raging waves of the Sea of Galilee, and quite scary being physically separated from Jesus. The same can be true with evangelism – often we face “storms” when we go out to share the good news of the Lord (e.g., feelings of inadequacy, cultural hostility, fear of being misunderstood and/or rejected, etc.). But we mustn’t forget that even as we venture into unfamiliar and uncomfortable spaces, Jesus will always be the calm in the storm, interceding for us, just as he did for his disciples from the mountain.

PRAYER | Dear Lord, fill me with courage to leave my comfort zone. As I work to share my faith with others, be a constant presence to quiet my fears and guide my steps. Help me to navigate stormy seas I may face with others in proclaiming your love. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | What hinders you from sharing your faith with others? How might you work to overcome this obstacle?

ACTION | Identify one person with whom you can share Christ’s love this month by inviting them to church on Sunday or a Bible study or other small group gathering.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn: Gracious spirit dwell with me
- Book | *Tactics, 10th Anniversary Edition: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* by Gregory Koukl and Lee Strobel

SCRIPTURE | ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:4-6)

Anxiety. There isn't a shortage of it in our world today, and understandably so. From concern about losing a job, to navigating difficult family relationships, to waiting for results from medical tests, to wondering what the future holds, anxiety is ever present in our lives. In this scripture, Paul directs us — not once, but twice — to, at all times, seek joy in the Lord. He further commands us to bring all our needs before God through prayer in a manner rooted in gratitude. Taken together these actions can replace the anxiety we experience from ever-changing stressors in our lives with the joy we receive from the readily available and consistent relationship we have with God.

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, I bring to you [my concerns/needs]: _____. Replace my anxiety with joy and restore my inner peace. And, thank you, Lord, for allowing me to cast my cares upon you and for your steady presence in my life. In your name, Amen.

REFLECTION | What is the biggest worry stealing your joy today?

ACTION | On a sticky note, list three things you are genuinely thankful for right now. Place the note on the mirror in your bathroom, refrigerator in your kitchen or desk at work, and review it each day this week.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Lord, I Need You* by Matt Maher
- Book | *Breath as Prayer: Calm Your Anxiety, Focus Your Mind, and Renew Your Soul* by Jennifer Tucker



day 3 AUGUST 11 | HOLY SPIRIT

SCRIPTURE | ¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you”. (John 14:15-17)

Paraclete, from the Greek word *paraklētos*, means “one called alongside to help” and it is most frequently translated as “advocate,” “helper,” “counselor” or “comforter.” Jesus uses this term with His disciples during his “Farewell Discourse” (John 13:31-16:33) to identify the Holy Spirit as “another Helper”, one sent by the Father, intended to mirror his own ministry. But while Jesus was physically present among his disciples as a paraclete, the Holy Spirit strictly dwells within us to serve as a source of strength and comfort, interceding with and for us eternally.

PRAYER | Come, Holy Spirit.

REFLECTION | What are some ways you know the Holy Spirit is within you?

ACTION | Identify the role of the Holy Spirit — advocate, helper, counselor or comforter — you need most today and then pray for the Holy Spirit to fulfill this need.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 516: Come down, O love divine
- Book | *The Holy Spirit: An Introduction* by John Bevere & Addison Bevere



day 4

AUGUST 12 | EVANGELISM

SCRIPTURE | ¹⁰But Moses said to the Lord, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.”
¹¹Then the Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?” ¹²Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” (Exodus 4:10-12)

What limits you from sharing your faith with others? Do you believe you don’t know the Bible well enough? Do you believe you lack the ability to be articulate or persuasive? Are you concerned with offending someone? Do you fear being challenged? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then you have something in common with Moses. Here, Moses doubts his ability to share the word of the Lord only to have God reassure him that he can. God points out to Moses that He is the creator of all human ability and is to be trusted in ensuring one is sufficient to do His work. God isn’t looking for a great orator or natural perfection to share the Gospel. He only requires a person to have a loving heart who is willing to let Him guide them in their proclamation.

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, please help me overcome my doubts in my ability to share your love with others. When presented with an opportunity to share my faith, be with me and teach me what to say. Give me the courage to spread the good news among non-believers. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | Knowing God is the sovereign Creator, how does this influence your view of your own perceived flaws and weaknesses?

ACTION | On the Episcopal liturgical calendar, August 12 is the feast day of Florence Nightingale (founder of modern nursing). Use this fact as a segue to introduce your faith to someone today.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *I, the Lord of Sea and Sky* by Dan Schutte
- Book | *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations (3 Circles)* by Jimmy Scroggins and Steve Wright

day 5 AUGUST 13 | PRAYER

SCRIPTURE | *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7)*

This readily recognizable verse is from the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus instructs his followers to adopt an attitude of being bold in prayer. Rather than teaching on how to pray, Jesus is providing a progressive method to move from making a simple request of God to actively pursuing his will and faithful presence through prayer. In our communication with God, we achieve this by:

- **ASK** | Humbly admitting our needs directly to Him, which reminds us that every gift comes from Him;
- **SEEK** | Looking past the gifts to focus on God Himself in an effort to pursue His wisdom, truth and presence; and
- **KNOCK** | Exercising steadfast faith by continuing to wait and trust Him when results aren't immediate.

God promises an answer to those engaged in a dialogue with him exhibiting both persistence and passion. Be bold in your prayers — God is listening!

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, give me the humility to speak the needs I have. Build up in me the persistence to keep seeking your will and wisdom. And strengthen my faith to trust that your doors will open at the perfect time. In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION | How do you tell the difference between a “closed door” that God wants you to walk away from, and a “closed door” you are meant to keep knocking on?

ACTION | List your needs for today and say a prayer asking God that they will be met.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Ask and You Shall Receive* (Matthew 7:7) by Country Gospel Station
- Book | *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* by Pete Greig

SCRIPTURE | *⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. (Romans 8:5-6)*

If someone could peer into your mind, what would they see? Here, Paul warns of two mindsets, each shaped by our thoughts, which ultimately reveal our spiritual health. The first — focused on things of the flesh — results from giving attention to sinful things such as selfish desires and worldly habits. It leads to a loss of energy and inner turmoil and represents the absence of a truly holistic relationship with Jesus. It is not pleasing to God and limits a person from submitting to God's law. In contrast, a mind set on the Spirit, places focus on divine wisdom and truth with an eternal perspective. This attention to righteousness and living according to the Spirit ultimately renews our minds, leading to vitality, peace and a deeper relationship with God. The choice is yours — how will you set your mind?

PRAYER | Holy Spirit, forgive me for when I allow selfish desires and worldly habits to rule my thoughts. Help me control my mind today. Guide me to set my thoughts on things above and lead me to a deeper spiritual life and peace that only you can provide. In your name, Amen.

REFLECTION | Recall a time when you lost your joy or peace because you focused on something of the flesh. How might a shift to focusing on the Holy Spirit in that situation have changed your perspective or reaction?

ACTION | Identify one selfish desire or worldly habit of yours that you will work to minimize, if not eliminate, by the end of the month.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn: Gracious spirit dwell with me
- Book | *Battlefield of the Mind (30th Anniversary Edition): Winning the Battle in Your Mind* by Joyce Meyer

SCRIPTURE | ⁹Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. ¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:9-15)

In this passage we see how Jesus is teaching his disciples how to pray by providing a model which we today recognize as the Lord’s Prayer. The prayer starts with establishing an intimate connection with God by addressing him as “Father.” As we move through the verse, we see a balance between focusing on God, through adoration and submission, with that of humanity, through protection and petition. The prayer ends with the condition of forgiveness—God is willing to forgive you of your sins only if you are willing to forgive others of theirs.

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, hallowed be your name. Align my thoughts, words and actions with your kingdom today. Give me the grace to trust you with all my needs today. And grant me the strength to forgive others just as you have forgiven me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

REFLECTION | Reflect on someone who has deeply wounded you. How can you practically begin the process of forgiving them in the same way you have been forgiven by Christ?

ACTION | Write your own prayer to God utilizing the four main movements of the Lord’s Prayer: 1.) *Praise*: acknowledge God’s holiness and fatherly love, 2.) *Purpose*: surrender your will to his plan and ask for his reign on earth, 3.) *Provision*: humbly ask for what you need today, and 4.) *Pardon*: ask for forgiveness of your sins.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *The Lord’s Prayer* sung by Andrea Bocelli
- Book | *Praying the Lord’s Prayer* by J. I. Packer

SCRIPTURE | ¹⁰And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: *it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.*” (Matthew 15:10-11)

At this point in the Gospel, Jesus is confronting the Pharisees who have traveled from Jerusalem to Galilee to challenge and discredit him. The religious leaders have placed an emphasis on man-made rules around ceremonial handwashing prior to eating. Jesus assures the crowd gathered that eating with unwashed hands or consuming particular food does not defile a person spiritually. Instead, the destructive thoughts, stringent words and mean-spirited actions originating from a person’s heart are what corrupt a person. If we are to practice authentic evangelism, our hearts must first be transformed by the Good News itself. For when this occurs, our message to others will naturally flow and reflect the grace, love and salvation promised by God to his children.

PRAYER | Lord Jesus, cleanse my heart and mind. Help me to remain focused on your Good News. Fill me with your truth so abundantly that my words and actions naturally reflect grace, love and salvation onto those around me. Make me an instrument of your word to become a light in my community for those still in the dark. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | How does Jesus’ teaching challenge the common misconception that following a set of moral rules is enough to be spiritually clean?

ACTION | Recall a recent interaction you had with someone where your words were hurtful or slanderous towards them, or you were just repeating gossip about another person. Think of how you might go about having that same conversation today.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 530: Spread, O Spread, Thou Mighty Word
- Book | *Idols of the Heart: Learning to Long for God Alone* by Elyse Fitzpatrick



SCRIPTURE | *The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. (John 3:8)*

This verse comes from a private nighttime conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. A prominent Jewish Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus secretly sought out Jesus to understand His teachings. In this encounter in which Nicodemus questions Jesus' explanation of spirituality, specifically the concept of being "born again," Jesus provides the imagery of wind to describe the Holy Spirit. Although we cannot see the wind itself, we certainly can feel it and see its effects as it blows across our faces, flutters flags atop their poles and sways branches among the trees. And we certainly cannot control the wind as evidenced by significant weather patterns in our region. The same applies to the Holy Spirit — he is not seen, but his presence is undeniable. The Holy Spirit is sovereign; thus, we cannot control him nor fully understand his work. So rather than working to "make the wind blow," allow yourself to "catch the wind" and be led by the current of the Holy Spirit working within you.

PRAYER | Come, Holy Spirit. I relinquish control to you to use me as an instrument of your peace and understanding. Breathe your refreshing peace into me today. Sweep away the stagnant thoughts, fears and anxieties holding me back. Fill my sails with your direction, guiding my steps to move me into action pleasing to you. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | Just as wind can be harnessed to generate renewable energy to power our homes, the Holy Spirit brings supernatural energy. Where are you relying too heavily on your own energy, and where could you allow his force to carry you?

ACTION | Today allow yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit to be taken into a new direction by doing something outside of your established routine.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 508: Breathe on me, breath of God
- Book | *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Hearts of His People* by Jim Cymbala

SCRIPTURE | *Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!* (Psalm 27:14)

Waiting ... who has time for that? In our world of instant this, instant that and everything in between, waiting is one of the last things we want to do. But that is the command David gives us in this Psalm, one which expresses, amidst significant struggles, his profound trust in God with a yearning to dwell in his presence. He writes that waiting is active—building faith through strength and courage—rather than a passive exercise of just marking time until your patience runs out. This is particularly relevant to when our prayers are not answered on our timeline. This may lead us to doubt if we are even worthy of an answer from God or if he is even listening. But if we believe unanswered prayers are just God’s response of “Not yet, I am preparing you for something greater,” or “No, I have other plans for you,” or “Not now, I’m building you up to better receive it later,” then the waiting might just be a little easier as we sit at the throne of his grace.

PRAYER | Most merciful Father, I confess that waiting is incredibly difficult, and I often want answers on my schedule. Counter my anxiety with the rest I receive in your sovereignty. Give me the strength and courage to wait patiently for you. Remind me your delays are not denials or rejection. Help me to trust in your goodness as my story continues to be written. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

REFLECTION | What is the most significant prayer request you are waiting for God to answer? As you wait, do you feel anxious and heavy or are you finding peace and understanding in your prayers?

ACTION | On a small note, write down one of your prayers that God answered in an unexpected way. List how you 1.) felt at the time and 2.) have come to appreciate God’s plan over yours. Place the note in a prominent area of your home and review it each morning in the coming week.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Wait for the Lord (Taizé)
- Book | *God on Mute* by Pete Greig

SCRIPTURE | *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.* (Hebrews 13:2)

We often think of evangelism in “large and loud” terms — the person screaming into a bullhorn on a busy street corner exposing on how to be saved or the dozens of believers coordinated to complete a whirlwind mission trip a half a world away. In reality sharing the good news of Christ with just one person is also evangelism and it can be easily done through the exercise of hospitality. The Greek word for hospitality, *philoxenia*, literally translates to the “love of strangers.” Hospitality isn’t just reserved for your family, best friends and long-standing Bible study group, but also, if not more so, for the friendless and marginalized. And if we cast a net wide enough, we might be surprised to see who we catch and what they can tell, show or teach us. This is exemplified in the story of Abraham when he extended hospitality to three unexpected travelers who would later deliver a heavenly message of a miraculous promise (Genesis 18:1-22). We never will truly know why God places certain people in our lives at particular times. But one thing is sure — random acts of kindness reflect the deliberate works of Jesus’ love in which he would want us to walk.

PRAYER | Lord, forgive me when I neglect to notice the strangers you place in my path. Open my eyes to the people around me. Help to build the gift of radical hospitality within me so that I may share your love through my words and actions. And use me as a vessel of your grace so that others might come to know you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

REFLECTION | Who are some of the “strangers” in your life?

ACTION | Perform one random act of kindness for a stranger this week.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *The Servant Song* by Richard Gillard
- Book | *Unreasonable Hospitality: The Remarkable Power of Giving People More Than They Expect* by Will Guidara

SCRIPTURE | ²¹And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²²and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

Paul uses three metaphors to show how God has placed the Holy Spirit within us as an indelible seal and an eternal guarantee when we come to faith in Christ:

1. **ANOINTING** | In the Old Testament, oil was poured over priests, prophets and kings to set them apart for the divine service of God. Here Paul tells us that anointing is for all believers through the Holy Spirit. We are chosen, equipped and empowered by God through the Holy Spirit to navigate our lives and do the work he has called us to do, rather than being left alone to our own devices.
2. **SEAL** | In times past, a seal, typically made by pressing a signet ring into hot wax, was a declaration of ownership, authority and protection. As faithful believers, when God places his seal on our hearts, he is in us and we are eternally protected by his authority.
3. **GUARANTEE** | In this setting “guarantee” is another word for “deposit” or “down payment.” God gives us the Holy Spirit as a “down payment” of greater things to come, an assurance that God will fulfill the promises he has made for our future.

PRAYER | Lord, Almighty, thank you for establishing me in Christ by anointing me with your grace, placing your seal of ownership on my heart and guaranteeing my future with you through the Holy Spirit. Give me the strength and wisdom to live out your purposes today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

REFLECTION | If God is the ultimate one who establishes our foundation, how does this shift your perspective on personal failures and moments of spiritual weakness?

ACTION | Reading scripture is an accessible way to build on a spiritual foundation. At some point today, randomly open your Bible and read the verses on the pages.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 686: Come thou font of every blessing
- Book | *The Holy Spirit in You* by Derek Prince

SCRIPTURE | *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* (Ephesians 2:10)

Poiema, which translates to “masterpiece” or “poem,” is the original Greek word for workmanship. You are God’s handiwork — a deliberate piece of art crafted with purpose long before you were born — of immense value, intended to reveal his love and grace within the world. And you are created in Christ Jesus to do good works. These works are not tasks to check-off to earn God’s favor in order to be saved. Rather, you already have been saved, which allows you to do good works. Your purpose isn’t one you have to design. God already has that in mind and has created a plan in life unique only to you. It is up to you to ask God, through prayer, to guide your steps along the path he has chosen just for you.

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, I give you thanks for knowing that I am your masterpiece, created anew in Christ. Forgive me for the times I have tried walking paths not meant for me in search of what I think is my purpose. Give me the courage to align my heart with your will. Help me to recognize the steps I need to take even when I cannot see the entire path in front of me. Grant me the wisdom to follow your lead so that my good works bring glory and honor to your name. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | What specific talents, passions, or life experiences has God uniquely gifted you with that you can use to bless those around you?

ACTION | Think of someone you know that you admire for their art, talent or skill. Reach out to them today to tell how much you appreciate them and how their good works are a true blessing to others.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Made for More* by Josh Baldwin, featuring Jenn Johnson
- Book | *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* By Rick Warren

SCRIPTURE | ²¹Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” (Luke 3:21-22)

The inauguration of Jesus’ public ministry is marked by his baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. All three persons of the Trinity are present: 1.) God the Son (Jesus) in the water, 2.) God the Holy Spirit (dove) descending down to earth and 3.) God the Father speaking from heaven. It is when Jesus is praying that the heavens tore open revealing the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. The dove is one of the most readily recognizable symbols of the Holy Spirit. It is a symbol of peace and gentleness, and, in instances of sacrifices noted in the Old Testament, purity. It signifies the calm, steady and loving anointing that the Holy Spirit brings to the work of God.

PRAYER | Holy Spirit, I recognize that I cannot live this day relying on myself alone. I ask that you descend upon my life with your peace and gentleness. Remind me that I am a beloved child of God. Guide me to do the work that is pleasing to the Father and help me soar to new heights to fulfill my calling. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | God expressed how pleased he was with his son *before* Jesus embarked on his ministry. Understanding that God’s love precedes accomplishment, how is your relationship with God influenced by today’s achievement-driven culture?

ACTION | Walk in the footsteps of Jesus today by prioritizing prayer before action — pause and pray before starting a major task, walking into a meeting or making a decision.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *The Dove* (featuring Kari Jobe) by The Belonging CO
- Book | *Learning to Be Loved: The Everyday Believer’s Guide to a Rich Relationship with God* by David Bowden and Mart Green

SCRIPTURE | ¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:13-15)

Jesus intentionally brings his disciples to Caesarea Philippi, a region more populated by Gentiles and known for its pagan temples and worship of the Greek god Pan. Against this contrasting backdrop of other religions, Jesus, in his divine identity, asks his disciples how people see him. The disciples reply with the identities circulating as rumors among the crowds. Jesus goes on to test his disciples’ personal convictions by asking them who they believe he is. This question is one at the heart of evangelism. When we ask others how they view Jesus we often receive responses which are culturally shaped or politically influenced. But we should take another step forward. Like Jesus, we need to help others move past public opinions and lean into their own thinking, so that they are empowered to develop a more personalized understanding of Christ, a deeper relationship with the Lord and an allegiance to the King.

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, thank you for loving the world so much that you gave us your only Son. Help me to know him more intimately, follow him more faithfully and stand more firmly in his truth. When asked “Who do you say that I am?” give me the strength to answer with conviction like Peter: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” In the holy and powerful name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | Who does the world around you say that Jesus is? How does that differ from your personal experience with him?

ACTION | Ask the Lord to place someone on your heart who needs to hear your testimony, and pray for the boldness to ask them, “Who is Jesus to you?”

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Who You Are to Me* by Chris Tomlin featuring Lady A
- Book | *Simply Jesus: A Study of Jesus’s Life and Message* by N. T. Wright

SCRIPTURE | *Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. (James 5:13)*

We navigate life continuously between the highs and lows. There are times we are sulking in the deepest of valleys in defeat and despair and then there are other times we are standing atop the mountain peaks in joy and jubilation. Most of our time is spent moving in between, driven by self-reliance to fix things ourselves or reward our successes. But the apostle James tells us to turn to God — first — regardless of the season of our lives. When we are hurting, we should turn to prayer first, rather than as a last resort, for comfort, guidance and peace. God doesn't want us to carry the burden alone. And we mustn't forget God is the source of all blessings; thus, we should praise Him in times of happiness and abundance with prompt gratitude. Ultimately, we should develop a constant, faith-filled reliance on God, regardless of the circumstances, exercised through ceaseless prayer.

PRAYER | Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for being a constant presence in my life. I confess that I don't turn to you in prayer as promptly and as often as I should. In times of suffering, grant me the wisdom and humility to turn to you first for comfort and strength. In times of happiness, help me to remember to sign song of praises in gratitude. And keep me connected to you in all circumstances through prayer. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | How does treating prayer as a lifestyle, rather than a call for help during hard times, change your daily relationship with God?

ACTION | Establish a constant rhythm of prayer by identifying one daily activity (e.g., drinking your morning cup of coffee, walking your dog, going to the gym, etc.) to remind you to spend a few moments in prayer.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *The Prayer* by Céline Dion and Andrea Bocelli
- Book | *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World* by Paul E. Miller

day 17

AUGUST 25 | PRAYER

SCRIPTURE | ... addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart... (Ephesians 5:19)

“He who sings, prays twice.” This beloved adage, derived from the Latin: *Qui bene cantat bis orat*, is most frequently attributed to St. Augustine of Hippo and describes how singing deepens worship. Singing engages our mind and body beyond that of just speaking words. And in times of intense emotion, such as with overwhelming joy or profound grief, which may be too heavy for ordinary words, music provides a necessary way for us to communicate with God. Whether we gather for worship or find ourselves alone, Paul instructs us to sing to the Lord—in all forms of music—with a melody of an honest and yielding heart. Our Father delights in hearing his children sing, so raise your voice in praise and prayer for your blessings and concerns.

PRAYER | Dear Lord, may the melody of my heart be a joyful, sincere song of praise to you. As I come into contact with others, help me to encourage them to do the same so that all of our voices combine into a chorus of love and gratitude for you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

REFLECTION | What are some of your favorite psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to sing? What is it about these pieces of music that make them so meaningful to you?

ACTION | Curate a playlist of worship music that is readily accessible to you as you move through your day.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *The Hills Are Alive with the Sound of Music* by Richard Rogers & Oscar Hammerstein II
- Book | *Then Sings My Soul: 150 of the World’s Greatest Hymn Stories* by Robert J. Morgan



SCRIPTURE | *If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.*
(Proverbs 18:13)

God gave us two ears and one mouth for good reason. This adage, attributed to the Greek philosopher Epictetus, is a reminder for us to listen twice as much as we speak. Today's scripture points to why this is so important. Reacting or forming judgments prior to hearing all the facts demonstrates a lack of discipline and wisdom (folly). And speaking prematurely can result in misunderstandings and embarrassment of us and/or others once more details or the truth emerges (shame). To avoid these issues, necessary for when we practice evangelism, one only has to turn to Jesus as a model of active listening. Jesus met people where they were, held space for them to voice their deepest pains and probing questions and was "quick to hear, slow to speak" (see James 1:19). He made people feel valued and respected, which is foundational for creating opportunities for spiritual dialog. When we adopt this same blueprint, we can begin to build bridges connecting people with our faith and the love God has for all of us.

PRAYER | Dear Lord, I recognize my tendency to react before I fully understand things. Grant me the humility and patience to listen carefully, opening my ears to what is being said and engaging my mind to what is not being said. Cover my thinking so that I may have a deeper understanding of the other person's perspective. Soften my heart and guard my lips so that my words are full of wisdom and grace. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | How many conflicts or misunderstandings in your life could have been avoided if you had just asked clarifying questions instead of jumping to conclusions?

ACTION | To limit the folly in future conversations, develop your own set of open-ended questions to aid you in clarifying things (e.g., "What do you mean by ...?" or "Can you tell me more about that?").

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 488: Be thou my vision
- Book | *I Hear You: The Surprisingly Simple Skill Behind Extraordinary Relationships* by Michael S. Sorensen

day 19

AUGUST 27 | PRAYER

SCRIPTURE | *In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God.* (Luke 6:12)

When you have a big decision to make, how much do you rely on prayer during the process? Are you one to seek God's guidance systematically at each step of the way or do you only make a quick request when you feel the time is right? This Gospel verse describes Jesus' intention with prayer before one of the most important decisions of his ministry — selecting and calling his 12 disciples into service. He retreated away from the noise of the crowds and the growing opposition from the religious leaders of Galilee to seek solitude so that he could pray uninterrupted and rest in communion with God. This shows that, despite being divine, Jesus still relied on the wisdom and guidance of the Father before having to make a major choice. So, if Jesus exercised total dependence of God, what does that say of your reliance on him knowing that while you are made in his own image (Genesis 1:27), you are still of finite, human essence (Genesis 3:19)?

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, thank you for your presence in my life. Forgive me for when I rely on my own wisdom and strength rather than turning to you when I am faced with a significant decision. Help me to build dependence on you by giving me the discipline to pray akin to Jesus on that mountain. Grant me clarity, direction and peace before I must make a difficult choice. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | How can we prioritize stillness and uninterrupted prayer when our own schedules feel overwhelmingly demanding and we are faced with so much noise in the world?

ACTION | Find a quiet location in your environment. Set a timer for five (5) minutes and sit alone in prayer with God.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Nocturne op.9 No.2* by Frederic Chopin
- Book | *Pray. Think. Act.: Make Better Decisions with the Desert Fathers* by J. Augustine Wetta

SCRIPTURE | ²⁵*If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*

²⁶*Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

(Galatians 5:25-26)

Paul concludes this chapter of his letter to the Galatians with instruction to stay aligned with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not to be a puppeteer, orchestrating our everyday movements throughout life. Instead, he is akin to a marching band's drum major, keeping us on tempo to move in the direction God wants us to go. We still take our own steps, but we do it by submitting to the way of our Lord. And if we lack such obedience? Then we risk becoming arrogant, proud, manipulative and jealous. This can lead to resentment of our brothers and sisters in Christ, hurting our neighbors and our own self-destructive behavior. We know God wants his children us to work with one another, not compete with each other. The Holy Spirit leads us to building a stronger community fixed in serving one another in love.

PRAYER | Come, Holy Spirit. Thank you for dwelling inside me and giving me new life. I surrender my mind and will to you so that my daily steps keep pace with you. Help me to follow your lead, keeping me away from the traps of conceit, provocation and envy. Guide my interactions with other such that they bring you honor and glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION | Are you making daily decisions guided by the Holy Spirit's conviction, or are you leaning on your own selfish ambitions?

ACTION | Comparison is the thief of joy. The next time you encounter someone who stirs feelings of jealousy or envy, temper these feelings by asking "What can I learn from this person?" or "How can this person help me grow?"

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 690: Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah
- Book | *Sensitivity of the Spirit: Learning to Stay in the Flow of God's Direction* by R. T. Kendall

day 21 AUGUST 29 | PRAYER

SCRIPTURE | ¹⁶And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. (Luke 9:16-17)

Today's scripture is part of the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. In this story, we frequently focus on the hunger of the crowd or the miracle of Jesus multiplying the five loaves of bread and two fish given to him by a little boy. But often overlooked in this passage is how Jesus models prayer in seasons of insufficiency. In this situation, Jesus doesn't become frustrated or panic when faced with a daunting task, but rather he turns to prayer. Notice how Jesus first puts his sights to heaven, looking away from his predicament and fixing his eyes on the Lord. Next, rather than lamenting what he lacks, Jesus gives thanks for what he already has, surrendering his limitations to God. Finally, Jesus trusts God will take any shortcomings or limitations and magnify them for his glory.

PRAYER | Lord Jesus, thank you for being the Bread of Life. I confess that I often focus on my own limitations and sometimes feel overwhelmed by what I think I need. Teach me to fix my eyes on heaven and give thanks with what I have currently. I surrender my limited capacity and shortcomings to you. Multiply what little I have to offer and use me to bless others. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | How would you characterize God's provision in your life — scarcity-driven or abundant satisfaction?

ACTION | Before each meal today, look up to heaven and recite your favorite prayer praising God for the food on your table.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn: Break thou the bread of life (not in the Hymnal 1982)
- Book | *Choosing Gratitude: Your Journey to Joy* by Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

SCRIPTURE | ²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?” (Matthew 16:24-26)

In today’s Gospel reading, Jesus explains to his disciples that surrendering one’s life for his sake leads to a true spiritual life, whereas self-preservation leads to losing it, as there is nothing that compares to the value of the soul. In essence, he is calling on us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him. Far too often we allow the comforts of this world — our possessions, time and self-interests — to take priority over our responsibility to introduce and share the value of Christ with others. By denying our self-interests over those of our neighbor’s needs, and valuing other souls over material possessions, we can set our sights on bringing more sheep into the flock with Jesus as the definitive shepherd.

PRAYER | Lord, thank you for the incredible value you place on my soul. Forgive me for the times I have valued my own comfort more than the souls of those around me. Remind me that no worldly gain can compare to eternal life. Ignite a passion in my heart for evangelism. Give me the courage to deny myself, take up my cross, and share your love with the lost. Open my eyes to the divine appointments around me today. Amen.

REFLECTION | Who is the one person in your life that God has placed on your heart to share the Gospel with this week?

ACTION | Reach out to the one person noted above with a simple invitation to either join you for coffee or a meal where you can introduce your faith or extend an offer to pray for a specific struggle they are facing.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 675: Take up your cross the Savior said
- Book | *Not a Fan Updated and Expanded: Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus* by Kyle Idleman

SCRIPTURE | *¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)*

This verse tells us that praying is for everyone and lists four specific types of prayers: 1. petitions (fervent requests), 2. general prayers (worship and devotion), 3. intercessions (praying on behalf of others) and 4. thanksgivings (appreciation for what God has done). When Paul wrote this letter, Christians suffered severe persecution under the ruling Roman Emperor. Still, Paul instructed believers to pray for governing authorities, highlighting that true peace comes from God. We do this today during the Prayers of the People when we pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world. Our goal isn't to express political alignment with our leaders, but rather, to pray that those in authority foster a stable, orderly society so that we may lead peaceful and quiet lives characterized by godliness and dignity.

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, I come to you with gratitude for the incredible privilege of prayer. Today, I lift up all those in authority over my city, state and country. I pray that you grant them wisdom, integrity, and a desire to seek justice and truth. Soften my heart toward those I find difficult to support and help me to respond with intercession rather than frustration. Give us all the grace to live peaceful, godly, and quiet lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION | Paul calls for prayers to be made for all people. How does your personal prayer list reflect this broad, inclusive scope, and who might God be calling you to add to your list today?

ACTION | Pray for one stranger you encounter today.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *We Pray* by CeCe Winans
- Book | *The Art of Prayer: A Handbook on How to Pray* by Kenneth E. Hagin

day 24

SEPTEMBER 1 | HOLY SPIRIT

SCRIPTURE | ... for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)

It's common to experience fear and anxiety when faced with overwhelming circumstances or difficult situations. But these feelings do not come from God. This is what Paul is writing to his protégé, Timothy, who was facing pressure while leading the church in Ephesus. Rather than fear, God provides us a remarkable multifaceted gift — the Spirit, or attitude, of power, love and self-control. The Spirit of power gives us strength beyond our natural limitations, allowing us to endure hardships and stand firmly in our faith. The Spirit of love allows us to live into Christ's character through our sacrificial service and care for others despite difficult or dangerous circumstances. The Spirit of self-control allows us to remain calm and focused on God's truth in times of anxiety and panic to make wise choices. Our reliance on the Holy Spirit in such ways is the manifestation of His empowerment actively working in our lives.

PRAYER | Holy Spirit, thank you for dwelling inside me. Forgive me for the times I allow fear and anxiety to dominate my thoughts and dictate my actions. I surrender all of my worries to you. Fill me anew with your power, love and self-control and cast out all fear, anxiety and doubt that is holding me back. As I move through my day, help me to endure hardships, love and serve others timely and deeply, and cover my thinking so I can make wise choices. In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION | God wants us to love one another unconditionally. How does leaning into this divine love help you view difficult people through his eyes rather than reacting out of frustration, judgement or self-preservation?

ACTION | Do that one thing on your to-do list that you have been avoiding out of intimidation. Replace your hesitation with bold action by tackling a tough task this week.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn: Holy Spirit light divine by Andrew Reed/Gottschalk
- Book | *Winning the War on Worry: Cultivate a Peaceful Heart and a Confident Mind* by Louis Giglio

day 25

SEPTEMBER 2 | EVANGELISM

SCRIPTURE | ⁹And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:9-10)

Wayne Teasdale, an American Catholic monk, once said, “Kindness is the highest form of intelligence.” It also is a powerful instrument of evangelism as it reflects God’s love into the world. Kindness can serve as a bridge to sharing Christ with others as it can disarm defenses, build trust and make Jesus more tangible. Paul tells us that doing good is not optional, limited to an occasional act here and there; nor should it be reserved only for those we know. He also cautions that radical kindness can be exhausting, but we should persist for in due time we will reap what we sow — a bountiful community of believers coming to know the goodness of our God and his Kingdom we call home.

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, thank you for the endless kindness you have shown me. Forgive me for the times I have grown weary of doing kindness as part of Kingdom work. Open my eyes to see opportunities to help others whom I encounter today. Open my ears to hear of my brothers and sisters in Christ in need of a kind act. May my thoughts, words and actions reflect your love so clearly that others may come to know you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

REFLECTION | Can you identify a recent time when you missed or passed on the opportunity to help someone? What stopped you from doing good in that situation?

ACTION | Think of one person in your circle who needs support and encouragement today. Call or text that person letting them know you see them and you are rooting for them.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Kindness* by Chris Tomlin
- Book | *The Power of Kindness: The Unexpected Benefits of Leading a Compassionate Life* by Piero Ferrucci

SCRIPTURE | *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. (James 5:14)*

When we fall ill, we often default to isolation and solitude. We retreat for many reasons whether it's to not burden others with our illness, out of a sense of pride that we can care for ourselves or if we just give it some time, we can heal on our own. But James instructs us to reach out when we are ill. He directs us to call the "elders of the church," which, today, can broadly refer to people of faith who are spiritually mature. James goes on to say the sick should receive prayer and anointing with oil, done in the name of the Lord. This verse is a reminder of our role in the restoration of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are physically, emotionally or spiritually ill. We are extensions of God, the Great Physician, able to lift up the sick in prayers of faith that they will be comforted, restored and sustained. Jesus healed the vast multitudes, showing us that healing is holy work. Our prayers for others in time of need can be some of the best medicine.

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, I come to you in my time of weakness. Forgive me for trying to carry the weight of my struggles alone. I believe you are the Great Physician. Give me the humility to reach out and ask for prayer and support from my faith community. Pour out your healing grace upon me and let your peace wash over me as I surrender my struggle to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION | Is there an area of your physical, emotional, or spiritual life where you are feeling weak, weary, or sick? Who are the faithful, trusted believers in your life that you can reach out to today?

ACTION | Think of one person in your life who is ill or struggling. Say a prayer for them today.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1007: Prelude by J.S. Bach
- Book | *Prayers That Bring Healing: Overcome Sickness, Pain, and Disease. God's Healing is for You!* by John Eckhardt

SCRIPTURE | ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul presents these nine virtues representing a transformed life. They are not provided as a straightforward checklist we are to tick off as we go about our day. Rather they are traits cultivated by the Holy Spirit when we live in step with Jesus. Notice Paul uses “fruit” (singular) rather than “fruits” (plural). This means that these characteristics are a complete package — a unified reflection of Christ’s character being formed in us that fulfills God’s moral desires:

- **RELATIONAL VIRTUES** | Love, joy, and peace define our inward disposition and how we interact with others, anchoring us during difficult seasons.
- **PRACTICAL ACTIONS** | Patience, kindness, and goodness demonstrate the active love of God, extending grace to those around us.
- **STEADFAST CHARACTER** | Faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control guard our hearts and keep us aligned with God’s will, even when no one is looking.

PRAYER | Holy Spirit, I invite you to work within in me today. Soften my heart and prune away anything that hinders your work in my life. Grow your fruit in my thoughts, words and actions so that I may be a light to those around to me. Help me to walk in step with you and bear fruit that brings glory and honor to the Father. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

REFLECTION | Fruit takes time to grow and requires the right conditions. How are you actively cultivating an environment in your daily life for the Holy Spirit to produce this fruit?

ACTION | Identify one thing limiting your capacity to bear fruit (see Galatians 5:19-21) and work to prune it from your life starting today.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Fruit of the Spirit* by Darren Winfield
- Book | *The Fruit of the Spirit: Becoming the Person God Wants You to Be* by Thomas E. Trask and Wayde I. Goodall

SCRIPTURE | *Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)*

This scripture relates to Jesus' teaching on faith-filled prayer, emphasizing confident expectation and unshakable trust in God's power over anxious doubt. Here we are challenged to approach prayer with unwavering expectancy. We are invited to make requests that are broad and bold so long as our prayers align with God's will. And rather than hoping God might answer, we are to trust God has already acted and is working all things together for our good. Our prayers are not a magic formula or prescribed algorithm to fulfill a wish list. They are our conversations with God to live in communion with him, transforming our anxiety into confident gratitude. So, ask audaciously, believe boundlessly and wait warm-heartedly for he knows what and when to give.

PRAYER | Dear Heavenly Father, I come before you with a heart full of gratitude and deep desire to trust your promises. I bring my requests to you with the confidence you already know what they are and belief that you are working on things for my good. I know you will provide me with what I need, when I need it. Thank you in advance for the answers as I surrender my worries to you and align my ways for your will. In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

REFLECTION | When you think about the things you pray for, how do you feel immediately after? Do you leave your concerns at the altar, or do you pick them back up and carry the weight yourself?

ACTION | To build your faith over time, start a journal where you write down your requests to God and the ways they are answered in a journal. Periodically review your entries.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* (sung by Alan Jackson)
- Book | *Pray First: The Transformative Power of a Life Built on Prayer* by Chris Hodges

SCRIPTURE | *For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.*
(Matthew 18:20)

When we have good news to share, how often do we want to tell as many people as we can? In addition to calling immediate family and close friends, we may rush to post it on our social media platforms, send a mass email to professional colleagues or jump on a texting chain with near acquaintances to reach a broad audience. But is the “goodness” of the news a direct correlate to the number of people it reaches? One can argue it’s not from this line of scripture. While the today’s Gospel directly applies to addressing conflict resolution and community accountability, it can extend to a command for evangelism. Jesus tells his disciples that his presence is guaranteed regardless of time, place, form, purpose or number in attendance of a gathering anchored in his love. One of our most impactful mission fields just might be that table for two or three where we invite a lonely neighbor over for dinner or sit with a colleague struggling with changing careers or share our faith with a non-believer. And so often sharing the love of Jesus Christ starts by just showing up for others.

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, thank you for the promise of your presence. Forgive me for the times I have ignored your call for evangelism because I’ve made it harder than it needs to be. Help me see those in need of hearing your good news, giving me the courage to invite them into my life this week. And as we gather in your name, let your presence be felt, giving me the words to fill those small spaces with your love. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | Fruit takes time to grow and requires the right conditions. How are you actively cultivating an environment in your daily life for the Holy Spirit to produce this fruit?

ACTION | If Jesus promises his presence when two or three are together, does this mean he is absent if we are alone?

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Two or Three* by the Collingsworth Family
- Book | *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World* by Vivek Murthy

SCRIPTURE | ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

We’ve all seen it before — and for some of us, we live it: just because someone carries something well, doesn’t mean it’s not heavy. Too often, in our culture of strength and stoicism, we feel the need to carry all of our burdens effortlessly by ourselves. We labor hard to hide our true feelings in times of need and frequently decline offers of assistance even when we have a genuine desire for help and comfort. Yet Jesus extends an open, divine invitation to each one of us to bring our burdens to him. The moment we pause and pray as we take Jesus’ yolk upon us, is the time we experience true rest. And while Jesus doesn’t promise to remove all of our responsibilities, he does promise to change how we carry them.

PRAYER | Lord Jesus, I come to you today because I am carrying heavy burdens. I confess that I often try to handle life’s responsibilities and challenges in my own strength. Thank you for the loving invitation to come to you when I am weary. I lay down my burdens and worries at your feet. I choose to take your yoke upon me. Please teach me how to walk in step with you, trusting your grace is real rest for my soul. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | In your daily prayer times, are you talking with Jesus as a partner, or are you operating as if the whole load depends on you?

ACTION | Identify one “heavy load” in your life right now. Sit in prayer with Jesus for a few minutes, taking this burden to him. Seek his guidance in how your load might be lightened or even entirely removed for you.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *I Left It in the River* by Jamie MacDonald
- Book | *All Who Are Weary: Finding True Rest by Letting Go of the Burdens You Were Never Meant to Carry* by Sarah Hauser

SCRIPTURE | *¹I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)*

The nosy neighbor, the argumentative co-worker, the eccentric relative... we all know that someone who puts our faith, and the true work of the Holy Spirit within us, to the test. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul offers a three-step method to preserve spiritual unity and peace when we encounter that “someone”:

1. Live a worthy life by aligning our daily actions and attitudes with the great salvation and grace God has given to us through Jesus Christ;
2. Practice the four virtues of humility (putting others’ needs above our own), gentleness (controlled strength), patience (enduring with others), and bearing with one another in love (grace for others’ flaws); and
3. Guard the harmony brought by the Holy Spirit diligently to keep one another bound together.

So, the next time you pull into your driveway, collaborate on that project at work or sit down for Thanksgiving dinner, you might just have to surrender your frustration, need to be right, or pride, and allow the Holy Spirit to bind you together with others in his perfect peace.

PRAYER | Holy Spirit, fill me with your humility and gentleness. Give me the patience to bear with others in love and help me to be an instrument of your peace in my home, workplace, church and community. Amen.

REFLECTION | When you are tempted to be impatient with the flaws, habits, or differing gifts of others, what helps you choose grace and forbearance over judgment?

ACTION | Identify that one “someone” in your life. To help you “bear with them in love,” think of at least one character trait, strength or gift they have that you like or admire.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | SANCTUS from the Missa Solemnis by Beethoven
- Book | *Loving People Who Are Hard to Love: Transforming Your World by Learning to Love Unconditionally* by Joyce Meyer

SCRIPTURE | *And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. (Mark 16:15)*

This verse is a universal mandate for all Christians to actively spread the good news of salvation to everyone everywhere. It is part of the Great Commission where Jesus is commanding — not suggesting — his disciples to spread the word out to the world. That command still holds true today. This means we must proactively step out of our comfort zones to reach people around us. And our mission fields don’t have the reach the far ends of the world. Simply sharing the love and joy of Jesus over coffee with a friend, at lunch with a coworker, during the ride with whom you carpool, or at the next family reunion, is evangelism in action.

PRAYER | Lord, thank you for the command to go into all the word and share your Good News. Open my eyes to those around me today who need to know you. Give me the courage to share your love and the grace to reflect your light in everything I do. Soften the hearts of those I meet, removing their spiritual blindness. Use me as an instrument of hope and salvation across the mission field you have set for me. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | Are your actions, patience, and love currently reflecting Christ in a way that makes others curious about your faith?

ACTION | Draft your “elevator pitch” as a tool for sharing the Good News. For a guide on how to do this, visit bit.ly/gospelpitch.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 376: Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee
- Book | *Joy Bomb: Unleash Jesus’s Explosive Joy for an Extraordinary Life* by Tauren Wells



SCRIPTURE | ¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

Here we are urged to shift our focus from fleeting, earthly wealth to eternal, heavenly treasures. Jesus points out that relying on money and material possessions is risky because the benefits are temporary. When we spend our time and energy chasing these things, we are largely left feeling insecure and unfulfilled. Instead, we should look to the security of heavenly treasures since their return on investment is imperishable. For when our focus is on God, then so our heart will be in his eternal kingdom.

PRAYER | Lord, thank you for all the blessings and resources you have entrusted to me. Help me to be more faithful and a better steward of my time, talents, and treasure. Guide my heart to seek your kingdom first and show me how I can joyfully invest in the eternal work of your church. Amen.

REFLECTION | Do your time, talent and treasure naturally flow toward the things of God?

ACTION | Spend a few moments today in prayer reflecting on how best you can give of your time, talent and treasure to the upcoming *Our Church Our Home* 2027 St. John the Divine stewardship campaign.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 711: Seek ye first the kingdom of God
- Book | *The Treasure Principle, Revised and Updated: Unlocking the Secret of Joyful Giving* by Randy Alcorn



SCRIPTURE | ¹³“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.” (Matthew 5:13-15)

As part of his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is speaking to his disciples in this passage. He uses metaphors to salt and light to tell them how enormously valuable they are as Christians in countering evil and despair in the world. Akin to salt preserving meat from spoilage and enhancing the flavor of food, believers are called to be an influence against moral decay, and bring joy, grace and hope to those around them, respectively. Should salt lose its flavor, it is rendered useless. Similarly, Christians who do not actively maintain their faith will not be effective in their mission. And, with light, there is visibility. Just as a city on a mountain cannot be hidden, a believer’s life should stand out clearly within a dark world. Believers should not hide or conceal their faith, but rather, let their good works shine such that all people see them. Evangelism goes beyond sharing scripture; it is a lifestyle of preserving grace and faith as well as reflecting Christ’s light in the world.

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, thank you for calling me to be the salt of the earth and light of the world. Give me courage, strength and wisdom to share your Gospel. Work within me to be an influence against decay and a light to drive out darkness in the world. And help me to bring your love and truth to those around me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

REFLECTION | How does your daily attitude reflect or hinder the light of Christ?

ACTION | Engage in one way you can outwardly proclaim your faith to others as you move through your daily routine (e.g., wear a piece of religious jewelry, have a Bible on a shelf in your office, include scripture in your email signature, etc.)

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 660: O Master, let me walk with thee
- Book | *Living as Salt and Light: God’s Call to Transform Your World* by Derek Prince

SCRIPTURE | *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.* (Romans 8:26)

“I was speechless, but my silence was not empty; it was full of what I could not say.” This quote, its author unknown, lends itself well to today’s scripture. We’ve all experienced times in our lives when we have been at a loss for words to describe the grief, pain, fear or hopelessness that had fallen upon us. In turn, our prayers for solace likely were limited, or even non-existent, either because we couldn’t adequately express what we were experiencing or articulate what we needed at that time. It is these occasions, when we are significantly overwhelmed or deeply wounded, that Paul tells us to lean on the Holy Spirit. In these moments, the silence is filled with the Holy Spirit, who, by interceding for us, speaks directly to God. He searches our heart and takes our sighs, moans and tears to shape them into the prayers that align our needs with the will of God.

PRAYER | Come, Holy Spirit. I confess there are times when I am weak and at a loss for how I should pray. Thank you for being my helper to intercede for me during these times. With you I know I am never praying alone and that my needs will align with the will of God. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | Does the Holy Spirit’s role in your prayer life mean that your own spoken words and conscious petitions are unnecessary? Why or why not?

ACTION | The next time you pray, ask the Holy Spirit to shape your desires to match God’s will rather than for specific outcomes.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Pie Jesu* by Andrew Lloyd Webber
- Book | *When You Don’t Know What to Pray: 100 Essential Prayers for Enduring Life’s Storms* by Charles F. Stanley

SCRIPTURE | ²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.” (Matthew 18:21-22)

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REFLECTION | How does your daily attitude reflect or hinder the light of Christ?

ACTION | Engage in one way you can outwardly proclaim your faith to others as you move through your daily routine (e.g., wear a piece of religious jewelry, have a Bible on a shelf in your office, include scripture in your email signature, etc.)

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 660: O Master, let me walk with thee
- Book | *Living as Salt and Light: God’s Call to Transform Your World* by Derek Prince

SCRIPTURE | ³⁵ So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” (John 12:35-36a)

Jesus is the Light of the World. In this scripture Jesus is warning the crowd that his remaining time on earth is short as it is just days before his crucifixion. He is urging them to appreciate the light (i.e., believing and having faith) and not to be overtaken by the darkness (i.e., rejecting His words and messages). Our connection to Jesus is through prayer. By bringing our concerns and anxieties to God with request for clarity and wisdom, he dispels the darkness. When we align our thoughts, decisions and actions with Jesus’ teachings, we are walking in the light. Ultimately, by doing so, we can take on his identity as “children of the light.”

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, thank you for giving me Jesus to be the light in my life. Forgive me for the times I try to navigate the darkness on my own. Help me to walk in your truth and believe your light so that darkness does not overcome me. Illuminate my path, guide my decisions, and transform me into a child of your light so that I may shine grace to those around me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

REFLECTION | In what areas of your life do you feel like you are groping in the dark, and how can you invite Jesus to illuminate the path?

ACTION | Reflecting Jesus’ character to those around you is a way to be a “child of the light.” Reach out to someone today you know is in the darkness and offer them words of encouragement and hope.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | Hymn 490: I want to walk as a child of the light
- Book | *Be Light: Shining God’s Beauty, Truth, and Hope into a Darkened World* by Samuel Rodriguez

SCRIPTURE | *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)*

Paul ends his Second Epistle to the church in Corinth with this profound blessing, which happens to be the only one of his benedictions to specifically reference all three members of the Trinity. While Jesus provides grace and God provides love, it is the Holy Spirit that provides fellowship or an intimate friendship. The Holy Spirit is God's constant, indwelling presence in us. He knows us intimately, affording us the opportunity to share our fears, concerns and joys throughout the day.

PRAYER | Holy Spirit, thank you for residing within me. I open my heart to your fellowship today. Guide me into all truth, cover my thinking and comfort me in my struggles. And help me to be keenly aware of your presence as my constant companion and to know you more deeply. Amen.

REFLECTION | Do you view the Holy Spirit as a quiet, distant notion, or as an intimate friend walking beside you each day?

ACTION | Set a timer for five (5) minutes. Sit in silence during this time and have a conversation with the Holy Spirit.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *2 Corinthians 13:14* by Verses featuring Matt Boswell
- Book | *Help is Here: Finding Fresh Strength and Purpose in the Power of the Holy Spirit* by Max Lucado



SCRIPTURE | *Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. (Joshua 1:3)*

At this place in the Bible, Moses has died and God has commissioned young Joshua as the new leader of the Israelites. Here God is speaking to Joshua, demonstrating his commitment to fulfilling his covenant promise to give the descendants of Abraham the land of Canaan. While the Israelites are promised a vast inheritance, they must first be called into a physical act of faith by stepping out across the land to take possession. The spiritual discipline of prayer walking embodies a similar principle. Prayer walking involves interceding for a specific location while physically moving through it. In essence, it's praying "on site with insight" and moves our prayer life from a passive posture to an active exercise. Just as God commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous, prayer walking requires us to step out and engage with the world in ways we wouldn't necessarily otherwise.

PRAYER | Lord, open my eyes to see my community through yours as I move about today. Give me the courage to step out in faith and intercede for the people and places around me. Help me to bring your light and love into the places where I live and work. In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION | Are there areas in your life (e.g., career, education, relationships, faith, etc.) where God has been beckoning you to move boldly but you have been reluctant to take that first step? What's holding you back?

ACTION | Try prayer walking for just one (1) minute within the next week. Consider a short walk in your neighborhood, at work, at your child's school or at the grocery store.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Walk by Faith* by Jeremy Camp
- Book | *Prayer Walking: Praying on Site with Insight* by Steve Hawthorne and Graham Kendrick

SCRIPTURE | *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Romans 15:13)*

Paul's prayer for the Christians living in Rome is a powerful benediction which we often hear today in our own places of worship. It starts with God, the ultimate source of hope. Next, we see how joy and peace are experienced through active trust and faith in the Lord rather than coming from wishful thinking or relying on our own devices. And all of this is powered by the Holy Spirit, the catalyst that shifts our focus from our immediate circumstances to the steadfast love and enduring will of God. This results in us becoming God's vessels abounding with infectious hope for a better world today here on earth and an everlasting one tomorrow in heaven (see Colossians 1:5).

PRAYER | Dear Lord, let the Holy Spirit be my daily guide, renewing my mind and guarding my heart with a peace that surpasses all understanding. May he dwell in me so completely that I cannot help to radiate your love and joy in such a way that I bring light and hope to all those around me. I pray that the Holy Spirit enables me to fully walk in your ways today and always. In your name, I pray. Amen.

REFLECTION | What are you hopeful for?

ACTION | Reach out to someone today to ask for what they are hopeful. Share with them your one hope. Then pray with one another for both of your hopes.

GOING FURTHER

- Music | *Heaven on My Mind* by TobyMac and Forrest Frank
- Book | *The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself* by Michael A. Singer



my spiritual timeline

Use the space on the next page to develop your spiritual timeline, which you will use when you meet in your small group during the Awaken '26 weekend.

AS A GUIDE:

1. Indicate when you were baptized, confirmed and/or received, and in which faith for each event.
2. Note significant moments that altered your worldview or challenged your beliefs. Consider including:
 - a. **AWAKENINGS** | Sudden realizations or shifts in perspective.
 - b. **TRANSITIONS & CHALLENGES** | Periods of doubt, loss, grief, career changes, or relocations that forced you to reevaluate life.
 - c. **PEAK EXPERIENCES** | Moments of significant blessings, deep awe, connection, or profound peace.
3. Categorize your experiences (e.g., letting go, learning, serving) and note the feelings, insights, and questions that emerged during those specific times.
4. Add spiritual disciplines or practices you engaged in during different phases (such as reading the Bible, attending a Bible study, prayer, meditation, or journaling). Notice how your practices shifted as your spirituality matured.
5. Look for patterns in your journey. Recognizing how you have navigated past shifts can help you lean into your current season and embrace future changes without resistance.
6. Identify key individuals in your life responsible for shaping your faith and spiritual growth.
7. Summarize your present faith life, noting your strengths and opportunities for growth and development.



AGE OR YEAR	MILESTONE/EVENT	SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE

WITH RESPECT TO MY CURRENT FAITH LIFE, I WOULD:

Summarize it as:

Consider my strengths to be:

Like to develop/work on:

[illegible]

notes:

[illegible]

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awaken

THE ACTS OF GOD

A SEASON OF AWAKENING

ACTS: CHURCH DRAMA



SMALL GROUP SERIES

AUGUST 24 - OCTOBER ?
VIDEOS & DISCUSSION GUIDES
RELEASED WEEKLY

THE CHURCH GIVEN TO THE SPIRIT



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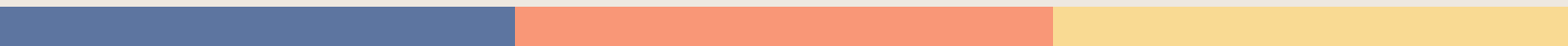
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A COLLECT OF REVIVAL

Awaken our hearts, O Lord, to love what you love.
Awaken our minds, O Lord, to think with the mind of Christ.
Awaken our souls, O Lord, to walk faithfully with your Spirit.
Awaken your Church, O Lord, to renewal and revival
as we gather in Christ, grow as disciples,
and go bearing the Gospel as a light for the city. Amen.