“Circle It and Pray”
40-Day Prayer Challenge
Family Ministry (Women)
July 2014
TIPS FOR 40 DAY PRAYER CHALLENGE

Who should I do the prayer challenge with?

You may want to consider the sisters in your family group in a weekly prayer circle. Family and other friends you are reaching out to as well. But whatever you do, don’t do it alone.

What should I circle?

If you don’t know on day 1, don’t worry. The true purpose of prayer is to let God move so He can move your heart and develop your spiritual vision. Maybe you can start by praying and asking God what/who/ where to pray for, then circle it. Do your best to be consistent in your prayer time. Get a prayer journal and write it down.

When should I take the challenge?

Up to you! Our prayer is that this will start a faithful response to most families in our ministry, that will cause a spiritual synergy, that will cause a faithful reaction in the Valley Family Ministry. And also provide more insight in building healthier families and saving more families in the Valley. Having a group focus on prayer during the summer is a good thing.

Where should I pray?

It is key to make a daily appointment with God by determining a time a place to pray. Schedule it in your planner, calendar, set an alarm. I prefer the beginning of my day.

I also suggest a group prayer time at special places. Create a synergy and momentum where all is committed.

(Please check with your family group leader or online at thevalleychurch.com/events for more information and materials.)
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Day 1- Consistency by Beverly Todd

Acts 10:2 “He prayed to God regularly.”

Insights:

- Cornelius, an Officer in the Roman Army has a vision while praying in Caesarea. Peter has a vision while praying in Joppa 32 miles away.
- Cornelius puts his faith in Jesus and the door of salvation swings wide open to the Gentiles.
- Saving the Gentiles (Roman Officer, you and I) started with two people praying.
- Peter (a Jew) went against cultural, racial and Jewish law by entering the home of Cornelius.
- God collided two visions from two different people to save more people.
- When we pray to God regularly, irregular things happen on a regular basis.
- Cornelius prayed regularly, and his prayers were heard by God.

Is there a holy anticipation from your regularly prayer times with God? If you establish a prayer routine, your life will be anything but routine. Don’t worry about meeting the right people because if you meet with God, he will make sure you meet the right people at the right time.

I have prayed regularly for divine assistance in working with my multi handicapped daughter particularly teaching her how to chew again. In 2008, she had several little mini strokes which rendered her incapable of chewing her food. It came to me during my quiet time to literally chew in front of her and she now mimics chewing. Hopefully, our next step will be chewing with her food inside her mouth (smile). She's severely deaf and mildly autistic which makes it very hard to communicate. However, with regular prayer times with God, I am anticipating her being able to chew her food successfully and more. I know there are many families out there who share similar challenges with their special needs children. I pray that these families will come to know God and the hope he provides for our children.

Application:

Friends and Family – Write down the names of friends and families with special needs and share the hope you have in Christ
City – Pray for every disciple to be a light in the San Fernando Valley

Prayer:

Dear God, I know there are many families who are crying out for help with their special needs children. I pray we can reach out to those families and help them have a closer relationship with you.

More Bible: Psalms 4:1 and Psalms 5:3
Day 2 - Established By God by Helen Hayter Quiroz

Proverbs 16:9 “In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.”

Insights and Key Questions:
-- All of us have ideas of what we’d like to do in life. Romans 12:1-8 God calls us to focus our talents and gifts for His glory for building up the church in unity and for growth
-- Cesar Lopez shared that “the Hebrew word “kun” translated in Proverbs 16:9 as ‘establishes’ can also be translated as ‘determines’, ‘prepares’, ‘makes secure’. It’s a word that entails careful planning down to the last detail.”
-- In this proverb is a promise from God to guide, direct and counsel us in our service to Him. What a great promise!
-- What are your passions and dreams? In what ways are you currently using your talents/gifts for church’s benefit? How might you need to work on bringing your talents/gifts into your service to God and have God establish your plans?

God opened my way to serve Him in a specific way; it’s so inspiring! When I was new in the church, many of the campus disciples had on their heart to be on mission teams to Toronto, Johannesburg, even to Los Angeles, and many of them fulfilled this dream! I too loved to share my faith, but felt badly that going abroad to do mission work was not on my heart. I asked God many times what I was to do for Him and what I had to offer. It was not long before God showed me that the longing I had had on my heart for many years to learn American Sign Language and to know Deaf people was His calling for me. At that time, there were no developed Deaf Ministries in any congregation of our fellowship of churches. There was no one I knew that shared my interest either. It was tempting to give up. With a lot of prayer, God showed me what needed to happen. For my part, I learned the language, then learned how to interpret. I studied with Deaf women while in graduate school in Washington, DC and I needed God’s help to bring other workers into the effort because establishing a ministry was not something I could do alone. God gave us a small Bible Talk in the church with three Deaf sisters, a family who had a Deaf son, and few others of us. Later God called our Bible Talk to move to Los Angeles because God had developed interest in the leadership here to have a full-fledged ministry. We have had many challenges and victories over the years, but I can confidently say God has given me my dream. Now I pray for God to show us how take it further and bring in workers for this effort because the need is great. God is faithful!

Application:
Friends and Family – Pray for God to guide you in the use of your talents to serve them
City – Pray for God to establish your godly dream, even if it’s something new to the church, and act with passion for God

Prayer: Jesus, Lord of my salvation, Savior of my soul. Send me out to the world to make You known (Song: Send Me Out by Steve Fee)

More Bible: Romans 12:1-8, James 5:13-17, Psalm 89:1-17
Day 3 - Amazing Things by Beverly Todd

Joshua 3:5 “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.”

Insights:

- Israelites were camped on the eastern banks of the Jordan River when God commanded them to “consecrate themselves.”
- Because they obeyed, God delivered them and parted the Jordan River.
- Consecration is a complete surrender to Jesus as Lord over all parts of our life. Our time, talent and treasures all come from God. The cross sets us free from a life of slavery to sin.
- “To set apart” for a special purpose defines “Consecration.”
- Jesus is our standard. He gave it all at the cross and expects nothing less.
- As we consecrate ourselves that means we no longer call the shots. We give God the authority to have the final word. Death to self; aka Deny ourselves
- Conversational prayers versus Garden of Gethsemane prayers make the difference in creating a catalyst towards being set apart for God’s purpose.

In Matthew 26:39 Three times: “Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will but as you will.” When was the last time we had a prayer that set us apart from the world for God’s purpose?

Raising and caring for my special needs daughter has many challenges and there are many days when I have my Garden of Gethsemane prayers to help me be the mom I need to be for her. I desire to help her to develop and grow in every way possible. There are two amazing things I thank God for: (1) my daughter’s effort in completing puzzles at an elementary level and (2) her ability to match at any level, without assistance.

God wants to do amazing things among us! What’s stopping you from bearing your heart to God and laying your requests before him? Perhaps it’s time to consecrate ourselves again and be free to have the Garden of Gethsemane prayers.

Application:

Friends and Family – Let confession of sin to brothers be a blessing not burden.
City – Share with other men on how you overcame the sins in your life.

Prayer: Dear God, Help me to be open/vulnerable with you and to sisters who can help me to overcome fear and sin/weaknesses in my life.

More Bible - Leviticus 20:7, Psalm 86:10 and John 17:19
Day 4 — Don’t Pray Away by Helen Hayter Quiroz

John 9:3 “This happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

Insights and Key Questions:
-- Here in John 9, Jesus heals a man born blind and more difficulty and controversy occurs for Jesus, but also more people gain faith and come to commitment to Jesus! Hearts are sifted.
-- As for the questions: why was this man born blind and who sinned to make that happen? Jesus’ answer was (vs. 3) “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.” We seek to find a source to blame when we suffer — it seems to be a common human response.
-- Certainly if we struggle with a difficult physical condition or other situation, we will pray and do all we can to seek healing/a solution. Though “we know in all things He works for the good of those who love him.” (Romans 8:28), it just doesn’t always feel like it. Jesus says there’s divine purpose behind these conditions.
-- What difficult circumstances are you currently dealing with that are challenging?

Many in our fellowship remember the years when I used a quad cane to get around because of back issues and pain. I also had a diagnosis of lupus, so I often didn’t feel well. But I wanted to keep serving God and as a single I hoped to be married to a godly man one day. To be honest, I felt unattractive and had a hard time taking good care of myself. I also had had some serious disappointments in kingdom dating. What became true was Satan used my difficulties to break my spirit. I struggled, prayed and asked for help because I knew God wanted me to guard my heart and not be envious of healthy peers who married well before me. Per the doctors, my physical condition seemed to have no solution and God did not guarantee marriage. It felt impossible to have hope for a good future as God promises. But I had to choose faith — whether to take to heart that God would work all things out for my good somehow or give up/not have faith. Giving up was not an option because I loved God and wanted to go to heaven, plus who wants to go back to the horrors of their old life? It took lots of honesty and crying to God and I sought spiritual counseling because I needed extra help to have some hope. Eventually God brought me a special brother when things seemed most hopeless. He even proposed during a visit at the hospital! God has been very gracious to me. I have improved physically over the past 10 years with my husband’s support and input, and with exploring what else may help. There have been spiritual victories, in both character changes that I needed and, during the hardest time, one of my neighbors became a faithful disciple. Faith pleases God and he will bless it!

Application:
Friends and Family — Pray and be compassionate to those around you with chronic conditions, even ask “what has it been like to live with this?” and multiply it by 365
City — Pray and imagine the fruit that will come from your faith and perseverance

More Bible: Romans 8:18-30, Prov. 4:23 & 17:22, Jer. 29:11-13, Hebrews 11:1,6
Day 5 — Write Down the Vision by Pamela Monroe

_Habakkuk 2:2 “Then the Lord replied: Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.”_

**Insight**

- Journaling is one of the most undervalued spiritual disciplines.
- Why did God ask them to “write it down?” Because we have a habit to remember what we should forget and forget what we should remember.
- John was asked to write down the vision in Revelation 21:5; a similar reason in Habakkuk - to ensure that it is imprinted on the mind, and transferred to future generations and those in distant places.
- Journaling is the best antidote, maybe the only antidote to spiritual amnesia

I love journaling! I tend to think too much. My mind is often cluttered with thoughts, and journaling helps me “sort things out” so to speak. Journaling has also become my “real voice.” What I would otherwise be afraid to disclose to others, I can speak in the pages of my journal. Writing things down helped me find my way out of many a “wilderness or desert” mentality. Writing it down, is also like “putting it in writing”, like a legal and binding document to which one could be held accountable. I used to ‘edit’—yes, ‘edit’ my journal entries in the unlikely event someone might read them. I didn’t want to be held accountable! What was even worse, I did not want to be accountable even to myself. I did not want to own how ugly some of my thoughts and feelings were.

God knows the value of writing things down. He breathed His holy visions and wisdom into men and they wrote His Holy Journal: the Bible (2Tim.3:16). God is not afraid to be accountable to His Word!! God is not just bound to His Word, He _IS_ the Word—who is Christ! (John 1:1). The revelation of that Word—that is, Christ—_is_ the mystery of God revealed! (Col. 1:26-27). And it is so incredibly phenomenal to all of creation!

Three years ago, I had a dream that a man gifted me a home. I wrote it down in my journal hoping, praying and believing it will come true. What are your hopes and dreams? Have you written them down and lifted them up to God faithfully in prayer?

**Application:**

Friends and Family — Write down who you would like God to reveal Himself.

City — Write down a vision for your neighbors, your child’s school and your workplace.

**Prayer:** Father, Help me to live out your Word, believe in your precious promises and to endure to the end.

**More Bible:** Isaiah 30:8, Daniel 12:4, Deuteronomy 27:8, 31:19, 31:22 & Revelation 1:18-19
Day 6 — Shameless Prayers by Lace Goodwin

Luke 11:8 “...because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.”

Insights

**Pray not to stray.** Jesus, the son of God, the savior of humanity, and the most spiritual man that ever lived was PRAYING. How is our prayer life?

**Humility is essential to spirituality.** "Lord, teach us how to pray..." A disciple who is presumably more spiritual than all of us combined and is a constant companion of Christ himself has the humility to recognize that he needs help. Pride can stop us from admitting that "we don’t have it all together" and we need help.

**Shameless audacity to ask brings limitless capacity.** When we ask for seemingly immense and improbable things we are opening doors for endless, ceaseless, and limitless possibilities for God to work in our lives. Let’s not put a cap on what God can do.

What do these greatest athletes (Ali, Jordan, Phelps, Bryant, James, and Brady) have in common aside from unbelievable talent? They all exhibit shameless audacity, claiming a win even before the game begins. Many call it arrogance but, those who understand sports call it the "heart of a champion." These athletes brazenly claim victory because they have faith in what they can do and they hope to intimidate their competition. Despite their greatest achievements, they are mere human beings so imagine the great things God can do when we make bold, shameless and audacious prayers to him. If we truly believe that God is all powerful then, why limit his capacity to exhibit his power? Nothing is impossible or too immense for God. Denis Waitley quotes, “The winners in life think constantly in terms of I can, I will, and I am.” If you go in a competition with a loser mindset then, you have already lost. We should have a victorious spiritual outlook, “With God I can, With God I will, and With God I am”. If we believe that God has our backs all the time, and that He has the power to eliminate our "opponent" don’t you think Satan will be intimidated by us? If we are playing on God’s team, won't we be a force to reckon with?

I have lost so much the past couple of years... I lost a lover, a home, a business, a job, a best friend, and a friend. It was so easy to be angry and succumb to desolation. It seemed that I was constantly battling with life’s partialities and unfair shakes. I was drowning in sorrow but, I had no way to stop the storms from crashing in. I was relentless in finding temporary cures for my despair. I lived in blatant disregard of others and unabashed in my sin. Until one day I no longer had the strength to fight. My life was crumbling down and I couldn’t do anything about it. I cried out to God in desperation, pleading for Him to rescue me from my misery. I had the audacity to beg him for help even when I was a shameless sinner. And He did, He rescued me. I could boldly and gratefully say that although I lost everything I had, I have gained more than I can possibly imagine. I found God in the embers of fire that threatened to destroy my inner self. God has allowed me to lose all that I thought I knew, so I could gain everything I need to know. I am thankful for God’s grace, mercy, and for second chances. If He can rescue me from the depths of sin and despair, then nothing and no one is insurmountable for Him.

**Application:** Friends and Family – Circle the names family and friends that are going through challenging times. Pray that God will work in their lives. City - Pray that disciples be bold in sharing faith. Let’s claim countless victories (physical, emotional and spiritual healing) for the whole San Fernando Valley

**Prayer** - Dear God, Allow us to have shameless audacity in our prayer life. Allow us to relinquish everything to you in our lives that seem impossible and insurmountable.

**More Bible:** Matthew 19:26, Matthew 21:21, Psalm 118:6, Isaiah 41:10
Day 7 — Act On It by Indee Lopez

Mark 16:14-2 “Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.”

**Insights and Key Questions:**

- Would you have wished you were Mary Magdalene to whom Jesus appeared first after he had resurrected or one of the Eleven?
- Can you relate to the Eleven who was rebuked for their lack of faith?
- Would there have to be signs to believe in Christ?
- How do we align our thoughts with Jesus’ commands to ‘go into all the world’?
- After knowing who Christ is, how willing are you to go out into the world and evangelize The Valley?
- How much confidence do you have feeling the presence of God when you share your faith?

Becoming a disciple gave me all the confidence that I need to share about Christ to others. I was very quiet and timid growing up. I usually don’t see the need to say much but rather just observe and listen. It wasn’t the impromptu speech, declamation and oratorical experiences I had in high school that taught me how to speak boldly, but from learning the truth and what it meant to have Christ in my life. Motherhood made it even more helpful in my evangelism. Having three kids and the frequent visits to the library, clinics, being in soccer/basketball games, school events, birthday parties I could not count, are the venues where I make the most of every opportunity to be like Mary Magdalene sharing the good news HE HAS RISEN. As we do our day to day tasks, we can always bring Christ with us. We are all empowered by the Spirit and we are called to GO, called to preach, called to teach, and called to be fruitful. People don’t need to look further for miracles and signs. Sisters, we are the living proof! Let’s carry on the great commission and witness the many victories He will do in our lifetime.

**Application:**

Create a prayer list of the people you want to reach out to.
Check your contacts. Send a note or a card to someone you haven’t seen and been in touch for years. Re-build the friendship!
Let’s go back to the day when we made our good confession. What’s our primary mission? What would it take to GO? Pray for boldness and discernment. Let’s pay attention to the world and ACT ON IT!

**Prayer:**
Dear Lord, as I examine my life and what it proclaims to the world, help me to stay on track with my mission and be radically seeking for lost souls and be an instrument to save them. In Jesus’ Name, Amen!

**More Bible:** Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 4:2
Day 8 — Whatever You Ask by Indee Lopez

John 14:1 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Insights:
- Jesus — reassuring, comforting, serving, misunderstood, troubled, but ready
- Disciples — confused, concerned, anxious, curious, afraid, but willing
- Bruce Wilkinson’s Secrets of The Vine asks, “How closely would you listen? How long and hard would you ponder your Lord’s last words to you?”
- The disciples were comforted by Jesus after he shared about his betrayal and his prediction of Peter’s denial
- Jesus promises a place for us in heaven and that he will come back to take us
- A constant desire to know the Father and the Son is an important goal every Christian should have.
- Knowing, believing and having faith in the Father is the same as knowing, believing and having faith in Jesus Christ
- How is your prayer life? How much confidence do we have when we ask?

I am touched by the power of prayer. Every day, as soon as everyone gets in the van ready to go to work or school, church, or basically anywhere, each member prays for each other and prays for safety. Peaceful mornings or chaotic mornings, we still pray! We ‘make our requests known to Him’ (Philippians 3:6). It’s an amazing feeling to be protected when we ask for His hand for safety. Our prayer times have been the bonding moments for my family. As we connect with God through prayer, it teaches our children to surrender everything to God. Teaching them to pray to God in the name of His Son introduces a relationship with Jesus. He is our mediator! It gives us the confidence that we can approach Him about anything as we have unlimited access to God. “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Heb 4:16). We are blessed and so privileged!

Application:
Let’s pray confidently for our friends and loved ones and CLAIM that our prayers have already been answered.
Let’s pray for people to seek God and be hungry for Him.
Let’s pray for the impossible and see how God will be glorified.

Prayer:
Dear Lord, Thank you for the many wonderful promises that gives us the confidence to keep fighting, to never give up or quit. Knowing that Jesus mediates for us, we can change, we can find the right way, we can know the truth, we can count on you! In Jesus’ Name, Amen!

More Bible: James 4:3, Matthew 18:20
Day 9 — Dream Factory by Helen Hayter Quiroz

II Corinthians 10:5 “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

Insights and Key Questions:
-- In context, Paul is responding to the negative comments of some people that Paul was unimpressive in speech and in person, yet his letters were ‘weighty and powerful’ (II Cor. 10:10).
-- To accomplish God’s Dream, Paul’s approach to ministry was not worldly (10:2). He realized that his actions were powerful sources of influence when with the Corinthians in person and his letters were bold in order to make his points clear to them when he was away from them. Paul challenges the judgmental individuals to not judge by mere appearances (by worldly thinking) (10:7), but to see the spiritual reasons behind his actions.
-- Paul could have listed off all his ministry successes to belittle them and argue why his ministerial approach was incredibly effective and impressive; however, Paul does not give in to boasting. Instead, he urges them to see the power behind his spiritual discipline and his willingness to combat obstacles spiritually (I Cor. 10).
-- Paul takes the time to understand and learn who he is teaching, to identify the evil/sinful thinking, and address the issues with spiritual persuasion.
-- There is growing coldness and worldly thinking in the people around us every day. How are we combating the worldly influences that affect us? What are we doing to better equip ourselves as we share our faith and Jesus’ love to demolish arguments and every pretension in society around us?

Paul is one of the most powerful examples of persuasion and of bold action to accomplish God’s vision/dream, even when he was sharing his faith alone. In Athens (Acts 17:16-34), while he was waiting for his co-workers on the mission trip to join him, he spent time in the marketplace (the agora of Athens) where the city hung out, did their shopping and met up for stimulating conversation. Paul spent time at the agora daily and learned about the ways of the Jews and God-fearing Greeks there. There were some philosophers who hung out there who started debating with him about their views and asking Paul about his. Eventually, they asked him to present to them as a group just up the road on their high place where they would gather, Mars Hill or Areopagus, which is near the famous place of worship in Athens, the Acropolis. During classical times, the Areopagus was used as a high court of appeal for criminal and civil cases. Alone as a disciple and surrounded by the most intelligent and powerful people of the day with arrogant and worldly beliefs, Paul is confident in the One Almighty God who stands with him on this hill and boldly proclaims to them the ‘Unknown god’ that they have a monument to — the one who is over all, through all and in all — and ultimate judge. God used Paul to convert several influential people in Athens during that short time.

Application:  Friends and Family – Spend time and pray to truly understand/love the people around us, so that our sharing of faith addresses the need. Seek to find scriptures and spiritual principles that meet the need and will be persuasive also.
-- City – Spend time where you’ll meet the open, influential people in your community. Seek to have spiritual conversations and study the Bible with them knowing the Almighty God is with you. Imitate Paul’s approach in Athens.

More Bible: Matthew 28:18-20, Psalm 51:6
Day 10 - Crazy Faith by Lace Goodwin

Luke 18:1-8 “Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up....”

Insights:

1. Jesus teaches us to do two things: Always (at all times, on all occasions) PRAY and NOT give up. (v. 1) He has given us a directive to do both and not choose one over the other. He commands us to have "combo", "supersize" it and take it "to go".
2. The judge is NOT someone to emulate. He is unafraid of God, an unbeliever. He is uncaring, indifferent, cold, detached and uninvolved (v. 2)
3. The widow "kept coming with a plea". (v. 3) she has remarkable traits that we should strive to have: resilience, humility, determination, faith and hope.

There are countless of nights that I watch my two daughters sleep with joyful recognition that I am blessed and fortunate to have these precious gifts in my life. My 7-year old Samantha has been plagued with various health issues since birth. She was born with Respiratory Distress Syndrome (RDS) and had to stay in ICU for 10 days. Her breathing stopped a month later and she had to be resuscitated. Since then, she has been struggling with asthma and eczema. She has been bullied in school for having "ugly" skin. Kids will not play with her because, they think eczema is contagious. Many nights she cries inconsolably for not being "normal" or not having a dad (she hasn't seen her father in 5 years - he chose not to). Thankfully, we have God and His Kingdom. God has become her refuge and the kingdom her haven. My daughters and I constantly pray together. I love it because it gives me a glimpse of what is truly in their hearts. I am particularly amazed by Samantha's "crazy faith". Sometimes, she prays about seemingly silly, mundane, and random things like "God, please remind my mom to buy me chocolates," "Please give my mom money so, we can watch a movie," "Please let day go by really fast." But she also constantly pleads with God, echoing lifelong sentiments..."God, please make my eczema go away. I just want to be normal. Please give me my dad back or any dad. I know you are the greatest father in the world and I'm sorry for being demanding but, I want someone to carry me on his shoulders or play with me. Please God, do not let my mom die ever. She is all that I have and I love her so much." I find these prayers bittersweet and my heart breaks for her misery but then, it warms my heart that she is incessantly surrendering everything to God.

More often than not, we let our rationale side get in the way of our faith. We let our cynicism seep through our prayer life. If only we could pray with childlike abandon. Why can't we be more like our children and pray without inhibitions about everything - because there is no such thing as a silly prayer. What's stopping you from having "crazy" faith? We do not overcome adversities by relying on our strength, but we triumph over them by faithful and hopeful perseverance. Believe that God hears, listens and answers all our prayers (big or small). If there's one thing we should learn from Samantha, it's that eczema is not contagious but, crazy faith is. Let's spread it abundantly and contaminate everyone!

Application: Pray with your children. Have quiet time with someone. Share your "crazy faith" with someone.

Prayer: Lord, please increase my faith. Allow me to trust in you completely. Please give me a heart the joyfully surrenders everything to you. May I live out the purpose you set out for me.

More Bible: Matthew 17:20, Matthew 21:21, Romans 8:32, James 4:2
Day 11 – Watch with Gratitude by Johanna Tavitian

Col 4:2 “Devote yourself to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”

Insights:
- Do not give up - Sometimes we grow tired of praying, especially if we do not see it being answered right away
- Be faithful - be persistent miracles comes slowly, for the delay may be God’s way of working. His will in our lives—in his own time and purpose
- Grateful attitude- answered prayers may not be the way we hoped for but in the way our Father know what’s best for us
- What’s the priority in your life? What’s the first thing you grab when you wake up the bible or your smart phone?
- Are you thankful for the church, the leaders & the family group you are in right now?

I was in college when I was met and it took 4 years before I finally studied the bible because my college degree and selfish ambition were my priorities in life. Nine months after my baptism, my best friend /discipler left the church, and soon after I saw friends and my bible talk leader turn their back on God as well. It all started with having a critical heart. For example, a sister being prideful towards me and then saying to myself, “I am not growing in this group “or “the church is not serving me.” I did not even know that God was preparing me for my own husband of 8 years to leave our church family. Through persistent prayer we got reunited, but he never came back to church. I prayed and remained faithful, but 4 years later I am now going through a divorce.

How can I remain thankful in this situation? I count my blessings, that my husband invited me to church and gave me two sons. I’m in a bible talk that consistently helps me by praying with me and encourages me daily; even making sure I do not eat alone for the next 7 days. I belong to a church, a family that supports me and my children through counseling and prayers; hence I am not alone during the most difficult time in my life.

Application:
We need to remember that we made a choice to have a relationship with God and for us not to have a critical heart — devote to pray daily and to be open about your struggles.
Watch and make sure I am at all the meetings of the church so I can grow in my faith and hold on to the blessings that I have received—my family, friends and health.
Reach out to others going through tough times, ask them to have a prayer walk or serve by meeting their needs. Write down a blessing you receive daily, share about it and thank God.
Let’s pray to meet people that are going through challenging times and help them to know that only God can give us peace, contentment and true joy.

Prayer: God, thank you for preparing me for these difficult times and I appreciate the faithful women and men in my life that have shown me that through serving others we can find happiness.

More Bible: I Thes 5:18, Ephesians 1:16, Psalm 107:1
Day 12 — Sow A Seed by Indee Lopez

Matthew 17:20….”He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Insights:
- Jesus rebuked the disciples for being unbelieving, faithless and perverse.
- We are quick to think we are over our limitations, while God has already applied His limitless power
- Jesus accepts the father’s faith on behalf of his son
- Do we have FAITH as small as a mustard seed?
- Faith means willingness to go where God leads and believing in what He can do for our lives
- Active faith is sufficient to cast out not merely demons but to move mountains
- Our heavenly Father takes what we have, and grows it into what is needed.

Here’s a surprising email from a Mom with 2 kids I invited to church in 2010 at the Northridge Library which I received in February 2011. Read on:

Indee, I have quite a story for you. I can’t wait to tell you. Thank you for following through and inviting us to church 2 years ago. I had really wanted to go, but I wanted to thank you now because that event was a very powerful sign for me from God where I needed to be. If you would like to hear our story please let me know. I can e-mail some of it, talk to you on the phone, or we will be sharing our testimony on March 13th at the church where we were baptized and just became members. That is in Santa Clarita where we live now.

I saw you invited us to go to your church. I wanted to say thanks. Is March 6 a special day? I will have to give the visit some thought since the trip is a little far for us now with the kids in tow, but I wanted to know if something special would be happening on that particular day.

I can’t wait to talk to you more. And I wanted to encourage you to keep listening to those promptings to tell people about God and Christ. God may not always reveal the reason to you right away or ever, but God has a purpose and a plan. I think our story will help you see the reason for talking to us and why you may never know the results of what God has asked you to do. You must have had great faith to trust God and just talk to us like that. That’s pretty bold. Of everyone I met and knew, you were the only one who ever invited me to church before we were Christians. So hope to talk to you more. Let me know how you would like to communicate further. God bless your day, Indee!

Who knows that God will stir up something in her heart? I believe that someday, she will become a true disciple of Jesus Christ…by FAITH! Nothing is impossible for God!

Application:
Find a person today and sow seeds of faith in his/her heart. Have faith that God will make it grow!

Prayer:
Dear Father, Increase my faith as I plant seeds in people’s hearts. Accept my inadequate resources and make them more than sufficient by the power of Your Spirit.

More Bible: Jeremiah 7:23; Matthew 21:21; 1 Corinthians 13:2; Ephesians 6:6
Day 13 — One Day by Sharon S. Kinard

Acts 10:3 One day about three o’clock in the afternoon he had a vision. An angel of God, as real as his next-door neighbor, came in and said, “Cornelius.”

INSIGHTS

A devout man…. A truly religious person, who had forsaken the Roman idolatry and superstition, in which he was brought up…. [He is] one that feared God: the one only living and true God, the God of Israel; he had the fear of God wrought in his heart, which is a part of the covenant of grace, a blessing of it, and the beginning of wisdom; he was truly a gracious man, a converted person, and who from an internal principle worshipped God externally: with all his house; he brought up his family in a religious way, as every good man should; and which was very remarkable in a Gentile, a soldier, and an officer:…. (He) and prayed to God always; every day, at the usual times of prayer; prayed privately in his closet, and with his family, as well as attended public service of this kind.

He had a vision, in which an angel delivered them to him. It was about the ninth hour of the day, at three of the clock in the afternoon, which is [for us] an hour of business and conversation; but then, because it was in the temple the time of offering the evening sacrifice, it was made by devout people an hour of prayer…. Now here we are told, (1.) That an angel of God came in to him. By the brightness of his countenance, and the manner of his coming in, he knew him to be something more than a man, and therefore nothing less than an angel, an express from heaven. (2.) That he saw him evidently with his bodily eyes, not in a dream presented to his imagination, but in a vision presented to his sight. (3.) That he called him by his name, Cornelius, to intimate the particular notice God took of him. (4.) That he was afraid… The wisest and best men have been struck with fear upon the appearance of any extra-ordinary messenger from heaven; and justly, for sinful man knows that he has no reason to expect any good tidings thence. And therefore Cornelius cries, “What is it, Lord?”

Source: Matthew Henry’s Commentary

KEY QUESTION:

What visions has God presented to you that frightened you?

APPLICATION:

I was preparing to declare Jesus as my Lord and Savior. There was one day to go before I was to make the greatest vow of my life. I was grasping the weight of my decision when a woman of God asked if I would be open to leading a group of single women following my conversion. “Who me?” I asked. “What do I know? Can’t I just wait it out a year or so and see how it goes?” Boy did that vision strike fear in me. I was called to lead yet wanted so much to run and hide, like Elijah! I took the challenge and for the next four years had the great privilege of mentoring so many young women as I learned to walk with God.

PRAYER:

God, when righteous dreams and visions are presented to me, may I remember your sovereignty and push past the fear. After all, I live that Your Will be done.

More Bible: 2 Timothy 1:7, Psalm 34:7, Joshua 1:9, 1 John 4:18, Psalm 56:3
Day 14 — Go, Set, Ready! By Indee Lopez

Hebrews 11:8 “By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.”

Insights:
• Abraham, father of faith, set the bar high with his amazing faith and obedience to God
• When God called me, did I understand where I was going? (verse 8)
• How “at home” do I feel in this world? (verse 9)
• Am I ready to die before receiving the promises? (verse 12)
• This world is not our home and Abraham set the example by looking forward to something permanent — heaven! It is where our hope should be!
• Sara and Rahab are WOMEN of great faith as well as Queen Esther, Ruth, Mary and more
• GO: telling others about God will increase our faith
• SET: making sure your feet are ready to run as in running a race
• READY prepared for the battle and prepared to meet Him someday

On March 12, 2000, Little Diego, Danny and I landed in San Francisco unsure of what our lives would be in this foreign land. I took a few months of vacation leave from work as I was not confident of our decision. Far from our loved ones and afraid of how we would bring up our own family and where, we took a step of faith and I submitted my resignation in June of the same year. As IT recruits, we were at the mercy of our employer regarding which state we would be assigned to. We've been to LA, Virginia, Missouri, and back to LA. It has been a roller coaster ride! Is it our calling to leave our home, our families, our positions in the Telecom world, our security to go to an unknown place. We wondered within ourselves, where is our promised land? “Lord, where do you want us to GO?” Where is God leading us to accomplish His plans and purposes? For 14 years, we witnessed a lot of victories and plenty of defeats and stayed faithful through thick and thin still hoping and praying for growth in every area of our lives. We are grateful for this church and how our lives are guided in terms of our relationship with God, our marriage, our parenting and our relationship with others. I know this will continuously be our temporary home…just a stop on our way to where we’re going! (Carrie Underwood’s song ringing in my head) Quite an emotional ride! LA might not be our promised land, but it is our ministry and our battlefield for now. We are resolved to stay and it’s better that way so we can focus on serving others. I hope our lives will always be a testimony of faith in action…this will always be our prayer. How often do we hear this sequence “Go, set, ready!”? It has been mostly “On your mark, get set, go!” Like Abraham, if we exercise our faith, it empowers us to obey His will. Instant obedience shows our love for HIM. Whatever the Lord brought forth before you, GO with the assurance He’s with us every step of the way. SET your eyes on HIM and be READY for the outpouring love He freely gives and the surprises life will bring while we walk by faith.

Application:
Go over your list of people you’re faithfully praying for and build a weekly calendar of outreach. Grab a couple of invites and wherever you go today, keep 1 handy (or ready in your hand) and whoever the spirit leads you to, hand it out to him or her and share away. It may be the most unlikely open person where you can practice your faith.

Prayer:
Dear Father, Today, please grant me to have fresh faith and believe that you can help me in my new walk with you. In obedience to your word, help me Lord to be your hands and feet and to never walk against the flow of your plans for me. In the most Precious name of Jesus, I pray. AMEN!

More Bible: John 5:8-9, 1 Peter 1:13,
Day 15 - Contend with Me by Lace Goodwin

Psalm 35:23 "Awake, and rise to my defense! Contend for me, my God and Lord."

Insight:

1. David is venting out his anger and anguish to God. He wants vindication and punishment for his enemies. Despite his fury, he chose to be righteous and surrendered everything to God. He didn't act on his anger!!! How do we handle our frustrations?
2. How truthful are you with your prayers? David was 100% real, he prayed about the good, bad and the ugly. It is pointless to edit our prayers because God knows what is in our hearts. He wants us to be completely open so we can guard our hearts.
3. Our greatest enemy is ourselves! The voices in our heads that drive us give in to our sinful nature. Do not let them win by relying on ourselves, but let God fight the battle for us. Let God contend for you!

Like the rest of the world, I love superhero movies! Iron Man and Batman are my absolute favorites. Among all other superheroes, they are the most flawed therefore, the most relatable. I am drawn to their frailties; arrogance, self-centeredness and egotistical character (sounds familiar?). They grapple with their fate, ingratitude of the people they serve, exhaustion from pretense and camouflage (double life), insecurity and desolation from solitary existence. It is easy to empathize with the struggles they have within such as how they strive to overcome the inner demons that prevent them from becoming the superhero they are meant to be. We cheer from delight as they dull the voices telling them: "They are not good enough," "The world is better off without them," "People are ungrateful, why save them," and "They have sacrificed too much for too little." We are moved because they prevail over the things that weaken them. Their change of heart provides strength, courage and inspiration to defeat the "evil forces" that threaten humanity. Hurrah! Applause for another triumph of the human spirit? But since humans are innately selfish, and without God are likely ruled by the sinful nature, shouldn't a more apt expression be triumph of the godly spirit?

My life's journey has been arduous and circuitous. The path I trudged was dark and difficult. If I met God then and He asked, "Lace, what are sins you have committed?"... My response probably would have been, "God, it would be easier to list down what I have not done!" I cringe every time I look back at my old life, my old self, and my old path. I am grateful that God has fought hard for me to have a relationship with Him. He has allowed me to stumble numerous times so when I'm badly bruised and exhausted I will turn and cling to Him. God has fought for me and he has fought hard for each one of us. He sacrificed his only son for our salvation. Do not let our arrogance hinder God from contending for us. Let us not fight with him but, let us fight for him so he in turn can fight our battles for us.

Application:

Open up to someone about your inner struggles. Be completely vulnerable and let them see your sinful nature. Be open to advice and input.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for the strength that you provide. Please help me guard my heart. Do not let anyone or anything make me stumble or fall. Continue to fight for me.

More Bible: Exodus 14:14, Deuteronomy 3:21
Day 16 — Lord Surprise Me by Helen Hayter Quiroz

John 3:8 “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

Insights:
-- For those of us who are disciples of Jesus and children of God, the Holy Spirit works in us and through us overcoming sin in our lives and enabling us to live a holy life. (Romans 8:14) The Holy Spirit leads us — He will not coerce, compel, force or possess us. His leading will never conflict with the Word of God.
-- 10 ways to know you’re following the Holy Spirit:
1. The Holy Spirit guides us into God’s will. Ps. 143:10
2. The Holy Spirit guides us to pray in accordance with God’s will. Romans 8:26-27
3. The Holy Spirit guides us to live God’s Word. Ezekiel 36:27
4. The Holy Spirit guides us to obtain God’s promises. Ephesians 1:13-14
5. The Holy Spirit guides us to get away from sin. Galatians 5:16
6. The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth. John 16:13
8. The Holy Spirit guides us to see what God has given us. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13
9. The Holy Spirit guides us by His power. Zechariah 4:6
-- What are the ways God has already surprised you in your walk following His Spirit? In what ways do you need to grow in your sensitivity to the Spirit and improve your daily walk with Him?

Jesus is our ultimate example! I try to imagine being a disciple living with Jesus during his time — observing how He got up early and went off to pray alone, how He was willing to change plans midstream to meet a need that came up, how He had compassion for the lost state and helplessness of people even when He himself was tired, hungry and needed a break, how He kept teaching the disciples even when they were slow to learn, how He relied on God when it meant more suffering than He was willing to face — ultimately, after “He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross…God exalted Him to the highest place.” (Philippians 2) There are so many ways to live in the Spirit … I long to be more like Him!

Application:
-- Friends and Family — Who has the Spirit called me to serve or reach out to? How will I obey immediately to serve or reach out to those people?
-- City — What ministry or service has the Spirit put on my heart? Have I acted on that calling yet? What do I need to do today?

Prayer — Father, you have given us a very high calling to be your ambassadors to the world! I want to be an effective ambassador to my family, my friends, neighbors, coworkers, and to all that you give me special opportunity to meet today. Please guide me today — help me to see and do all that your Spirit calls me to.
Day 17 - Do Not Delay by Johanna Tavitian

Daniel 9:19 “O Lord Listen, forgive! O Lord hear and act! For your sake my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

Insights:
• Rom. 12:17-21 – understanding God’s forgiveness should make us more willing to forgive
• Matt 5:32 - first step in restoring relationship
• John 8:11 - must lead to change of heart, only way to God’s power
• Do you easily forgive? Do you remember how much you were forgiven?
• Do you believe that forgiveness demonstrate strength not weakness?

My mother left us to come to the US when I was 9, my parents ended separating. Because of this I grew up being resentful and bitter towards my parents. I felt abandoned and unloved, hence not wanting to give my heart to anyone for the fear of being hurt and used. I had trust issues and superficial friendships. When I studied the bible, I learned what true forgiveness means when Jesus died on the cross without delay. My church family has shown me so much compassion every time I have sinned and lost my way, they pray with me and studied Psalm 51. I cried many times because I felt so much love and mercy after all my wrong doing. They do not keep record of wrongdoings, as demonstrated by Joseph (Gen 45:17-20), one of my heroes in the bible. Forgiveness brings freedom and dignity, and there is no sin too great for God to forgive, Psalm 51:1-7. I have learned to forgive my husband and let go of my anger because it will weigh me down and I will not experience the freedom and joy from God.

Application:
- Forgetting what I have leads to complaining. Write down your trials and remember the victories God gave us without delay
- Forgiveness changed my bitterness to joy. Lk15:30 write down the names of the people you want to share your true forgiveness and peace
- Forgiveness involves both attitudes and action. Rom12:19-21. Make sure to call or hangout with the people that have been struggling.
Friends and Family – call a brother or sister that you had a conflict or falling out
City-Lets pray for boldness to share how much we have been forgiven

Prayer: Father, thank you for your forgiveness. Help me to seek forgiveness from others and my need for humility and a change of heart to be more like Jesus.
Day 18: Keep Circling Evelyn Casidsid

Joshua 6:4 "Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams’ horns in front of the ark, on the seventh day march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets."

Insights:
In God’s army victory is by faith, not by slick military strategies.  
God asks us to see beyond the physical and perceptible 
The impossible is always possible with God on your side. 
God gave specific instructions to Israelites to defeat the enemy without weapons.  
Keep circling - in other words keep working and walking towards our goals.  
God asks people to do crazy things!  
Noah to build an ark  
Abraham moved his family to a country he did not know  
Gideon sent his soldiers away and win with jars and torches  
Ezekiel to lie on his side 430 days for the sin of the people  
Peter to catch a fish and pay taxes with the money in its mouth  
Ananias to study with a guy who kills Christians for a living  
Faith happens when we leave the comfort zone (Hebrews 11: 1, 2, 8)  
Victory happens when we persevere (Hebrews 10:36)  
The one who stands firm to the end will be saved. (Matt 10:22)  
This kind of faith (trust) comes only when you know God intimately  

The message is to continue to BELIEVE, keep the FAITH, speak BOLDLY and great things will happen!

Application:
Many times along my journey trying to live a godly life, I saw opportunities to compromise. After being single for a long 15 years, my heart started to become filled with pride, insecurity and impurity. I complained a lot and I thought maybe God didn’t want me to get married and have a child. From what I could see, there was no one in sight.  
At one point, I humbled myself and surrendered my heart to God. I decided to believe in the power of prayer no matter what, but it was still all up to Him. One specific prayer that God answered stands out to me. I prayed to Him to reveal in my dream who he wanted me to be with. A week later, God revealed in my dream Korina running to me and Ramil as well. They lived on the other side of the world and I thought it was not possible. At that time, we were just building a friendship. However, the answered prayer helped me to believe that God wanted them in my life. Then in 2 years time, we got married and by faith, I moved to the United States! Prayer is powerful!

Prayer:
Dear God, Help me to believe that anything is possible through you! Even though I may not see how my family can be saved in the Philippines, I know that nothing is too hard for you. In Jesus name, AMEN!

More Bible: Psalm 34:1-19, , John 12:24 , Romans 8:28-32
Day 19 – Memorial Offerings by Tanisha Chen

Acts 10:4 “Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked. The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.”

Insights:

• Cornelius wasn’t a Jew yet he believed in God, and prayed to him regularly.
• He was a man of authority in his job and a spiritual leader in his home.
• He was known to be righteous and he was respected by all the Jews.
• Cornelius did what he knew to do but he still had not received the message of Salvation.
• God acknowledged Cornelius’s prayers and gifts towards others as a “memorial offering”.
• A memorial offering is something done to preserve the memory of a person or event in a form of worship.

How are you preserving the memory of Jesus in your life? Have you considered that even the respected and well established leaders in your community and workplaces need to know the message of the Cross?

There are many people like Cornelius that live among us of great character, who sincerely want to make a difference yet they don’t know the true message of salvation. Many times when I come in contact with people like Cornelius I honestly get intimidated. I hear about all their “achievements”, “community projects”, “church events” and I think, “They won’t be open”, “they’re too busy” or “who am I to share with them?” Shame on me!

About 7 years ago a dear sister Blanca Abal who was working as a teacher’s assistance invited her “boss” a preschool teacher to church and today Yani Ali is our sister in Christ. Yani is one of the pioneering state preschool teachers; she’s well respected in her field and is known to be kind and generous to those in need. She’s also married to a Pakistani and has 3 children. At the time she was invited, her husband was asking her to convert to his Muslim faith. She prayed for God to lead her to a Christian church and so he did. Today, Yani, her mom and her housekeeper are all faithful disciples in Christ!

Application:

Friends and Family- Ask two people in your circle of family and friends that you admire and respect to study the Bible.
City-Pray for the Cornelius’s in your community to receive an invitation to Church.

Prayer:

Father, I pray you help me put aside my insecurities that I may share about you with those I admire and respect who still have not understood your message of salvation.

More Bible: I Timothy 2:4, Romans 12:1, 10:12-15
Matthew 17:20 “He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Insights:
• The disciples were presented with a dire situation. A boy was physically suffering before them.
• The father was desperate and humble, he kneels and begs for mercy for his son’s healing.
• Jesus responds, “Bring the boy here to me”. (17:17)
• The disciples were puzzled by their inability to heal the boy.
• Jesus points the issue to the disciples’ lack of faith.
• The disciples only needed enough faith the size of a mustard seed to “heal” the boy.
• A mustard seed is equal to 1 to 2 mm in diameter, practically a dot.

How do you deal with the mountains you see before you?

When we’re young Christians we readily accept our need for Jesus and surrender ourselves to his mercy understanding that on our own, we can do nothing. As we get older we sometimes begin to rely on ourselves forgetting who we are in “Christ” and what we have is because of God. When I first started studying the bible my mom was too. In fact, my mom was baptized before me. I was 17 while my mom was a 40yr old single mom of five. By the way my mom also has a mild form of Cerebral palsy. At the time my mom had an 18, 17, 16, 12 and 2yr old. She was newly separated from my dad, on welfare living in a 2 bedroom with all her kids. When the disciples first met us as a family they weren’t put off by her situation. In fact, they loved up on her and understood their purpose. That is to bring her to Jesus. Looking back it’s as if they took us by the hand and said, “We’re taking you to know Jesus. Jesus has a plan for you”. I’m thankful for the disciples faith back then. Actually it humbles me because there have been times when I see someone with “lots” of kids and I hesitate to share with them. There have been other times I learn about a stranger’s problems and I feel overwhelmed instead of thinking, “let me take you to Jesus”. The problem with our faith is sometimes we make it about “what we can do” and not, “What God can do”. Actually, what we can do is PRAY and take the mountain to Jesus!

Application:

Friends and Family- Offer to pray with family and friends you know who have “mountains” in their lives and faithfully pray for them.

City- Pray for those who are suffering without hope in the valley to meet a disciple.

Prayer:

Father, forgive me when I choose to rely on my strength and help me remember that with you nothing is impossible and I can do nothing without you.

Day 21 – Prayer Fleece by Tanisha Chen

Judges 6:37 “…look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.”

Insights:
• Gideon was called by God to carry out his plans.
• Gideon was sent an angel with words of encouragement from God, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” (6:12) “I will be with you,” (6:16).
• Gideon was raised hearing about God’s deliverance of his people from Egypt but doubted God’s presence because of the oppressed state of the Israelites.
• Gideon was reluctant to obey; instead he focused on his weaknesses. “My clan is the weakest”, “I am the least in my family.” (6:15)
• Gideon continually asked God for signs to be assured of his presence before he would “act”.
• God graciously gave the “signs” Gideon needed to build up his confidence.

How many signs do you need before you’re willing to trust and obey God?

In 1990, I was 17 and was working as a cashier at Target when a customer invited me to a bible talk; she was married with 2 kids. That same week two disciples, both single in fact one was a neighbor, door knocked on our apartment and invited my sister to a bible talk. I wondered if these three people could all be from the same church. I attended a 4th of July BBQ and sure enough I was right. I took it as a sign, a calling from God. When asked to study the Bible I did and although I was excited to hear about being a disciple I didn’t think I could do it. I was nervous and scared and thought of all my inadequacies. But the sisters encouraged me and with their faith I gained the confidence that I could be a faithful daughter to God. After 3 weeks of studying the bible I was baptized! Today I’m thankful for God’s grace and patience with me, for the sisters’ words of encouragement and for revealing himself to me with signs when I needed it.

Application:

Friends and Family- Ask your family and friends outside the church if they’ve prayed for a sign from God before, then use that as a means to share about your conversion.
City- Pray to be used by God to be a part of someone’s “prayer fleece” in your community.

Prayer:

Father, I thank you for the many signs you’ve given me to help build up my faith when I needed it. I ask that you will help me to remember your grace towards me and help me to be of encouragement to those who lack the faith that they could be used by you to do your will.

Day 22 - Set Your Foot by Tanisha Chen

Joshua 1:3 “I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.”

Insights:
• Joshua had been Moses’ aid in the desert for the past 40 years.
• Joshua was blessed to have crossed the red sea under Moses’ leadership.
• God told Joshua to, “get ready” for the challenge ahead.
• Joshua was now being called to lead the next generation across the Jordan River.
• God promises Joshua that he will be with him just as he had been with Moses.
• God knew that Joshua was nervous, scared and felt lacking in his ability to complete the mission. (vs. 6, 7 and 9).
• The people had to conquer the land to receive the promise.
• Success and prosperity would come through obedience to God’s word.

What Promised Land do you want to claim? And are you willing to lead others to the Promised Land?

Imagine Joshua’s position. Joshua started his journey under a “spiritual giant” along with so many others and though their great leader was no longer with them the mission still needed to be completed. Does this sound familiar? The apostles were left in a similar situation when Jesus ascended into heaven. Just like Joshua and the early apostles were given a great commission so are we in Matthew 28:18-20. Although I thought I understood the great commission I have struggled over the years to really live it. Shortly after I was baptized I was asked to go “door-knocking” to invite others to church. I was so uncomfortable and it made me wonder if I had unknowingly become a “Jehovah Witness.” I needed to be reminded again by the example of the disciples in the bible to put my fears to rest. A few months later I was once again challenged in my faith when I was asked to lead a bible study. I thought, “who me?”, “I don’t know how.” so I was told to prepare myself. Then about one year of being a disciple I was asked to attend my first “leaders meeting.” Again, I was nervous, scared (of responsibility) and uncomfortable. Of course after about 24 years as a disciple I think I’ve knocked on over a hundred doors, led many bible studies and been in lots of leaders meetings and yet God has not stopped calling me higher, to claim the promises and lead others to him. As a disciple I’m sure we all want to “grow” spiritually but maybe we want to do it our way and at our pace. We pray for certain things but expect God to do all the work. God wants to give us every place we set our foot, but he calls us to step out on faith. He promises that he will be with “us” always but there are two things he asks of us.
(1). be ready to claim the promise that is being willing to “fight” for the spiritual blessings. (2). Obey his word, to obey his word we need to know it. (Joshua 1:7-8).

Application:
Friends and Family- Write out the names of those closest to your heart and ask God to help you do your part to lead them to his promised land.
City- Ask your spouse or a friend to go door knocking with you and invite people to church.

Prayer- Father, help me always be willing to fight for the blessings you’ve set aside for me, to remember how you delivered me from the world and to be ready to always help others know you. This I ask in Jesus’ name, Amen.

More bible: James 2:14-18, 2 Peter 1:3-8, Psalm 37:3-6, Mark 6:7-12
Day 23 - Find your Voice by Beth Rosa

Jeremiah 1:4 "The Word of the Lord came to me saying…."

Insights:
--Jeremiah was still a young man or was only about 17 years old when God called him in the prophetic ministry. He was fearful to accept such a responsibility, declaring, "I am still a boy!" But God said to him, "Say not, 'I am a boy,' for you shall go to all that I shall send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you." (V4-8)
--From that moment, Jeremiah lost all fear and delivered his prophecies and warnings to the unrepentant Israel regardless of the persecution he was about to face with the king and his strong men often at the very peril of his life. (Jeremiah 2:4-9)
--When we know deeply in our hearts it is really God who is calling us to follow Him, sometimes we could have many excuses and say "not now God, I'm busy," "I have to finish my thesis," “I’m still studying at school I have other priorities,” or I can’t give up this relationship," Or "I can’t do it." In our mindset being a disciple is hard.
--We were convinced that God has called us to His Kingdom in His own time. And we all know that because God loves us and He has a great plan and purpose for our lives.
--What do you think is the purpose of your existence on earth? Why did God create you?
What is God’s dream for you that He desires for you to embrace in this life?

It was year 1990, three months before my 18th birthday; I was at the university when a woman approached me at the library and invited me to come to her church. She told me something that caught my attention, but even after several invitations, I ignored it and thought it was not really important because I didn’t go to church all my life except on my birthday. After more than ten times of inviting me I finally came one Sunday. That day was the start of change in my life.
It took me almost 3 months before I responded to the calling of a committed life to the Word and to the church of Christ. I thought becoming a disciple of Jesus was hard because I had many excuses back then. Since I’m the eldest of seven siblings, my parents expected me to help them support the family. I was very selfish of my time and attention even for God. I was filled with selfish ambition and just wanted to do things on my own. But God changed my heart completely. I was freed of my sins and to my little world. God gave me a noble dream of seeking and saving the lost for Christ. It was a radical change for me from being selfish to selfless. God had totally unfolded His plans for my life when I made a decision to get baptized in December 1990.

God allowed me to be used for His divine purpose. I shared the gospel at my school like no one else and for the first time I reached out to this woman named Cristina who got baptized. I then met this man Arnel on the jeepney who also got baptized. Arnel then reached out to his family and his brother and mom got baptized too. Now he is currently leading the church in my town province. It didn't stop there I started dreaming to build a zone in our campus and God continually used me to reached out to many women in my university and we grew into 3 house churches. I knew that God has seen my heart, my brokenness of my sins and my gratitude for Him and that He used me as an instrument to save these souls so He can snatch me from the world and be saved. It became my strength to know God is happy with what I'm doing. From sharing my faith to all women like me, at the office, the bus, jeepneys, at the malls and seeing them baptized into Christ, living with a purpose and praising God is a deep joy within.

Application
Friends and Family: Think of names whom you want to see share the Word and pray for them.
City: Pray for the compassionate heart and to see that people are lost and they need disciples in their life.
Prayer- Dear God, Help me to share to others the joy of having a personal relationship with you.

More bible: Psalm 86: 12-13, Hebrews 6:10-11, Romans 6:1-4
Day 24 Pray Throughout the Day by Yesenia Fuentes

1 Thessalonians 5:17 ...pray continually...

Insights: (By Bobby J. Henley) I am thoroughly convinced that we are to be a praying people. We are called to be people who are serious about prayer, to be in continual communion or prayer with our Father in heaven. To pray is to abide in God’s presence, to continue to cry out for His grace and mercy. It still amazes me that we serve a God that allows us to communicate with him no matter the day, time, or situation. He is always there!!! When we simply quiet ourselves and open our mouths, there He is. What does “praying continually” mean to you? To me, this simply means that as believers, we offer up prayers to God throughout the day, going to him with all our cares and concerns. Personal Sharing/Illustration/Or

Example: (By Yesenia Fuentes) In 1998, the year I got baptized, I got to spend a lot of time with Shawn Mead, she led the campus women at the time. As a young Christian, when I was with her, I was in awe at the amount of times that Shawn went to God in prayer. She prayed about everything, from asking God to help her find a parking space to asking God to bless her with a child (she now has three children). Yes, it was the Bible that told me to pray continuously, but it was she that showed me what that looked like. She was a blessing in my life because for years I had suffered in silence with depression, continuously going to God in prayer helped me cope with depression. One of my favorite scriptures is 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, where Paul talks about the thorn given to him, I have numerous times prayed over this scripture. Now, as an older Christian I know that the “thorn” I have been given (depression) brings me closer to God. In those times of sadness it is only God that can comfort me and give me strength. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 the Bible tells us to be joyful, pray continuously and give thanks because that is what God commands and desires for us. God I have learned, wants a real friendship with me. Through prayer I connect with God and he connects with me. Prayer helps me have a real relationship with God; I tell him my every thought and worry and through the Bible he does the same. Through continuous prayer God has becomes my confidant in every situation. When people might be telling me “just be happy” God is telling me “I understand your pain”. It is through praying continuously throughout the day that I am able to choose joy and it is through praying continuously through the day that I am able to see and acknowledge all of God’s blessings and give thanks. I am amazed that the God who created every star in the sky and gave life to every human in this planet allows me to draw close to him every minute of my day! Application: (by Bobby J. Henley) We should continue to pray because when we are praying, we will be drawn closer to God. When we are in consistent communication with someone, we get to know them better. The same is true for you and me.... we will build a stronger relationship with God when we pray continually to him. Let’s Always Pray Until Something Happens!!! (P.U.S.H)

More Reads: (By Yesenia Fuentes)
Psalm 15: 1 Dwelling in God’s sanctuary, Psalm 18:2 Taking refuge in God, Psalm 27: 7 Calling out to God, Psalm 55: 17 Calling out to God continuously, Psalm 90:9 Going to God in the mornings, Psalm 107: 6 Going to God for help, Psalm 116:1 God hears our voice
Day 25 The Prophetic Voice by Yesenia Fuentes

Numbers 11:29 “Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied—but did not do so again….29 But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!”

Insights:

It is incredible to know how blessed we are to have the Holy Spirit placed in us during baptism. People could not even conceive this idea during Moses’ time. In fact, Joshua came to Moses in great indignation because God had just placed his spirit on seventy elders and they were prophesying. Moses’ wish was that “all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” We have been so blessed to actually see Moses’ wish come true. We must not doubt the power of the Holy Spirit which lives in us. Let us be in awe of God’s grace to allow us such an honor to be his prophets. God has given us the Bible (his word) for us to share with others. Let us rely on the Holy Spirit, placed upon us by God on the day of our baptism, to use his word powerfully in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

Do you truly embrace being a “prophetic voice” in the world? God has revealed his will to us through the Bible. Are we allowing God to use our voices to spread his word?

I have been a disciple for 17 years. I have to say that I am a slow learner. I am sure that it has taken me longer than most to learn the basic concepts about Christianity. Therefore to answer the key question in this quiet time: I feel like I am just beginning to embrace and understand what it means to be a “prophetic voice” in this world. See, as a young Christian I did not understand that every time I interact with others I have the ability of being guided by the Holy Spirit to share God’s word. This does not apply only to inviting people to church but also in our every day in-counters with our coworkers, friends and family. God can work through me all the time, if I am willing to be used by him. I am inspired by so many sisters in our church who have embraced being a “prophetic voice”. These sisters will say things like “Well you know the Bible says…” or “Let me share with you a scripture that I think will help…” I feel like sisters who deeply understand the honor of being a “prophetic voice” constantly share with others scriptures that encourage or inspire them, therefore allowing God to work through them. We are so blessed to have examples of these kinds of women around us.

The truth is that from the day we got baptized we carry God’s Holy Spirit. The spirit that God has placed in us is powerful. I believe that satan often tricks me into believing that I am like everyone else, he truly wants me to believe I am powerless. On hard days (those days I struggle with depression or allow the world’s pressures and demands to bring me down) he even has me believing that I do not have much to contribute to those around me. The reality is that satan knows that you and I are prophets of God. He knows that if we allow God to speak through us everything is possible, because God is all powerful. Today, let us go out into the world with full awareness of who we are before God. We are his chosen people, entrusted to share his word. He is not sending us alone but has blessed us with the Holy Spirit!

Application:

In our conversations with those around us let us share God’s word. Encourage someone with a scripture. Be who God made you to be, a prophet in the world!

More Bible: 1Peter 2:9 Declare God’s praises, 1 John 2:14 The word of God lives in you, 2 Corinthians 2:17 We speak like men being sent from God, Colossians 3:16 The word of God dwells in us
Day 26— Double Circle by Pamela Monroe

Matthew 17:21 “This kind only comes out by prayer and fasting.”

Insight:
- Prayer and fasting combined with faith is powerful
- Evil spirits are rebuked in the name of Jesus and in faith in His name;
- Jesus is thus referencing a kind of unbelief (Matt. 17:17); albeit, an unbelief rooted in the senses—a natural response to a matter
- Grief, trauma, and sorrow are easy and unsuspecting portals where Satan ‘circles’ to gain a foothold, that readily becomes a stronghold, due to our acceptance of unresolved and unchecked natural reaction to life’s common realities
- Oh but rejoice sisters! For Jesus comes into our circles of natural unbelief with supernatural, all-encompassing belief!
- When Jesus comes, TALK TO HIM! Even though you told disciples and crowds about your difficulty and they could not help (Matt.17:16), tell Jesus (vs.14-15)! 
- Jesus will clarify your trouble (vs.17,20); Jesus may speak hard truths, but he comes not with condemnation (Rom. 8:1); he keeps not a record of wrong (1Cor.13:5); he finds not fault but gives wisdom (James 1:5-6);
- Jesus will instruct you (vs. 21)…fast and pray!
- Be not only a hearer but a doer of the Word (James 1:22). Jesus sets in motion a ‘double circle’ toward FAITH.

I was a disciple 12 yrs and never applied fasting & prayer to my unbelief. The past year became my inauguration to this ‘double circle.’ The longest period was 14 days: a liquid fast, w/a fellow sister for the battle. I deeply desired to be free of ‘evil spirits’ that left me deaf and mute with profound insecurities, guilt, and shame from past histories and parental influences. I never knew healing like this! It’s a process but Jesus can, and is, reconciling my heart!

Application:
Friends and Family – Strongly consider circling in prayer and fasting for troubled families where satan is trying to gain a foothold.
City – Consider cycles of fasting & prayer with other disciples for fruitful outreach in the Valley.

More Bible: Mark 2:18-22 (fasting); Isaiah 58 (fasting); Mark 7: 18-23 (unclean w/in)
Day 27 Prayer Leads to Action by Johanna Tavitian

Matthew 25:23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

Insights:
• God gave us talents, abilities and money not for our own good, but to use it to advance His kingdom
• Our father wants us to pray but to also act, and not just wait for the miracles
• Faithful servants will be rewarded, so do not give up on the fight or quit on God
• Do you talk to God daily? Do you remember God during good times or just the bad times? Do you believe in the power of prayer? Do you ask people to pray for you and with you?

We sometimes look at other people and wonder how come they are so bless and yet here I am struggling but have been faithful? God tests us to see if we will run to him or run away from all the disappointments in life. When I was asked last 2010 to help women who are married to non-disciples, I had to pray and ask myself will this help me or be a hindrance to my family. After much prayer I had to act because this is for God and His church. The sisters helped me to be faithful and committed. Now I know why God allowed me to experience campus, single, married, separated, married to a fall away and now to be in a middle of a divorce. I have so many spiritual women in my life that have held my hand to pray and act on my needs. I know I am not alone and that whenever I fall, they will be there to help me get up and finish the race. I need to share my time, experiences and God’s blessings/challenges for the kingdom.

Application
- Phil 1:4 – remember to be thankful in prayers, “attitude with gratitude “
- Ezra 8:23 – fast and petition your requests
- Psalm 6:9 – cry for mercy

Friends and Family – have some time to pray with each sister in your family group to build prayer partners
City-Share your experiences with people that are hurting and with families going through hardship

Prayer: Father, hear my prayers and let me act on your request. You have given me so much. Let me surrender to you and know that your will will be done, because you know what’s best for me.

More Bible: Psalm 86:6, Psalm 102:17, John 17:15
Day 28 — New Prayer by Vanessa Davie

Psalm 96:1 — “Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.”

Insights:
• The word Lord here means Jehovah: Supreme Being, Creator, Eternal, and Almighty God, who created the universe and everything in it. He has also made us creative beings. When we tap into our own creativity, it allows us to be fresh, new, alive, original and creative in our prayers and songs to Him.
• Who among us does not love receiving fresh and new sentiments or gifts, from our loved ones? If we receive the same old items, or words, we can begin to feel unimportant; or insignificant. We may think to ourselves, “If he/she loved me, they would make the time to come up with fresh, creative ideas.” Anything can grow stale after long periods of inattention, abandonment and non-focus. In the same way, I believe God wants us to approach Him with fresh, original, imaginative, inspired prayers!!
• When we converse with our loving God, and approach Him to listen and learn, we want to do so with the intent of bringing our best, most innovative selves to His presence. Each day is new, and holds unexplored possibilities for a creative, inspired time with our Lord. With Him, nothing should ever grow old, stale, and boring if we approach Him with new songs (prayers) in our hearts. Even if we don’t “feel” it at the time, we can pray for God to renew us from within and invigorate our hearts toward Him. Do you think He wouldn’t answer that prayer?
• With the intention of bringing a “new” song (prayer) to God, what ONE thing can I change, immediately, to keep my prayers fresh, creative and inspiring?

Application:
For a while, each morning, I would say the same quickie prayers, before rushing out the door. I treated this as a type of checklist to do before starting my day. By noon, I would have a difficult time remembering what was revealed during my time with God that morning. This would get me off balance for the rest of my day.
For the past three months, wanting my prayer life to be more fresh, meaningful and significant, I began by being still in the mornings. I go to the window, look at the mountains, and just remain silent before God for a few minutes. I want Him to speak to my soul and for me to just listen.

Prayer:
“God, today is a new day and it’s your day. What fresh and vibrant ways can I serve you today? How can I keep my songs “new” before you each day as a woman who truly seeks your best for me and my family? You, Lord, the master of creation, formed me to be imaginative, original, inspiring and innovative. How can I tap into this power in order to glorify you?”

More Bible: Psalm 40:3, Isaiah 42:10
Day 29 – Abide in Me by Beth L. Rosa

John 15:7 “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

Insights:
--Jesus is the vine; the true source and sustenance of life for the branches, and the branches must remain in the vine to live and bear fruit. The branches are the people. The Father is the gardener that cuts off the branch that does not bear fruit, while every branch that bears fruit He prunes. (v1-2)
--Jesus the vine connects with the Father. The disciples are the branches that must be connected to the vine. That is, connected to Jesus Christ in order for us to bear much fruit. No branches can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. (4-5)
--Jesus impressed upon the disciples the importance of staying close to him spiritually. He said, "Remain in me," or “Abide in Me,” and Jesus promised He would be with them. The secret to spiritual growth, the bearing of much fruit that glorifies the Father is found only in Jesus.

What is Jesus trying to communicate by calling himself the true vine? In what ways have you experienced the Father’s "pruning”? What spiritual benefits result from remaining in Christ?

I remember those campus days. I was so fired up about sharing my faith! I was a very committed disciple, not missing any meetings of the body whether devotional, bible studies with people, leadership meetings, and prayer meetings. I was always seen around the church. I love to do things for people and for God. I was consumed with saving souls for God and evangelizing the whole campus! I saw many souls saved. But the time came when my faith and commitment to God was tested. My father, from the beginning didn’t like the church and he persecuted me. It was intense persecution to the point of beating me, throwing away my bible right in front of me, hitting me pillows and dragging me by the neck while telling me that I should stop going to church. At that moment it was hard to obey God. I was sad and crying because I needed to make a choice. I was struggling, tempted to leave the church and give up. I prayed to God for help. I remembered the scripture where it says “In this world you will have many troubles, but take heart I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33). I will not forget the talk I had with a sister trying to encourage me. She shared to the expectations of being a disciple of Jesus. So I counted my cost, got up and was strengthened. I decided to trust God’s plan for my life. I saw my father after 10 years of praying for him finally attend our church. I saw his heart change towards the church as he saw my commitment to God. I continued sharing my faith with my family. Although none of them have become Christians yet, I believe that God’s word will not return empty (Isa 55:11).

God is not finished and He will never be finish teaching and molding us until that day. When I moved to the singles ministry, God allowed me to experience being pruned many times. I saw many sins come up like my pride towards God, my selfishness, my self reliance and not trusting Him. I faced many kinds of temptations along the way being a long time single, heartbroken twice in the church which lead me to feel insecure in many ways. I was tempted to have a relationship outside the church, but then I realized it’s all not worth it. God is great. All that happened was part of my refining and shaping my heart and character in order for me to become a woman that I needed to be for Him and my husband now. That is too bear fruit – fruit that will last.

Application:
Friends & Family: Pray that God will use you to accomplish His divine purpose in your life and in your family.
City: Pray for the heart to obey even in your difficult times and to do the will of God in the Valley.

Prayer: Dear God, We ask you to give us courage and strength to do your will in our lives because we love you.

**Day 30 — Get a Testimony by Susan Knudsen**

*Revelation 12:11 “They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*

**Insights and Key Questions**
- None of us truly know how we affect people with our conversations. If there is just one conversation, that person makes a quick judgment on many things about us: our physical appearance, our attitude as positive or negative, our openness or reticence, and even go so far as judging us on how we are dressed.
- After they spend more time getting to know you, what do you assume that they would testify about you? What about the people you work with? What about your friends outside the church? Are you ready to hear their truthful words?

I love how God used everything in my life, and in my husband’s life, to be our testimony of God’s love! When I came to my first church service as a single mother, I was shocked that they met in a hotel ballroom, shocked how friendly they were, and overly shocked that they all had Bibles in their hands! I immediately feared that I would be judged by all of them. I was a divorced mom with Ryan, my ten year-old son son from my marriage and Jordan, my 2 year-old son outside of marriage.

I didn’t have to look far, once I started reading the Bible, to see that families aren’t always what we expect... In Genesis 16, Sarai didn’t trust God’s promise of her own children, and so she goaded Abram to marry her slave to have children. Of course God had bigger plans for Sarah to have Abraham’s son even though she was beyond her years of fertility (Genesis 21). And Mary was an unmarried woman and Jesus had Joseph as his stepfather.

After 1-1/2 years of becoming a disciple, I was given the gift of my husband Chris. He too brought a son who was outside of marriage. Between the two of us, there is one “legitimate” son and two “illegitimate” sons all piled together into one blended family. Chris formally adopted Jordan and the events of that day are shared regularly and we celebrate that day every year. My older son has his father and his stepmother and step brother. My husband’s son has five stepbrothers and a stepfather. My soon-to-be daughter-in-law has a similar “messy” blended family background. There is nothing in this that would seem to give either of us a great testimony. But as it says in Psalm 68:6, “God sets the lonely in families.” Our family has its own testimony and it represents how God uses each one of us, in every circumstance, for His glory!

**Application:**
How do my conversations during the day become a testimony to my spouse, my children, my church family, and the people I interact with daily? Leaning on God and His word will fill me with a better perspective on how to encourage others.

Pray for deeper, more heartfelt interactions that affect more groups of people.

**More Bible:** Isaiah 8:20; John 4:39-42, 19:33-37; Psalm 18:35; Psalm 16:5-9
Day 31 - Specific Prayers by Beth L. Rosa

Matthew 20:32 "Jesus stopped and called them. ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ he asked."

Insights:
--Jesus healed two blind men as they were leaving Jericho. They cried out with a loud voice pleading with Jesus for mercy. They were desperate and persistent to get the attention of Jesus despite the opposition of the crowd. (v29-31)
--Jesus tested their earnestness and strengthens their trust in his power. Their faith grew as they responded to His word with confident hope. Jesus restored their sight -- both physically and spiritually to the reality of His kingdom. (v32-34)
--Faith opens our heart to pray earnestly and with humility before God. It makes us bold in our prayers and motivates us to pursue God's mercy without timidity or hesitation. It's the faith that opens the way for us to see the power of God and to experience his healing presence in our lives both physical and spiritual.
--How can we seek and obtain God's mercy in our life? Do you recognize your need for God's healing grace and do you seek Jesus out like these blind beggars with persistent faith and trust in his goodness and mercy?

The word mercy means literally “sorrowful at heart.” But mercy is something more than compassion. That is, compassion empathizes with the sufferer. However, mercy goes beyond sees to it to remove suffering. Jesus never refused to bring God’s mercy to those who earnestly sought it. I was struggling hard during my 13th year in the kingdom. I was tired, burned out with the things I was doing in the church such as leadership or any meetings. I felt like I had no more strength. Everything in my life was falling apart. I was hopeless in dating life, broke financially and had a hard time living up to my family's expectations. In my heart I knew I loved God so much but I was not happy anymore. I was just discouraged about the things I mentioned earlier. During that time the church was going through some tough times. Little did we know it had a huge effect on my heart and many others as well. I started to question God about why I was so unhappy even though I gave up everything for Him. It seemed no one cared about how I felt nor what was going on in my life and my future. But I realized that God has a promise for those who love Him. (Jeremiah 29:11-13) I confessed in God about my struggles. To a God full of compassion and mercy, day and night I knelt down before Him in prayer and petition. I asked God to deliver me from the depth of my sorrow and despair. I prayed to God to look upon me with mercy and to show me His loving kindness of sweet promises. During that time I resigned from my job and tried a different field of work, so it was challenging. I was asked by a sister who was working in an agency to apply in Russia as a nanny and she said I would not incur any personal expenses to apply and work there. I asked God to allow me to go since we have our church in that country. The sister told me that out of 10 people who applied (nurses and experienced overseas workers), I was chosen. God had blessed me to go to a beautiful country and it was more than I could ask or imagine. I was mesmerized and in awe to His creation. It was absolutely awesome! God allowed me to experience the powerful healing of my heart and my spirit. He was incredibly merciful! Before I decided to come back to my country a year later, I asked God specifically to give me a good job so I can continue give to the church and to my family. God allowed me to work in a good company in our country and I loved my work there. At that time my younger brother was diagnosed with stage 3 kidney cancer and began to deteriorate to the point of almost dying. I prayed to God to heal my brother and to give him a chance to live more years, meet a wife and have children. After 13 years of praying, my brother was healed from the cancer and blessed with his baby and his own family. I asked God specifically to guide me in my dating life and to give me a sign so I would know who I was meant to marry. As I poured out my heart to Him, God blessed me with a man who is spiritual, loves God and is faithful. He is now my husband of 4 months. Lately my mom was diagnosed with ovarian cancer the day before my wedding and had an operation shortly after. My family and I prayed for her and asked God to remove the cancer cells from her ovary. After a month, the doctor told us she is well. God is awesome. He wants us to hear and see the very core and desires of our heart through our honest and humble prayers.

Application:
Friends & Family: Pray with vision for your family; for God to heal them both physically and spiritually.
City: Ask God to lead you to the people who are open and to share with them about the mercy of God.
Prayer – Dear God, I want to say thank you for being a “God who sees”. There is no one like you.
Day 32 - Raise Up A Remnant by Editha Dunbar

2 Kings 19:30 “Once more a remnant of the house of Judah will take root below and bear fruit above.”

Insights:
• People of Jerusalem are in laid waste, families broken up & scattered, great numbers killed in war, famine & pestilence and all are in state of confusion. Through Isaiah, God sent a message of assuring deliverance to His people. He promised that the remnant from the house of Judah will take root below, increase, grow riches and be well provided for.
• The reign of Josiah (2 Kings 23:15-20) was the fulfillment of this prophesy.
• Remnant is defined as scrap, leftover, flawed, reject
• God’s heroes are flawed, outcasts, scraps chosen by God because of their humility (Moses), loyalty (Ruth) & willingness to be used by God (David). It is not based on their skills, talent or knowledge.
• When we surrender to God’s power through our weakness or challenging moments, His glory is revealed.

How is the prosperity of our souls? Is it taking root downward by faith in God and bearing fruits of righteousness? The day work provided all employees with a letter to meet off-site, I immediately knew the plant was closing down. I was in denial, anxious, felt insignificant, helpless & numb, like walls were closing in. I panicked and started searching for job openings that I thought would be good enough and sent an incomplete resume. I impatiently took matters in my own hands the best way I knew, hoping I would be ahead of the game. The following day when I got a better bearing my name, I fought to find a still, quite, surrendered and confident time with Jesus, my Rock and Savior. Through the Word, I surrendered that His plan for me is greater than myself or the company. As I hear good news for those who have found job leads or interviews or job offers, I pray to patiently trust that He will not forsake me and be surrendered to His timing. On the other hand, I am mostly surrounded with employees who have no hope, no interviewing experience, have not written a resume in their lives or have limited options. I found myself extending my knowledge of resume building, along with my trust and hope in Jesus. They responded with gratitude and light of hope started to sparkle in their eyes. This inspires me to remain faithful and continue to find strength and hope in God daily.

Application

Friends and Family: Pray that during times of hopelessness, co-workers will turn to us and Jesus for answers

City: Pray that we have Jesus’ heart for the lost and the courage to speak about the truth

Prayer: Pray that my heart will be investing time in finding open hearts, not only finding a job.

More Reads: Jeremiah 29:11-12, John 15:1-8
Day 33 - Prayer Covering by Editha Dunbar

Exodus 17:12 “But Moses’ hands grew weary, so they took a stone & put it under him and he sat on it while Aaron & Hur held up his hands, one on one side and the other on the other side.”

Insights:
• While the Israelites were weary and worn, the Amalekites, who did not fear God, attacked and cut off all the who were lagging behind
• While Joshua was leading the Israelite armies to victory against the Amalekites, Moses stood on top of a hill with arms up with the help of Aaron and Hur until sunset
• Jonathan and David’s friendship is another example of steadfast love, loyalty, devotion and commitment driven by fervor, intense, zealous, earnest and eager love for God and one another.
• Even when our situation appears to be impossible, our work is “to hope in God.” Our hope will not be in vain and in the Lord’s timing, help will come — George Mueller
• Are we steadfast in prayer that is driven by our fervor service to God and love for one another?

Life is a not a race. It is a marathon. Though it is up to the runner to complete the 26 mile race and cross the finish line, mental discipline, determination and surrounding encouragement from co-runners, family and friends drives them to completion. According to marathon runner friends, they will hit a “WALL” at around 20+ miles. Their legs start shutting down and they will struggle to push through and be tempted to give up. But with friends, family or volunteers who are strategically located along the race path, they will cheer them on to not give up and keep going.
Look out, encourage and pray for one another. Look out for those who are struggling for a long time and those who are worn amd weary in faith. Encourage them to keep on going and not give up.

Application

Friends and Family: Lovingly & actively reach out to friends and family who are continuously struggling. Do not give up on them.

City: Pray that we have Jesus’ zealous heart to eagerly help those in need.

More Reads: Matt 18:20, Ecc 9:10-11, 1 Sam 20:17, Eph 6:18
Matthew 6:20 “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

Insights:
• World’s treasure includes fame, fortune, gold, silver, possessions, reputation, job
• God’s treasures are the fruits of the spirit, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control
• In the Old Testament, God shows that He only works through spiritual means.
• Because of Ruth’s loyalty to follow Naomi’s life and beliefs, she turned away from a secure and familiar life in Moab. God blessed her to be an ancestor of David & Jesus.
• Because of Abraham’s faith, God fulfilled His promise to him through Isaac (through Sarah), instead of Ishmael (older than Isaac, son of Hagar).
• Because of Moses’ humility, faith & utter dependence on God in the midst of challenging circumstances, God chose to use him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

What is driving our daily life decisions, trust and contentment in Christ or materialism?
After I graduated from college, I got a job, a car and the attention of some men. For a while I was feeling accomplished and in control of my life. I was looking forward to having a life of fun, freedom and finding someone who might love me. But the world quickly took that dream away. I found myself crying to God to find a someone who would truly love me and to show me the true meaning of life.
Shortly afterwards, God answered my prayer. A persistent friend invited me to a singles event where I experienced a sincere expression of love, kindness and joy. After a couple of months, I was baptized. I started living a life of true meaning, purpose and everlasting love. I have found and learned to live a life of contentment in Christ. Through failures & success, I have learned the following:
1. Ask God only for our daily bread, neither poverty nor riches. Desire for riches can sidetrack us from our beliefs. We have been warned that if we love the world, God’s love is not in us.
2. Put our hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. We will be like a well-watered garden or a never failing spring. Security is not found in possessions. If we have wealth, do not be arrogant or greedy, nor put our hope in it.
3. Avoid materialism by pursuing and clothing ourselves with righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness, compassion, kindness, humility & patience. We can do everything through Him who gives us strength.

Application

Friends and Family: Pray for friends & family who have not found meaning and purpose in life.

City: May we guide lost hearts to Christ.

Zechariah 4:10 “Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the Lord that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone in the land of Zerubbabel?”

Insights:
- The scripture talks about in question “Who doesn’t like the small things in Life?” God wants us to appreciate everything even the small blessing that he’s giving us everyday
- What kind of blessings had God given you?
- How does small blessings change your life?
- Name one big blessing that God has made come true?

One of the blessings I want to share is in 1984 I came here to the USA. I’m blessed with the people that brought me here because they treat me as one of the family. I studied the bible and became a disciple in 1998. God really changed my life. I became more happy and grateful for where I am now. The big blessing that God has given me is my spiritual and handsome loving husband. And still ask God for more and more blessings. Once again I asked God for a child. And surely God has answered my prayers and he blessed me with a beautiful boy. God doesn’t stop giving us blessings. Sometimes I question God “Why God, why not yet?” But if we only ask and be patient and surrender, God will bless us according to His will and for His glory. I believe because it happened in my life. I am blessed. Thank you God.

Application:
1. Write five things you want God to bless you this week.
2. Praise God for the many great things he has done for you.
3. Keep praying, God will provide everything we need.

Prayer:
Dear God, You are powerful, you created all things. You always keep your promises and you have done so many great things for me. I thank you God, please help me to always obey you. I love you always. Amen.

More Bible: Deuteronomy 28:1-14, Ephesians 1
Day 36 – Climb the Watchtower by Lace Goodwin

Habakkuk 2:1 (NLT) “I will climb up into my watchtower now and wait to see what the LORD will say to me and how he will answer my complaint.”

Insight:
1. Habakkuk is wrestling with God’s seemingly indifference to the evil that has pervaded everything around him. (Habakkuk 1:2).
2. Despite anguish, and outrage he didn’t turn away from God but, actively sought Him out. Habakkuk tirelessly engages and challenges God to answer his musings and laments.
3. He understood that he needed to climb a watchtower to gain a better vantage point. Because of that God opened his eyes and provided a better perspective.

There are many instances in our lives when we have should climbed the watchtower however, we get so entrenched in the vortex of bitterness, anger and frustration that we fail to see God’s purpose. We get so caught up in the business of life and its constant struggles that we overlook the underlying message from God.

Single parenthood is not easy. Finding the right balance between the various yet, equally important roles that needs to be juggled can be challenging. It’s a multiple choice of sorts, figuring out the perfect role to play at the right moment: whether a provider, nurturer, confidant, friend, dad, mom, playmate, disciplinarian, chauffeur, shopping buddy, chef, teacher and the list goes on and on. Parenthood in itself is already daunting; however, without a partner to rely on is beyond overwhelming. I could’ve been embittered by my past and ceaselessly question God’s plan but, I refused to be shackled to my bleak history. I climb the watchtower quite often, to get a better perspective, to clearly hear what God is trying to tell me, to visibly see the path he wants me to trudge. My kids and I refuse to be defined by the dysfunction of single-parent household. God doesn’t want us to be ashamed of whom we are, but He wants us to embrace it like He has done for us. Contrary to what people think (I), I don’t wake up with a smile plastered on my face, but I make it a constant and conscious choice to be happy. To live with a murky outlook and hopelessness seemed asinine especially, when God’s blessings are literally coursing through my veins (My kids and I are breathing! That in itself is a huge blessing.)

Application: Evaluate what’s going with your life. Create a 2-column list: on the 1st column write the significant events in your life, 2nd column write the lessons that God taught you. How do you feel after?

Prayer: Lord, please give me the strength to overcome the stumbling blocks that are hindering my way. Allow me to climb my watchtower and reflect on all the blessings you have lavished upon me. Father God, please give the wisdom and discernment to understand you and the purpose you have set out for me. Thank you for your grace and patience.

More Bible: Psalm 63:6, Philippians 4:6-7, Psalm 1:1-6
Day 37- Holy Ground by Maggie Najar

Exodus 3:5 “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”

Insights:
• An angel appeared to Moses in flames of fire from within a bush, He decides to get closer out of curiosity.
• Then God calls out to him from the burning bush; Moses responds “Here am I”
• The putting off of sandals is a token of respect and submission; the ground is made special, holy, by the divine presence of God.
• We ought to approach God with reverence, prepared to worship, in faith and obedience.

What sandals do you need to take off in order to stand closer to God?
“I don’t have time. I haven’t done this in a while. I’m tired and bored. I can’t be like them. Work has been so stressful. I’ll get to it tomorrow. I need money. Can I just have some time for me? It doesn’t matter anyway, it is what it is. I feel alone in this……” Recognize some of these sandals? These thoughts, if not taken captive and filled where they belong; will keep us from hearing God’s voice today. So, off with your sandals! God wants us to respect what Jesus did on the cross. He desires to make his glory known to us and through us for the world to see. Unlike Moses, you will not hear “do not come any closer”. Decide to get closer to God and choose to submit to his promises …there is time for everything….ask and it will be given to you….do not worry…blessed are you…..you are the light of the world….and surely I am with you always! We submit to something daily anyway, what are we submitting to today?

Holy: exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness.
Let’s remember that whatever we stand for, physically or in our heart, we can decide to make it holy or not…..
May we be reverent, obedient, faithful to the promises and worship freely

Application
Friends and Family: Decide how you will stand to be holy for/with God and your hearers (they are everywhere).

I wonder if Moses had not been curious about the bush on fire and not burning, would he have spoken to God directly? Would the angel have been the one to give him the instructions to free God’s people? Exodus 3:1-4:17
Day 38- Prayer Alphabet by Maggie Najar

Luke 11:1 “One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

Insights:
• Jewish masters used to give followers a form of prayer-formula as a particular badge of their relationship to them.
• One desired to be taught by Jesus on how to pray
• This format/direction brought order when praying for the disciples
• This prayer in true and full meaning is the badge of a true Christian.

How often do you find yourself in a situation with a desire to be taught in order to imitate?
It seems that more often than not, we think we know better. Our way is the best way. We don’t need help, we know enough to figure things out on our own. There is that independent prideful tendency that comes before humility even has a chance. But wait, you got what on sale? How much did that investment pay you? Free? Wear this and I will get the job? Say that and everyone will like me? Teach me, I’ll do anything to get that same result. We are willing to be taught and there is desire for a formula if it gets us what we want or what we think is needed.

“And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:29

We are true Christians! So why not have our prayers show a badge of humility, a formula to love mercy towards others as we ask our Father to provide the rest that our souls long for every day.

Application
Friends and Family: Let’s start asking God, friends, family, mentors, to teach us how to raise our kids, run the home, enjoy the blessings of a marriage, enjoy the stage of life we are in, share the good news with others, so people will know who we belong to.

Prayer:
Thank you God for letting us know what you require of us and how willing you are to guide us through life. May our desire to learn from you only grow in our hearts to represent you better.
Acts 1:4 “On one occasion, while he (Jesus) was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.”

Insights:
• God has purposed a time and place for every activity under the sun (Ecc 3:1);
• When God says, “Not now,” it often predicates discipline with the purpose of training for righteousness (Heb. 12:11). As such, disciples may often be ‘in training’ thru difficulties. But unlike the world, we suffer not in vain.
• Do Not leave Jerusalem! Jesus commands his disciples to stay where they may face trials and suffering because it is a part of fulfilling his purposes. They may not have understood at the time, but made a decision to trust Jesus and wait.
• On the other hand, when we say (to God), “Not now,” we inevitably incur discipline; like Jonah, who refused the Lord and ran to no avail, except to that place of God’s judgment in the belly of a fish. There, alas—the unyielding hand of God’s discipline fell upon Jonah. To harm? No, to bring about the process of dying to self in order to rise through prayer, repentance, and glory to the Father!
• Be patient and surrender all to God!

When I was first converted, I was bent on divorcing my first husband. I had already made the journey to my “Tarshish” with our two kids in tow, having left him behind in another state. However, after baptism, Jesus began to speak “not now” into my heart through his message of forgiveness. Friends and family were perplexed by my decision to reconcile. So was I quite frankly. I had no satisfactory explanation except that I couldn’t divorce! I could not leave ‘Jerusalem’ as Jesus was clearly commanding me. We eventually divorced; not because of my anger or bitterness, or running away from my Nineveh like before, nor for the desire to see my husband fail. But only through prayer and petition, and waiting for God to show me the path of righteousness that it was made clear that it was time. Because of my decision to wait and trust in God’s timing, I learned to hope again, to love anew, imitate God and to have a perfect love that drove away my fears. Thus, I was able let go, recognizing that the prize was never the “happily ever after,” but rather the “heavenly ever after”.

Application:
Friends and Family — In what relationship do you refuse God? In what relationship is God saying, “Not now?”
City — In what area of your evangelism are you telling God, “not now?” And vice versa.
More Bible: Hebrews 12:22-24; 1 Cor. 13
Matthew 18:18 “I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be” bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be “loosed in heaven.”

Insights:
“The binding and loosing refers to the decisions of the church in conflicts. Among Christians there is no court of appeals beyond the church. Ideally, the church’s decisions should be God guided and based on the discernment of His Word. Believers have the responsibility, therefore, to bring their problems to the church, and the church has the responsibility to use God’s guidance in seeking to resolve conflicts. Handling problems God’s way will have an impact now and for eternity” (NIV Life Application Study Bible).

I clearly remember the year 2007, for many reasons:
1. I was working full time and going to college part time at night, I had my two daughters Ariana 3 yrs Keren 1 ½ yrs.
2. I was excited to study anatomy in the fall of that year and I thought that God was on my side because out 100 or so students I was the third person chosen to be added to the class. However, juggling a full time job, going to school and raising a family was overwhelming; so with tears and regret, I had to drop the class. It was a year that pierced my heart forever in a good way.
3. I found out I was pregnant with my 3rd baby, which took me by surprise. To my shame I did not welcome this baby with a happy, thankful heart. I clearly remember (which always bring tears to my heart) the thought of not having my baby while at the same time having a fear God that shook me up. That same night I called one of my best friends Tanisha and told her about what it was going through my mind. She guided me with God’s Word and helped me to do what was right in the eyes of God. Because of God’s Word and a godly friend, I was able to stand up and keep my baby. Thankfully, I did not do what I would have regretted for the rest of my life. I’m so thankful to God for blessing me with such a great sister and friend.

I was also not happy with my husband. I hated him and yes to my shame I even cursed the day I married him. (It is very hard to relive these memories but at the same time it reminds me of God’s grace). I cried every single day and night. Although I decided to do what was right, there was not a moment of joy in my heart and face. Everywhere I went (my doctor, the labs, the ultrasound technicians tried to comfort me with words) nothing made me feel any different for about six months. What hurt me the most was that when I was at my doctor’s visits I always found myself sobbing in front of women who were trying to get pregnant and here I was so ungrateful and unhappy.

By month 6 I cried out to God to please forgive me, that I was NOTHING before him, that I was a worm and did not deserve for him to listen to me. I was so broken for the way I acted and I begged God day and night to forgive me and to bless me with a baby boy. Finally the day came when the technician told me that it was a boy…I cried like I never had before because God had answered my prayer. I knew I didn’t deserve anything from God, but I believe he did it out of his love and mercy.

Post-partum was a nightmare I was on medication for 3 months or so. I never expected it, but God was there on my side to overcome it.

Now my baby is a reminder of the bond between God and I. His joyful heart encourages and reminds me of how God wants me to be in the good and difficult times. God did not only bless my husband with his desires of his heart, but has blessed me more by my son being the student of the month and being in a gifted class. This brings me down to my knees and reminds me that God alone knows what is best even when we don’t see it. I am so glad that I handled my problem God’s way and reaped the blessings now and for eternity.

Application:
It is so important to be open and humble to seek advice, to confess, to have convictions to live a life worthy of our calling and to stand up and do what is right in the eyes of God.

Prayer: Father in heaven thank you so much for allowing us to know your word and your precepts. I pray that we can live our lives to please you in every way possible. Thank you so much for your love and mercy for us in Jesus name I pray amen.

More Bible: PSALM 37:3, PSALM 34:15, PROVERBS 30:11, HAB 2:4, 1JOHN 3:7