

14-DAY DEVOTIONAL FROM 1 PETER

FEAR  
LESS


*Family*

RAISING KIDS WHO LOVE JESUS IN  
A CULTURE THAT'S HOSTILE TO HIM

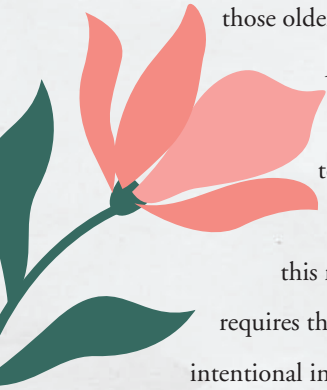
CISSIE GRAHAM LYNCH

“Train up a child in the way he  
should go; even when he is old  
he will not depart from it.”

*Proverbs* 22:6



America is certainly changing. Today, nearly 40% of my generation are “nones”— they claim no religious affiliation at all. Among my age group, only 17% read Scripture even once a week, and it’s not much better for older generations. For those older than 65, only 21% read the Bible once a week.



As Americans become less knowledgeable of God’s Word, our nation is becoming increasingly hostile to Biblical truth.

Raising children who are ready to encounter this new world and demonstrate the love of Christ requires that we be authentic in our own faith and intentional in our teaching. As a mother in these turbulent times, I wanted to put together this devotional study on 1 Peter to inspire you to live—and parent—with a sense of urgency.

Peter wrote this letter to believers who were beginning to suffer persecution under Nero. Eventually, he and other early church leaders were martyred by this evil Roman emperor. Just as Peter warned the early church in his epistle, there may come a day even in our lifetimes when we are persecuted for our faith.

I want to study this letter together and see how God is calling us to holiness amid the hostility. He’s urging us to “*be sober-minded;*

*be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*" (1 Peter 5:8). Our charge is straightforward: be in the Word, stand on the Word, and equip our children with the Word.



Regarding His commands, God instructed His people to *"teach them diligently to your children ... talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."* (Deuteronomy 6:7). Every moment of each day should be steeped in His Word. Only then will we—and our children—be able to stand fast, *"blameless and innocent ... in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation"* (Philippians 2:15).

Thank you for taking this journey with me.

CISSIE GRAHAM LYNCH







# Day 1

## UNFADING INHERITANCE

### Reading 1 Peter 1:1–9

The Apostle Peter wrote this letter to encourage believers in the face of trials and persecution, and it is filled with instructions for standing on God's promises—even in the midst of opposition. Peter shows us that we find joy and hope in our times of trouble by keeping our focus on God and our priceless inheritance that comes through our spiritual rebirth.

Peter could be considered an unlikely source, considering his famous encounter on the day Jesus was crucified. Like us, Peter faced social pressure to conform to public opinion. He knew the Lord and walked with Him. But, this same Peter who boastfully said, "*Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away*" (Matthew 26:33), withered in the face of adversity just hours later. When pressed by the crowd to acknowledge himself as a follower of Jesus, he denied Christ three times.

In spite of Peter's failure, Jesus came to him after the resurrection and forgave him. Jesus used Peter to reach people across the world and throughout time with His truth. Peter stood firm and faithful under unimaginable persecution at the hand of the Emperor Nero, and at the end



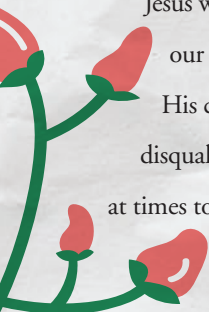


of his life, he died an excruciatingly painful death, upside down on the cross because he thought himself unworthy to die in the same manner as his Lord and Savior.

What changed? What made the difference in Peter's life? A personal encounter with the resurrected Christ! *"According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"* (1 Peter 1:3).

Jesus appeared to the disciples on the beach, and he asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Peter was hurt. *"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you"* (John 21:17). Peter had to humble himself and admit how much he needed the redemption only Jesus could offer. Jesus didn't just forgive Peter—He restored him and instructed him, *"Feed my sheep"* (John 21:17). Jesus removed Peter's consuming guilt and freed him to fulfill his calling to teach, encourage, and equip others. Peter could cling to the promise of an "unfading inheritance" in Heaven, and he devoted the rest of his life to sharing the Good News with others.

Jesus will do the same for us when we repent of our sins, surrender our will to His, spend time with Him in prayer, and conform to His character through the reading of God's Word. Our failures don't disqualify us from knowing and serving God. We, like Peter, may fail at times to live in a way that shows others that we are Christ-followers, but one of the most beautiful things about God's Word is that




it is full of men and women who failed and were still used by the Lord to do incredible things for His glory.

Allow your personal relationship with the Lord to be strengthened by spending time each day with Him, which will help you *“not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect”* (Romans 12:2).

As parents, we have been offered a precious gift of raising children. Our most important responsibility is teaching our children about the “unfading inheritance” God offers in 1 Peter 1:4. But we must know God’s truth before we can teach it to our children. Take a moment right now and allow it to soak in: no matter what the world throws at us, nothing can take away what awaits us in Heaven!

We are living in a culture that is becoming increasingly hostile to Biblical truth. Instead of filling us with hopelessness, it should spark a sense of urgency to stand strong as we teach our children to live for Jesus. We will fail occasionally, but we can be encouraged by knowing that just like a loving parent, God forgives us when we ask. He can remove our guilt and equip us for the task, as he did for Peter. He will help us if we call on Him for strength and guidance. Just keep your eyes focused on the “unfading inheritance.”







# Day 2

## KEEPING AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

### Reading **1 Peter 1:10–14**

**M**any of the original readers of Peter's letter had to fight a daily physical, emotional, and spiritual battle thanks to persecution and poverty. Today, most of us have a very different kind of struggle as we seek to obey God's command to "[prepare] your minds for action, and [be] sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13).

There are a million things vying for our attention—some necessary, and others not so much. After a long day of work or accomplishing tasks on our never-ending to-do lists, most of us are looking to just relax on the couch. And, while balance is important, I often wrestle with whether I am spending time every day making sure I'm prepared for what He has called me to do—as a believer, a wife, and a mother.

While setting our minds fully on eternal things can feel like an impossible task, Peter gives us instructions for obeying this command: "*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance*" (1 Peter 1:14). With our children, it can seem at times like



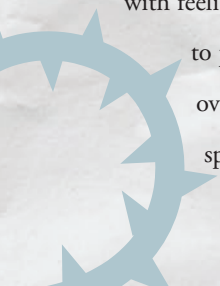
we are forced to repeat the same admonishments over and over. As they grow, it finally seems to click and we can comfortably say that they “know better.” In the same manner, as followers of Christ, we know better and should never go back to our old ways.

God wants us to *“do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life”*

(1 Timothy 6:18–19). When we continually remind ourselves that eternity with Jesus Christ—is “that which is truly life” the Holy Spirit will change how we approach the day-to-day tasks of life—and He will help us set an example of eternally-minded living for our children.

Andrew Brunson was a pastor who was imprisoned in Turkey for two years for preaching the Gospel. Like the first-century Christians to whom Peter wrote, Andrew experienced deep emotional and physical suffering for his faith in Jesus. I had the opportunity to talk to him about his time in prison, and I was deeply touched when he shared how God helped him endure.

Andrew shared that while he was behind bars, he struggled with feeling far from God—but when he prayed for the strength to persevere, the Lord gave it to him. He said that the overwhelming difficulty gave him a brand-new perspective on spending an eternity with Jesus. “I asked myself, ‘Am I going

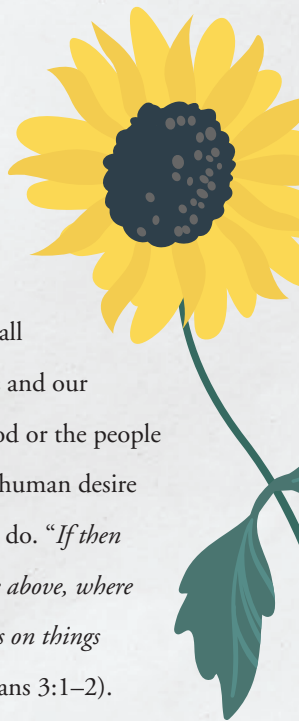


to fear the consequences of obeying God, which is persecution,” he told me. “Or the consequences of not obeying God, which are much more serious for eternity?”

Andrew also offered a piece of practical advice for all believers. He explained that we can prepare our hearts and our minds by asking daily, “Am I going to try to please God or the people around me?” That isn’t always easy because we have a human desire to be accepted by others, but it’s what we are called to do. *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth”* (Colossians 3:1–2).

Many of our daily tasks are important. But, our challenge is to avoid the trappings of this world and to set our minds on Jesus and the things that He commands us to do. All of us devote entirely too much time and energy to the things vying for our attention. All the while, what matters the most is understanding that we exist for God’s glory—to know Him and make Him known.

You and I are not facing prison for our faith in Jesus Christ like Andrew Brunson—although we might someday. Today, our goal should be—regardless of the consequences—to honor God, prepare our minds for doing His will, and teach our children to do the same.







# Day 3

## HOLY LIVING

### Reading 1 Peter 1:15–25

Love is one of the most overused—and wrongly used—words in the English language. Many of us have lost its true meaning. Love is even being redefined inside the walls of many of our churches. To understand love—what it is and what it isn't—we must turn to its creator. *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love”* (1 John 4: 7–8).

Have you ever stopped to think about what it actually means to love God? During Jesus' time on Earth, His disciples pondered the same question, and He gave them a very simple answer—*“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word”* (John 14:23). What a convicting verse! If we truly love the Lord, we must obey the commands He has given us in His Word.

As you continue reading 1 Peter, you'll see God repeatedly refer to us as His children and command us to pursue nothing less than wholehearted surrender to His will: *“As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’”* (1 Peter 1:15–16).

We tend to focus on God's love, mercy, forgiveness, and grace. There are countless books written about these important attributes. But, we seldom talk about God's holiness, largely because it reminds us of our own sin. When we think of God's perfection, we can't help but consider our own shortcomings. Don't allow that to discourage you, though; there's good news!

*"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). He loved and valued us so much that He was willing to sacrifice His Son. We were bought with a high price—the *"precious blood of Christ"* (1 Peter 1:19)—so our loving obedience to God's commands is the least we can offer in return. God sent His Son to pay our sin debt, so that we could live holy and pure lives.

Holy living may seem impossible. In fact, complete obedience to God's word is impossible in our own power.

After Jesus explained the connection between love and obedience to His disciples, He promised we wouldn't have to walk the road of obedience alone. *"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever"* (John 14:16).

When my husband, Corey, played in the NFL, he had to study the team's playbook regularly to know what to do in each situation. He needed to know where he was supposed to be



on the field and his specific responsibilities. By intimately knowing the playbook, he had immediate recall and could make the play. In the same way, the Bible is our playbook for life. We can't obey God if we don't know what He has commanded. Knowing God and His expectations requires that we spend time in His Word—that's where we truly get to know Him and His character. Obedience and holy living will begin to flow out of a life that is committed to seeking God. When we are following God, loving Him and those around us will come naturally.

Like a loving parent, God wants us to obey because He wants what's best for us. His desire is that we wouldn't settle for what the world has to offer, knowing that trust and obedience will lead to an abundant life. Just like our children depend on us because they don't see and understand the full picture, we have to trust God and rely on the Holy Spirit to lead us.

If you become discouraged or overwhelmed by the times you've failed, I understand how you feel! Remind yourself that God has also promised that *"if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). Our journey to being holy like Jesus can begin anew today!

Take heart in these promises and ask the Lord to help you model obedience to Him today—for your children and all those around you.



# Day 4

## THE FOUNDATION OF GOD'S WORD

Reading

**1 Peter 1:22–25; 1 Peter 2:1–8**



quoting from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 40: 6–8), Peter reminds us that “*the word of the Lord remains forever*” (1 Peter

1:25). The things of this world aren't worthy of our trust, as they will fade away. But, God's Word is a firm foundation!

Growing up, I remember going downstairs to a familiar sight every morning: my mom reading her Bible. Even though my dad traveled a lot, when he was home, that was true for him too. But, they didn't just read the Bible because they thought they were supposed to; they truly loved God's Word because they loved the Lord—and their love for Him has only gotten deeper with time. The desire to know Him more leads to a craving for His Word. My parents have built their lives on the firm foundation of trusting God's Word, and they passed that love of Scripture on to their children. After I became a mom, I wanted to make sure my children were greeted with the same image every morning: my love for Jesus exemplified through faithfully studying the Scriptures.

Most of us can remember what it was like to hear our babies cry out





when they were hungry. That desire to be fed was so strong, and they have no other way to communicate than to scream!

*“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation”* (1 Peter 2:2). Here, Peter encourages us to crave God’s Word the way babies want milk, and for the same reason they do too—because it is life-giving and critical to growth. Spending time in the Bible is an essential mechanism for hearing from God and getting to know Jesus. It’s how we become the people and the parents God has called us to be.

Our spiritual growth is not something that is ever fully achieved. In fact, we must continue pursuing a closer relationship with Jesus every day. As we do this, God will equip us to accomplish our greatest purpose as parents: developing the spiritual growth of our children.

Before God led His people out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land, He told Moses to give them these instructions: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. And you shall repeat them diligently to your sons and speak of them when you sit in your house”* (Deuteronomy 6:5–7).

This portion of Scripture, and many others like it, reminds us that faithfully loving and obeying God is closely tied to spending time in His Word. When we read the Bible, God will show us how to live a life that honors Him and how to diligently pass His teaching



on to our children.

How we read the Bible is vitally important too. One of my favorite pastors, Skip Heitzig, says that a knowledge of the Bible and Biblical history fosters obedience. “Those who know God’s Word, those who know the history of God, they will fear the Lord and be obedient,” he says. He goes on to add that knowledge of Biblical prophecy fosters confidence. That’s how we can stand in strength in today’s culture—by knowing and obeying God’s Word.

To truly have a grasp of God’s Word that changes our hearts, our minds, and our lives, we need to read it in its entirety. While that can seem like an overwhelming task, it doesn’t have to be if we set time aside every day to read a few chapters. You don’t have to be a theologian, Bible scholar, or pastor. You just need a heart that is committed to the Lord and open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Between jobs, school, homework, sports practices, and household chores, it can be hard to find dedicated time to read the Bible. But, I challenge you to set aside a portion of each day to do just that. Pray that the Lord would give you a hunger to read, understand, and apply His Word in your life. Spending daily time with Jesus will help you to set aside the noise and distractions that make it hard to hear God’s voice. The wisdom found only in Scripture serves as a guide for our marriages, children, friendships, jobs, and finances—and it gives us peace and strength to face life’s greatest difficulties.





# Day 5

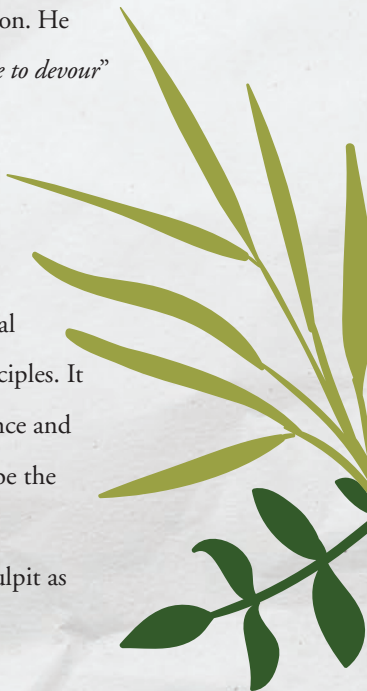
## SET APART FROM THE WORLD

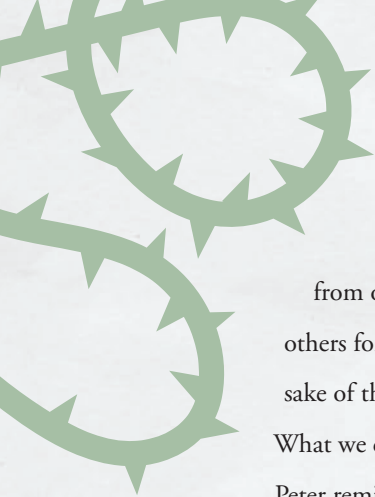
### Reading 1 Peter 2:9-12

In 1948, my grandfather got together with his team to talk about some of the problems that had plagued other evangelists. As a result, they made resolutions to uphold the highest standards of Biblical morality and integrity. My grandfather had full grasp of the truth: Satan knows our weaknesses even more than we do. He's looking for an opportunity to infiltrate and lead us down a path to destruction. He *"prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"* (1 Peter 5:8).

Their declarations became known as the "Modesto Manifesto," and my grandfather later wrote this about it in his autobiography *Just As I Am*: "In reality, it did not mark a radical departure for us; we had always held these principles. It did, however, settle in our hearts and minds, once and for all, the determination that integrity would be the hallmark of both our lives and our ministry."

Billy Graham was the same person in the pulpit as





he was in private. He showed the same care and concern for each person he encountered, regardless of where they were from or their station in life. If we want to reach others for Christ and influence our children for the sake of the Gospel, we must live out an authentic faith. What we do must match what we say.

Peter reminds us that the world is watching and that our lives should be testimonies to His truth. We are *“a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light”* (1 Peter 2:9). Therefore, we are to *“keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that ... they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation”* (1 Peter 2:12).

While this can feel like a weighty challenge—and it is something to take seriously—there are countless, simple ways our lives can point other people to the Gospel. We can make sure that our words are God-honoring—*“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt”* (Colossians 4:6). We can take care with how we dress—*“women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control”* (1 Timothy 2:9). We can be intentional in how we treat others—*“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience”* (Colossians 3:12).



We are exiles in this world—sojourners who shouldn't feel too comfortable here. It's okay for us to talk, look, and act differently than the world. In fact, an authentic faith requires it. *“Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness”* (Ephesians 4:22–24).

When we model this kind of faith for our children and the world around us, it will make an impact. Everything we say and do can draw people to Christ or drive them away. When we commit our lives to following God, the Holy Spirit will work in our lives and use us to impact the world around us.





# Day 6

## SUBMITTING TO AUTHORITY

Reading **1 Peter 2:13–17**

**A**uthority is something humans have struggled with since the beginning. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve decided to follow their own desires rather than following God's instruction. Since then, our nature has been to question those in authority, push boundaries, and seek our own will. Our parents saw it in us, and we see it in our children!

That's why it is easy for us to get uncomfortable when we read passages like this one and Romans 13. We understand, from an intellectual standpoint, that we are to submit to those placed in leadership. But, living it is a bit more challenging, especially when we disagree with our leaders' decisions or actions.

Just like our children, we don't like being told what to do. But by being obedient and submitting to the systems of authority in our lives, we can "*put to silence the ignorance of foolish people*" (1 Peter 2:15). When we show honor to those in authority, even when we disagree,





we are truly modeling the kindness and humility of Jesus, both for the unbelieving world and the watchful eyes of our children. Our submission is a powerful tool to draw others closer to God.

Remarkably, these instructions to *“be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme or to governors”*

(1 Peter 2:13–14), were written to an audience of people who didn’t enjoy the same privileges we have as Americans—the right to vote for our leaders in every level of government. And, still, the Bible is clear that we are to submit to those God has placed in leadership, as long as we are never asked to do something that is contrary to the moral law found in His Word. There may come a day in America when we have to follow the example of Peter in Acts 5:29: *“But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men.’”* Knowing when to show humility and when to stand firm requires knowledge of the Word and discernment. We must know the difference between God’s moral laws, societal laws, and politics.

Daniel is an example of how we can show courage in the face of difficult circumstances while living in an ungodly culture. When

he was taken captive in Babylon, he remained faithful to God. But, even in his resistance to authority, he did so with respect. *“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs”* (Daniel 1:8–9, KJV). Like Daniel, we have to “purpose in our hearts” to be set apart from the world. Daniel’s story also reminds us of another powerful truth—the battle belongs to God, and we are already on the winning side.

As parents, we want our children to honor us, to listen and obey. We want them to learn from us about how navigate the world in which they are growing up. To do that, they need to see us being faithful to the Bible’s teaching. When we show honor to our leaders, commit to praying for them, and even when we disagree, doing it with gentleness and respect, we “put to silence” those who are out to discredit us and we give our children something to which to aspire.





# Day 7

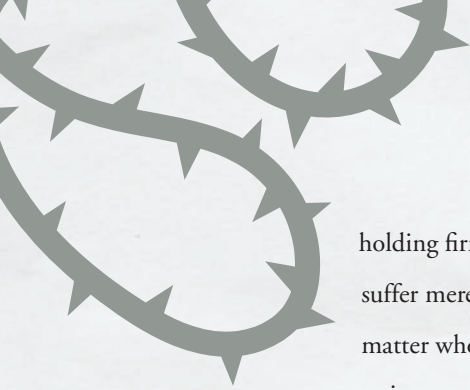
## SUFFERING WITH GRACE

### Reading 1 Peter 2:18–25

**T**hroughout his ministry, my grandfather had countless God-given opportunities to minister to the nation—and the world—during times of tragedy. He spoke often in the face of immense suffering. He once wrote, “No one is exempt from the touch of tragedy: neither the Christian nor the non-Christian; neither the rich nor the poor; neither the leader nor the commoner. Crossing all racial, social, political, and economic barriers, suffering reaches out to unite mankind.”

Colorado baker Jack Phillips has suffered tremendous financial losses in his business, after he has been sued repeatedly for refusing to bake cakes celebrating milestones that violate his Biblical values. Despite all of the hardships, Jack has stood firm. “I’ve tried to honor the Lord in the things I’ve designed and creatively produced,” he said. “I want them to be things that if Jesus Christ walked into the bakery, He’d say, ‘You did a good job with the time and talents I gave you.’ In no way would I want to





dishonor Him.”

Like Jack, we may suffer for holding firm to our faith. Other times, we suffer merely because sin entered the world. No matter who you are or where you live, you will experience some manner of suffering or adversity.

I’ve been around the world and seen people experiencing unthinkable hardships. Sometimes it is physical, with lack of food or clean water. In other places where there is more hostility to the Gospel, it is spiritual suffering. Much of this suffering in the world doesn’t seem fair, and we can’t fully understand it on this side of Heaven.

While we all experience suffering in this life, we can take comfort in knowing that Jesus knows what we experience. Being fully human, He felt every emotion and need that we feel today. He was hungry when He spent 40 days in the wilderness. He was exhausted as He slept on the boat. He was devastated when His friend Lazarus died. He felt anxious as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before going to the cross.

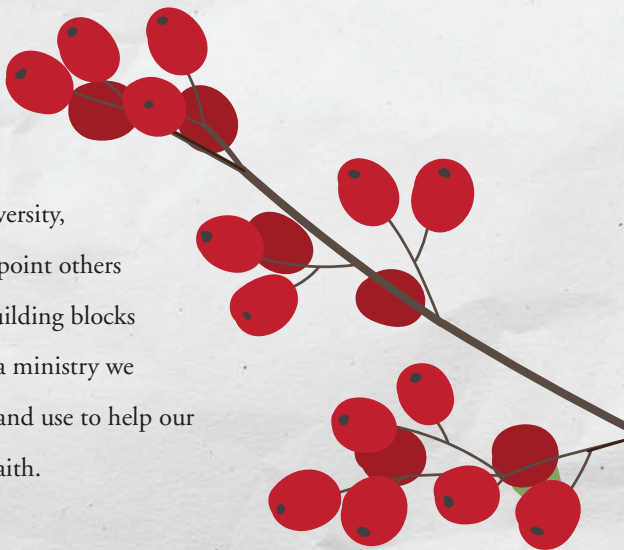
No one in human history has suffered more than Jesus; having committed no sin of His own, He bore ours on the cross. He was beaten and mocked without offering scorn in return. He willingly chose to be separated from the Father, so that we can experience a life in union with Him. *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die*

*to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:24–25).*

I get overwhelmed thinking about everything that Jesus endured, just for me and you! Glory be to God!

Navigating the challenges of today’s world is hard. And, we know from Scripture that it’s going to get harder. With new technology and a world increasingly hostile to Biblical principles, being a parent has perhaps never been more difficult. There’s no doubt that there are times when we are ready to throw in the towel. It seems to be too big of a challenge.

But, God is faithful and never leaves us. We can take refuge in knowing that when we persevere through our difficult seasons, especially when it’s suffering for Jesus’s sake, God will use it to grow our faith. Every time we face adversity, it’s an opportunity to point others to God. It becomes building blocks of our testimony and a ministry we can share with others and use to help our children grow in the faith.







# Day 8

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

### Reading 1 Peter 3:1-7

There aren't many Scripture passages that are more heavily debated and misunderstood than 1 Peter 3:1:

*“Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives.”* God has a very specific design for marriage, with roles and responsibilities for husbands and wives.

Some women may tense up at the idea of submission or being considered “less than.” But, if you look clearly at the passage, you get a fuller, more accurate picture. Peter spent the previous verses urging us all to submit to authority, even when we disagree; encouraging servants to honor their masters, even when they are harsh; and calling everyone to live righteously through our suffering, just as Christ.

Now, he turns his attention to the family, by saying, “*Likewise.*” When wives honor their husbands, they serve as a Christlike example of humility and respect. We can't miss that there is an important

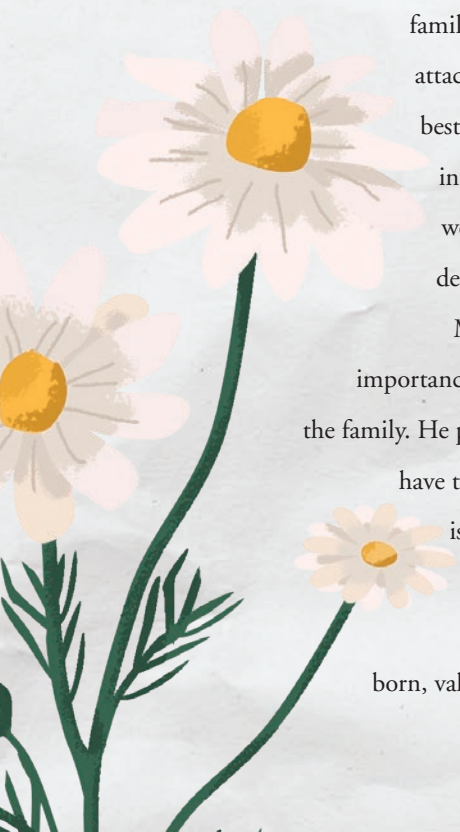



responsibility for husbands, as well. “*You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way . . . and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life*” (1 Peter 3:7, NASB). For husbands, they are required to honor wives in the same way—with understanding and respect. In fact, we know that husbands are to love their wives “*as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*” (Ephesians 5:25).

These truths may be countercultural, but they shouldn't be controversial in the church. God's Word is clear about His plan for

families, and even though our society attacks it at every turn, He knows what's best for us. To be clear, we are all created in God's image and carry equal value; we just have specific roles we were designed to play in the family.

My grandfather often talked about the importance of following the Lord's design for the family. He put it this way: “It was God's idea to have the family in the first place. The family is the most important institution in the world. In the home, characters and attitudes are formed. Integrity is born, values by which we live are made clear,





and goals are set—they last a lifetime. The husband-wife relationship is the key to family success. Children must see love between the father and the mother.”

I’m thankful that I have incredible examples of Christ-honoring marriages in my parents and my grandparents. Until the day my grandmother died, she inspired me with what it means to be a godly wife. Without her, my grandfather would never have been able to preach the Gospel in the far corners of the globe. My grandmother also led my mother to Christ—and in turn, my mom made it possible for my dad to reach people with His love. She made sacrifices to be home with her children while my dad traveled to serve in ministry.

As parents, we’re pulled in many different directions—but one of the most important things we can do for our families and model for our children is to honor our spouse in the way God commands us. Our children are learning about marriage by observing ours. By honoring God with our relationship with our spouses, we are teaching the next generation what a godly marriage looks like. While obedience to God’s Word in this area doesn’t guarantee a marriage free of trouble, we will find a great deal of peace as husbands and wives—and within our homes—when we submit to His will for us.



# Day 9

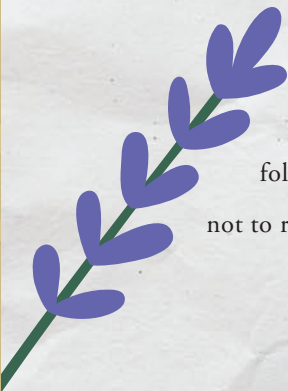
## PRACTICING KINDNESS

### Reading 1 Peter 3:8–12

**W**orld War II hero Louis Zamperini, whose life is chronicled in the bestselling book *Unbroken*, faced unthinkable abuse as a POW at the hands of a Japanese soldier named The Bird. What's remarkable is that after coming to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, Louis harbored no bitterness and resentment for The Bird. Prior, all he could think about was going back to Japan, finding The Bird, and settling the score. After coming to know Jesus as his Lord and Savior, his motive changed. He still made a trip back to Japan, but it was to offer forgiveness instead!

How can one endure such torture and not remain bitter? How

can someone face what Louis faced and not be full of hatred? Only Jesus can change our hearts like that! My father always reminded me that as followers of Jesus Christ, we have a higher calling—not to react how the world thinks we should, but to





respond how Jesus did. As Jesus was whipped and ridiculed, He only offered grace and forgiveness.

But, our sinful human nature is often to respond to insults with insults; to return evil for evil. It's likely that you've experienced this yourself. We've certainly all seen it with our children. Boys and girls steal toys from other children because toys were stolen from them. They say unkind things to other kids because they've had unkind things said to them.

I believe it has become even more difficult to be kind in our current age of social media. If someone posts something negative about us, it's in our nature to fight back. But, in this passage, we are reminded how we should respond: "*Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing*" (1 Peter 3:9).

Here, the exhortation is not silence in the face of evil. That,



in itself, would be hard enough. Instead, it is to go a step further and bless those who curse you. Jesus said in Luke 6, “*Bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you*” (Luke 6:28). We should return the opposite of the evil we’ve experienced: love instead of hate, light instead of darkness. This is hard to do in our own power. It takes the Holy Spirit working through us, just as Louis allowed the Holy Spirit to heal his past hurts and bring him to a place where he could forgive those who abused him.

As Christian parents, it’s important that we get this right, as those around us are watching and learning through our actions.

Consider this: The next time you experience unkindness, stop and ask God to provide you with the grace, patience, and wisdom you need in the situation. You may have to fight the urge to respond immediately in order to do this, but it’s worth it. I assure you, God will answer your prayer, because He promises us that “*if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him*” (James 1:5).





# Day 10

## KNOWING GOD'S WORD

### Reading **1 Peter 3:13–22**

**W**hen we think about evangelism, most of us immediately think about our friends, neighbors, coworkers, or family members who don't know the Lord. 1 Peter 3:15, NIV, reminds us: *"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."* While I usually think about my friends and acquaintances who need Jesus when I read this verse, the command applies directly to our relationship with our children as well. As parents, we have a high calling: to teach our children about Jesus and show them how to share their faith with others. While it's easy to take this opportunity for granted, it's important that we don't leave this responsibility to the church or anyone else.

A couple of important things to note about this verse. First, we must think about what is implied: We should be living a life that causes someone to ask us about it. Our lives should look different enough that someone would want us to explain





ourselves. Secondly, we are charged to “*always be prepared.*” That means we need to study God’s Word faithfully. It’s our duty to know what the Bible says in order to be able to speak with authority when asked. We never know when our children, or someone else, will ask us a question about our faith.

As parents, we spend a lot of time in the car with our kids driving them to school, church, and extracurricular activities. Growing up, my mom often used our time together in the car to talk about difficult subjects. We would talk about our culture and the situation I was experiencing. She always had a way of communicating complex topics in a way I could easily understand. God used her willingness to have these tough conversations in my youth to give me the wisdom and the courage to stand up for Biblical truth today.

Recently, I was driving in the car with my own daughter and she asked me a question I didn’t

know how to answer.

If you have young kids, you know how inquisitive they can





be. There are countless things they can ask out of the blue, and I'm not a scientist, philosopher, or engineer! But, when it comes to Scripture and our personal testimony of faith, we don't have to feel blindsided. We just have to study God's Word and be prepared to share it.

Inevitably, we won't have all the answers. In those times, I believe the Holy Spirit will give us the right words. By being faithful in our studying, we grow closer to the Lord and begin to understand His Word and character more fully. God will then use those moments to work in the lives of those around us, just like He used my mother.

If your children have already made the decision to follow Jesus, take time to equip them to stand for Him and share their faith. Devote regular time to open conversations about the Bible or your relationship with God. It may seem like a small thing, but I assure you that they are the building blocks to a lasting faith.

Even if we don't discuss every cultural issue with our kids, let's remind them that the best way to confidently tell others about Jesus is to pursue a close relationship with Him—and encourage them to find out for themselves what His Word teaches.





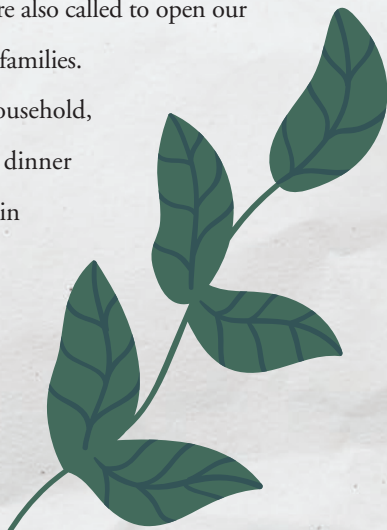
# Day 11

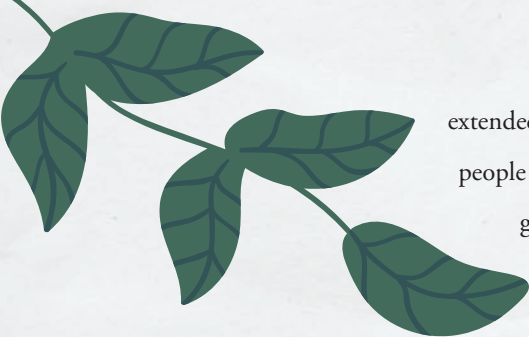
## ALIGNING YOUR CHARACTER WITH CHRIST

*Reading* **1 Peter 4:1–11**

One of our most important mission fields is our kitchen table. These are the daily moments when we can share important and meaningful conversations with our loved ones. We have a very short time with them around our table, so it's imperative that we not take these moments for granted. I try to make the best possible use of this season of life, while my children are still in our home and I can talk to them daily about God's truth. But, using our kitchen table as a mission field extends well beyond our kids—we're also called to open our homes and hearts to people outside our families.

On Thanksgiving in the Graham household, it was rarely just our family around the dinner table. For years, special guests would join our celebrations—whether it was one of our classmates or a family friend. My grandparents and parents always






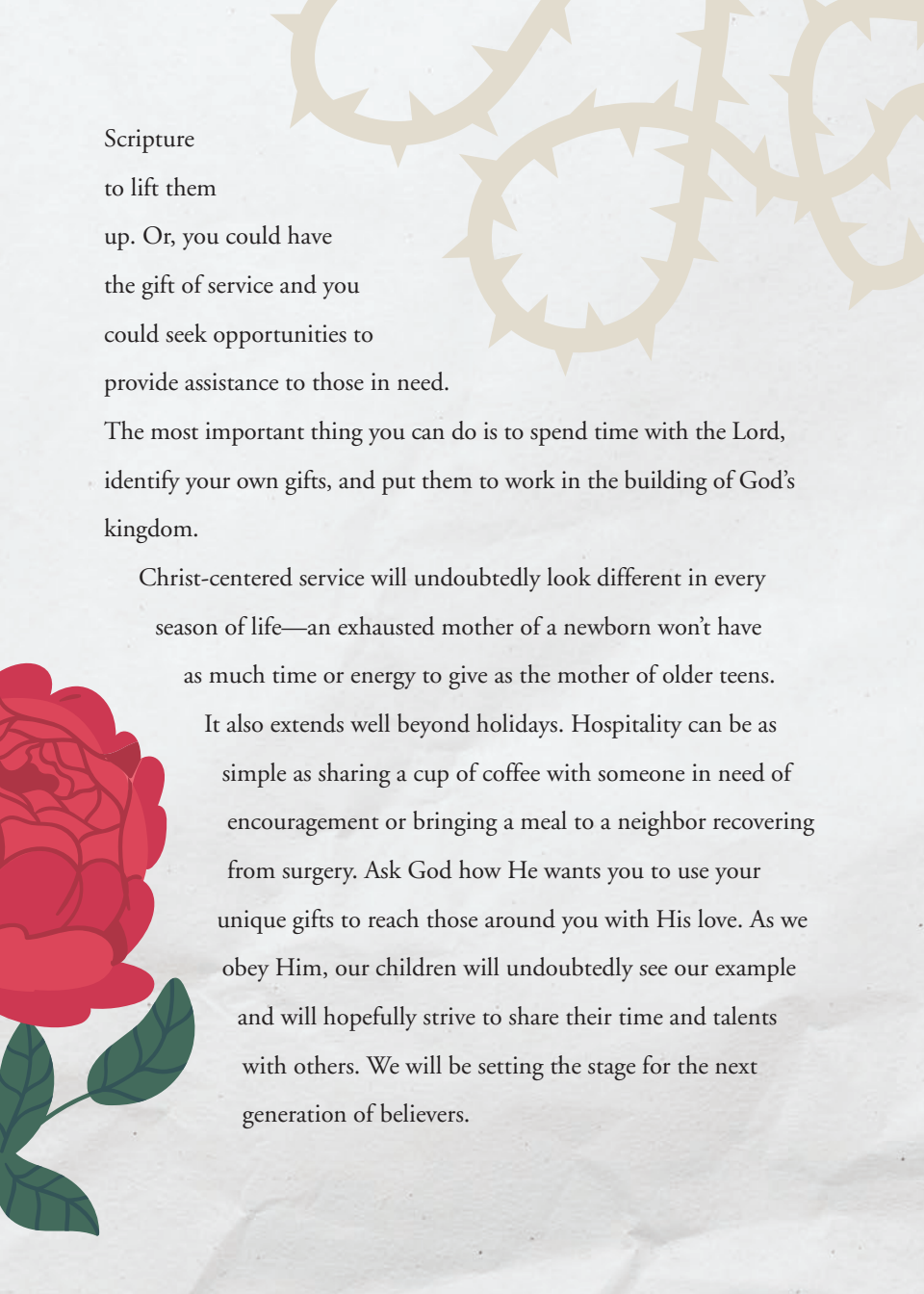
extended a warm welcome to people from all walks of life. These gatherings gave our family a simple way to show hospitality and share the love of Jesus with others.

Peter reminds us to “*show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace*” (1 Peter 4:9–10). When we open our homes and our hearts, we are also pointing our children to an invaluable truth—God calls us to focus on others, not ourselves.

The culture we live in tells us that we are the most important part of our world. But in reality, when we became followers of Jesus, we abandoned the world’s view and adopted God’s view. Instead of thinking of your own interests, you now “*count others more significant than yourselves*” (Philippians 2:3).

God has given each of us spiritual gifts, all for the purpose of glorifying Him and serving others. For some, showing hospitality and planning gatherings comes easy to you. Others of you may have the gift of encouragement; you could drop someone a note or send them a text with





Scripture  
to lift them  
up. Or, you could have  
the gift of service and you  
could seek opportunities to  
provide assistance to those in need.

The most important thing you can do is to spend time with the Lord, identify your own gifts, and put them to work in the building of God's kingdom.

Christ-centered service will undoubtedly look different in every season of life—an exhausted mother of a newborn won't have as much time or energy to give as the mother of older teens.

It also extends well beyond holidays. Hospitality can be as simple as sharing a cup of coffee with someone in need of encouragement or bringing a meal to a neighbor recovering from surgery. Ask God how He wants you to use your unique gifts to reach those around you with His love. As we obey Him, our children will undoubtedly see our example and will hopefully strive to share their time and talents with others. We will be setting the stage for the next generation of believers.





# Day 12

## GRATITUDE IN THE FACE OF SUFFERING

Reading **1 Peter 4:12–19**

One of the moments I look forward to every day is dinnertime with my family. The stress of the work and school day is usually behind us, and the hectic bedtime routines haven't started yet. I savor these meals with my husband and my children, and I ask God to help me make the most of this special time. One way we do this is affectionately called "peaks and pits." Every night, my children have to share one "pit," the worst part of the day, and one "peak," the best thing about their day. There are only a few rules—for example, they always have to find a "peak," even if they had a bad day.

We are called to "*give thanks in all circumstances;*

*for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). The second rule is that my son's "pit" can't be his sister!


I love to hear my kids share from their hearts. While this precious time is usually fun for us, I also pray that God



will use it to help them understand the importance of gratitude. Gratitude isn't an option for followers of Jesus Christ. It is a command, no matter what we're facing: "*Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). 1 Peter 4:13 takes it a step further and instructs that when "*you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing*" (NASB).

It's important to teach our children early on that God expects grateful hearts and joyful obedience in every season of life. This special dinner ritual also gives us an opportunity to teach our children another critical truth—suffering in this world is guaranteed for believers in Jesus Christ. While we might not face the persecution Peter and his fellow Christians did, we will inevitably experience pain on this side of eternity. Scripture teaches us to expect it—"*Do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you*" (1 Peter 4:12)—and to look to Jesus when we suffer. He sets the ultimate example for us on how to endure trials of all kinds.

John Cooper, lead singer of the band Skillet, experienced unimaginable pain and found comfort in Jesus. His mom battled cancer and was sick for three years before passing away when John was only 14. It's hard for a child to watch a parent suffer and die. He's spoken frequently about how he wouldn't



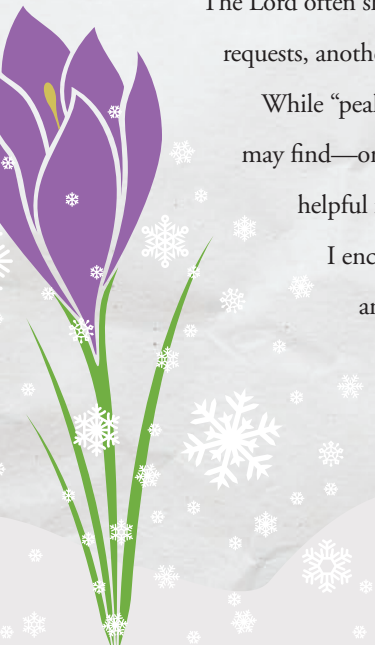
have been able to get through that trial without Jesus. “At that point I had to realize that I needed to lean on God and I didn’t have anybody to talk to,” he said. “So, I would talk to God in my room at night and I began to know Jesus as a friend.” John’s mom had instilled in him the truth that God is good and He can be trusted.

Like John, it’s critical that our children know that they can cast all their cares on God, because He cares for them (see 1 Peter 5:7). That’s why I’ve found it so effective for our family to share “peaks” and “pits” every day. I want them to see their failures, heartaches, or complaints—as well as their praises—as an opportunity for prayer and thanksgiving.

The Lord often shows us how we can turn our “pits” into prayer requests, another vitally important topic Peter addresses later.

While “peaks” and “pits” works great for our family, you may find—or already know—of something else that is helpful for your children. Whatever you decide to do,

I encourage you to model gratitude for your kids and help them learn to have grateful hearts, even when we go through hard times. It will serve them well for the rest of their lives as they ripen their prayer lives and deepen their trust in the Lord.







# Day 13

## SHEPHERDING WITH HUMILITY

### Reading **1 Peter 5:1-7**

**T**he Bible is chock full of imagery using shepherds and sheep. Not only was it relevant to the culture of the time, it provides a clear picture of our relationship with Jesus, our Shepherd. Similarly, people in leadership positions are charged with shepherding those under their charge. Maybe you are not a pastor, elder, or leader, but all of us as parents are shepherds of our own flocks.

The Bible is clear about what God requires of leaders: lead by example with humility and commit to prayer. *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you”* (1 Peter 5:6-7). If we humble ourselves before Him, spending time with Him through prayer and reading His





Word, then He will equip us to lead others, including our families.

Peter admonishes leaders to not be “*domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock*” (1 Peter 5:3). There’s an old adage that says “there’s more caught than taught.” In other words, children are observing our actions more than they are listening to our words. To be clear, we must do both, but it’s critical that our actions line up with what God’s Word says and what we teach our children. We must exhibit a spirit of humility as individuals and as parents.

Peter then urges us to pray. Prayer is essential business. We should remember that Jesus Himself would often “*withdraw to desolate places and pray*” (Luke 5:16). During my grandfather’s decades of ministry, there were very few things he emphasized as much as prayer. He preached, taught, and wrote about it publicly—and he lived this out in his personal life, in front of his children and grandchildren, taking everything to the Lord in prayer. He and my

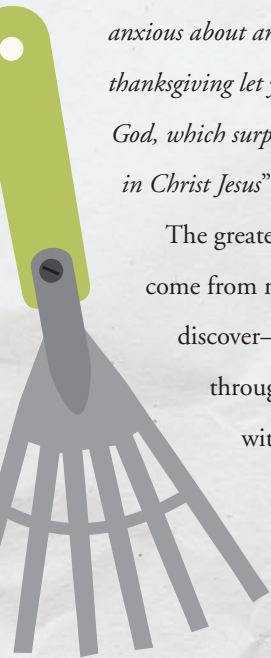


grandmother left a legacy of prayer that inspires me to this day.

He once wrote, “We were created to live a life of prayer ... We would do well to follow Jesus’ example: in spite of His hectic public ministry, He was never too hurried to spend hours in prayer. I urge you to select a room or corner in your home where you can regularly meet alone with God. That quiet, secluded, one-on-one praying can be your day’s greatest blessing.”

When God calls us to pray, He does it for our own benefit, as well. We can—and should—bring everything to God because He cares for us. He wants us to bring all our burdens to Him in prayer. “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 4:6–7).

The greatest strength I’ve found for parenting my children has come from my time alone with the Lord, and I’d encourage you to discover—or rediscover—the incredible peace that comes only through regular study and prayer. This dedicated time alone with God will develop us into the humble leaders He has called us to be.





# Day 14

## ACCOUNTABILITY

### *Reading* **1 Peter 5:8–13**

**W**hile we know that our society is becoming more hostile to God and His truth, there is another threat that's just as dangerous. More than ever before in our nation's history, secular culture is infiltrating churches. Many leaders who identify as Christians preach and teach things that are completely contrary to God's Word—and it can be difficult to discern what's truth and what's not.

So how do we identify truth? By intimately knowing the real thing.

To spot counterfeit currency, federal agents don't study fake bills. They train by analyzing genuine bills, so they know every detail. These men and women work to carefully commit every detail of our nation's currency to memory so that they can easily spot counterfeit bills. What a powerful analogy for us as believers! In order to discern teaching that isn't Biblical, we need to be in the Word.

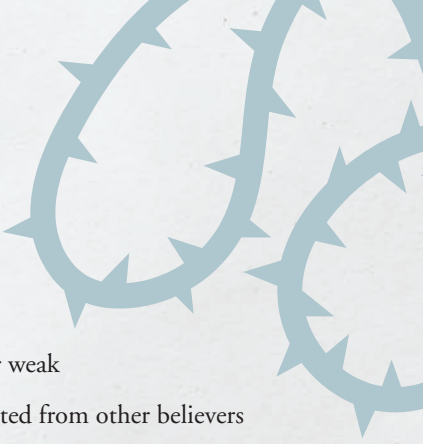




In the early days of my grandfather's ministry, his close friend Charles Templeton changed his views about the inerrancy of Scripture. He had flipped and now said the Bible could not be trusted. He encouraged my grandfather to reexamine his positions. This troubled my grandfather so much that one night he couldn't sleep. He got up and took a walk in the woods. He laid his open Bible on a tree stump and committed to the Lord that he would accept the Bible as truth despite any doubts he may have. He rose from that encounter a renewed man, and God used him for decades to reach millions for Christ. He surrounded himself with godly men and women who helped him and encouraged him along the way.

Like my grandfather, we are going to be faced with tests. "*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness*" (James 1:2-3). It's in these moments that we need to spend time in the Word, ask the Holy Spirit for guidance, commune with the Lord in prayer, and seek the godly council from Christian brothers and sisters who can hold us accountable. We need to increase our knowledge of Scripture and build a

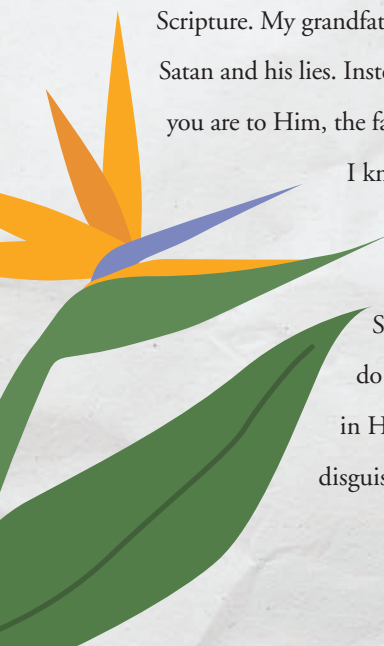




support network of other believers who will help us withstand Satan's attacks.

Just as a hungry lion on the African plain seeks to separate the vulnerable gazelle from the pack, Satan is looking for weak spots in our lives. When we are disconnected from other believers or when we let life's busyness impact our daily time with the Lord—those are the seasons when we are most vulnerable.

God's Word is filled with instructions on how to “*resist him, firm in your faith*” (1 Peter 5:9). Like the federal agents who study real currency, the Bible urges us to resist false teaching and lies by diligently studying Scripture. My grandfather put it this way: “Don't be deceived by Satan and his lies. Instead, stay close to Christ—because the closer you are to Him, the farther you are away from the devil.”



I know that as my children grow older, their questions will get more and more difficult. But as we faithfully study Scripture—and encourage our children to do the same—we'll be equipped to stand firm in His truth, no matter what lies our culture disguises as truth.

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