

A 21-DAY JOURNEY TO DEEPER ROOTS

CHRISTIAN LIFE CHURCH MEQUON, WI



"ROOTED"

COMMITTED TO DEEPER GOD-CONNECTION

"AS YE HAVE THEREFORE RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, SO WALK YE IN HIM: ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN HIM, AND STABLISHED IN THE FAITH, AS YE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, ABOUNDING THEREIN WITH THANKSGIVING." COLOSSIANS 2:6—7

Roots are vital to the life of any tree. Roots draw nutrients from the environment and send those nutrients through the trunk into the branches. The kind of soil a tree is rooted in will affect the flavor of its fruit. Good soil will lead to good fruit. The Scriptures are filled with correlations drawn between the people of God and trees. Like a fruit-bearing tree, our root will determine our fruit. It is unrealistic to believe that our lives can be characterized by spiritual fruit if we are not intentional about where we take root.

We are focusing this year on getting Rooted in a deeper, daily connection with God. When the life and nature of God is flowing through us, it changes everything! Education, social engagement, and inspiring environments are all great, but they are not the essence of a successful Christian life. All relationships, pursuits, ministries, mindsets, and priorities must grow out of a deeply rooted relationship with God. If we are going to be fulfilled in living for God, experience the fruit of the Spirit, have successful families, produce effective ministries, and mature spiritually, it will be because our hearts and minds are deeply Rooted in a personal God-connection.

It is my sincere prayer that this effort will not be just another initiative in your life, but that it will be an onramp to a more committed and successful walk with God. Rooted is about changing the culture of our lives, homes, and church. I hope and pray that your thinking will be both challenged and changed in the coming weeks.

For the Journey,

Pastor Hanthorn



FOUR COMPONENTS OF DEEPER GOD-CONNECTION

There are four essential components to establishing a strong, life-giving connection with God.

1. GOD-CONNECTION BEGINS WITH DEFINITIONS:

We must have the right definition of success. Unless we understand what success looks like, we will never know what to pursue. We must ask ourselves, "What does Biblical success look like for me personally, for my marriage, for my children, and for my church?" We cannot merely accept religious and societal definitions of success. We need Kingdom definitions!

2. GOD-CONNECTION WILL REQUIRE A FRESH VISION:

A God-given vision seldom has dates, times, places, and faces associated with it. God does not necessarily call us to a person, a place, or even a date – He calls us to a path. I am convinced that God wants to give each of us a fresh vision of the path He is calling us down. Imagine how different your life would look if you were privately sold out for Jesus. Ask God to help you see a new you in your future. This vision will give you the passion and discipline you need to take this journey.

3. GOD-CONNECTION WILL INVOLVE EVALUATING PRIORITIES:

The Scriptures speak of people who "oppose themselves" (2 Timothy 2:25) and also of those who live with a "divided heart" (Hosea 10:2). Too many Christians live in ways that simply do not match their stated priorities. Rooted is about bringing our lives back into harmony with kingdom priorities. This involves evaluating how we invest our time, energy, and how we direct our families. More than ever, Christian homes must be Rooted in God-centered values and priorities.

4. GOD-CONNECTION IS MAINTAINED BY DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:

Spiritual disciplines are the pathway to God-connection. It is imperative that we develop and strengthen our spiritual habits. Habit will always carry us further than our desire. Our root system is comprised of our spiritual disciplines. Where we lack spiritual discipline, God-connection will be diminished. The goal of Rooted is to help each of us establish habits of prayer, fasting, study, and journaling that will become the conduit of His Spirit into our lives.



READING AND JOURNAL PLAN

READING PLAN:

- Set aside 30 minutes each day to read and pray. Morning is best, but not essential. It may be easier in the mornings to hear from God with an uncluttered mind.
- Pray before you read. Ask God to speak to you through His Word as you read.
- Pray specifically that God would give you a desire to grow spiritually and that He would help you do a thorough and honest self-examination of your heart during the next 3 weeks.
- Read the Scriptures that are recommended on each journal page.
- Read the passages slowly or reread them several times.
- There is a great difference between reading the Scriptures mechanically and reading them relationally. Ask questions of the text while you read. This opens up the Word and turns Bible reading into a conversation.

SUGGESTED RESEARCH TOOLS:

- 1. Strong's Concordance
- 2. Blue Letter Bible
- 3. Olive Tree Bible App
- 4. PC Study Bible
- 5. Dictionary
- 6. Vine's Expository Dictionary

JOURNALING PLAN:

In this journal, each page includes the following:

- A verse to read and meditate on throughout the day
- A short devotional thought
- Journal prompt questions
- Space to write
- Suggested word studies or other study prompts for additional devotion

Journaling is a great way of unpacking thoughts and preserving the things God reveals to you as you read His Word. There is no right or wrong way to journal. Simply answer the journal prompt questions as honestly and completely as you can. The entire point of this initiative is to help us become more rooted in a deep, growing, God-connection. This happens as we seek Him through the daily spiritual disciplines of Bible reading and prayer. Together, these habits are the basis of forming a relationship with Jesus. Apart from these things, spiritual growth is not possible.



. PRAYER AND FASTING PLAN .

PRAYER PLAN:

A prayer life consists of two types of praying: dedicated time alone with God and God consciousness throughout the day. Both are essential. One is what we call "closet prayer," based on Matthew 6:6. The other is called "prayer without ceasing," as seen in 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Many people pray throughout the day, but fewer people have the prayer closet experience that Jesus described in the Sermon on the Mount.

For this initiative, we are asking you to set a target time to be in a dedicated place and posture for prayer. If you do not have a dedicated time and place for prayer, please commit to 5 or 10 minutes in the same time and same place every day for the next 21 days. If you already spend dedicated, alone time with God every day, please set a target to increase your daily devotional time.

I will commit to _____ minutes of dedicated prayer every day for the next 21 days. (Dedicated prayer is defined as a specific time, place, and posture connecting with God.)

FASTING PLAN:

Fasting is an essential part of Christian disciplines and plays an important role in strengthening our Godconnection.

We invite you to join us on a 21-Day Daniel Fast and a 21-Day Media Fast

If, for health reasons, you are unable to participate in the Daniel Fast, please choose an appropriate, sacrificial fast that will help you discipline your flesh and connect to God in a greater way.

POSSIBLE OPTIONS WOULD BE:

- Abstain from caffeine or sugar
 - Abstain from favorite foods
- Modify the Daniel Fast in some way to fit your dietary requirements

For those who cannot participate in a prolonged Daniel Fast, due to vacation plans or work requirements, we would encourage you to choose two or three days each week to do a water only fast.

"I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCHES. HE WHO ABIDES IN ME, AND I IN HIM, BEARS MUCH FRUIT; For without me you can do nothing. " John 15:5



. THE MODEL PRAYER .

In Luke chapter 11 we read that the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him to teach them how to pray. This was the only thing they had ever asked Him to teach them. It must have been evident to them that His power, miracles, spiritual insight, and integrity all flowed from His prayer life and private Godconnection. Jesus' response to His disciples can be found in what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

"...OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL:

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER.

AMEN."

MATTHEW 6:9 - 13

Recorded in both the Gospel of Matthew and Luke, this prayer is a model for us to follow. It was never intended to be used simply for recitation. It was given as a pattern for prayer; a road map to guide us into an effective prayer life. Each of the six statements from Jesus represent a facet our private prayer time.

1. RELATIONSHIP & WORSHIP

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." – V. 9

We should begin praying by acknowledging God as our father. We ought to pause to appreciate the fact that He has adopted us as His own. We should also "enter into His courts with praise" by choosing to focus on Him; who He is and what He has done for us.



2. SURRENDER & INVITATION

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." – V. 10

This is where we recommit ourselves to living for Him and surrender our lives afresh. We should daily invite His kingdom and lordship into our lives and bring our will into submission to His will for us.

3. PETITION & INTERCESSION

"Give us this day our daily bread." - V. 11

In this portion of our prayer time we should "cast all our care upon Him" and "let our requests be made known unto Him." We should talk with God about our personal desires and needs. We should also spend time praying for the needs of our friends, family, and church.

4. CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

"And forgive us our debts; as we forgive our debtors.". - V. 12

We should humbly confess our sins and honestly invite God to search our hearts, revealing actions and attitudes that are inconsistent with His will for our life. Furthermore, we should take some time to pray for, forgive, and release those who may have harmed or offended us.

5. DIRECTION AND PROTECTION

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." – V. 13

We should pray that God will lead us by His Spirit, keep us sensitive to sin, and help us against temptation. Pray for wisdom in areas where you may be confused and in need of His leadership. This is also where we should engage in spiritual warfare.

6. WORSHIP & THANKSGIVING

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." – V. 13

We should end our prayer time with worship and in a spirit of gratitude. Listing the things we are grateful for and once again honoring the glory and the majesty of our great God and King.



. PRIORITIES WORKSHEET .

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE, RATE THE AREAS IN WHICH WE SPEND OUR TIME:

- 1. WORK
- 2. FAMILY TIME
- 3. CHURCH SERVICES
- 4. ENTERTAINMENT/SOCIAL MEDIA 8. VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES
- 5. PRIVATE DEVOTION
- 6. EDUCATION
- 7. HOBBIES AND FITNESS

PLEASE CIRCLE THE MOST IMPORTANT AREA IN EACH HEAD-TO-HEAD COMPARISON: (For example: Which is more important? Work or family time? Work or church services?)

1 or 2						
1 or 3	2 or 3					
1 or 4	2 or 4	3 or 4				
1 or 5	2 or 5	3 or 5	4 or 5			
1 or 6	2 or 6	3 or 6	4 or 6	5 or 6		
1 or 7	2 or 7	3 or 7	4 or 7	5 or 7	6 or 7	
1 or 8	2 or 8	3 or 8	4 or 8	5 or 8	6 or 8	7 or 8

PRIORITIES .

ADD UP THE NUMBER OF TIMES EACH AREA WAS CIRCLED:

1.	WORK	5.	PRIVATE DEVOTION
2.	FAMILY TIME	6.	EDUCATION
3.	CHURCH SERVICES	7.	HOBBIES AND FITNESS
4.	ENTERTAINMENT/SOCIAL MEDIA	8.	VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

MY 1 — ROOTED IN GOD-CONNECTION — PSALM 1:3

Throughout the Bible there is a correlation drawn between the spiritual growth of Christians and the creative design of trees. One of the most obvious and informative spiritual correlations is seen in the way trees grow and bear fruit. Trees are designed to grow from a single root system. Everything that a tree is above ground is determined by what it is rooted beneath the surface. Like trees, Christians are called to live and grow from a single root system. The fruit of our lives is determined by that in which we are privately rooted. Our relationships, pursuits, conversations, disciplines, ministries, priorities, etc. reveal the nature, quality, and depth of our root system. When we get the right root, we will get the right fruit. The Psalmist David, declared that the people of God would be like trees *planted* by rivers of water. To be Rooted in Him simply means that He is our source. It is from Him that we draw strength, energy, and life. When we are established in God-connection, His nature and power can daily influence the way we think, talk, and live.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. What does the term "God-connection" mean to you?
- 2. Think about what a root system provides nourishment, stability, and identity. What does it mean to be Rooted in Jesus?
- 3. In what ways is your life enriched and fed daily by the presence of God?

CONTROLLY To become more aware of our need for deeper, daily, God-connection.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Using a dictionary, look up the words "planted" and "rooted." Write out each definition and contemplate how it applies to your relationship with God.

DAY 2 — CHOOSING THE RIGHT VOICE — PSALM 1:1-2

Before David gives us the illustrative image of a tree planted by rivers of water, he first reminds us that we must say no to some things. He opens his psalm by saying that we are blessed if we "walk not," "stand not," and "sit not" in certain places. As Christians, we must learn the art of saying no to other so-called sources. The world around us is constantly promising to give us that which only God can provide – peace, joy, purpose, and love. We must learn how to reject the counsel of the ungodly (advice), the way of the sinner (customs and habits), and the seat of the scornful (critical attitudes and negative mind-sets). Part of maturing as a Christian is learning to choose the right voices in our lives.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Can you identify ways in which you are influenced by the advice of unsaved people, or where you have adopted the attitudes, customs, and priorities of this culture without seriously consulting the Word of God?
- 2. What feeds your life? Where does your spiritual support, renewed strength, emotional stability, and guidance come from?
- 3. Are you guided, supported, and spiritually nourished more by your human relationships than by your relationship with God and His word? If so, how can you change this?

Cod. Identify areas where you are influenced by voices and ideas that may be contrary to the will of God.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Using a Strong's Concordance or a Bible dictionary, look up the word meditate found in P 1:2. What does it mean to meditate on His law "day and night"?		
The final account meaning arrangement adjusted in the final section of the final section in t		

m DAY3- nothing means nothing - John 15:4-5

The Apostle John records one of the most profound statements made by Jesus. In John 15:5, Jesus promised that those who abide in Him would be fruitful, but apart from Him they would be capable of nothing. Take a moment and allow the word nothing to sink in. In short, Jesus was saying that, unless we are Rooted in Him, we are incapable of producing anything of spiritual value in our own lives. Even as Christians, it can be hard for us to fully accept this truth and even harder to allow the reality of it to affect the way we live. Often, we profess dependence upon Him with our words, but privately we live very independent from God. Being Rooted in Him is about embracing our dependence upon Him and living as if we can truly do nothing without Him. The phrase "apart from me you can do nothing" in this verse, should remind us all just how dependent we really are upon Him.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. How does your private life reveal your level of dependence on God? Give examples.
- 2. Why do you think we struggle to remain aware of how dependent we are on Him?

COLL: To acknowledge to ourselves and to God how dependent upon Him we truly are.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Sap is the life's blood of trees. Using Google, or other sources, do some research on sap and its role in carrying nutrients from the roots through the branches to the leaves and fruit. How does this tie in to abiding in Him?

DAY 4 — BEARING MUCH FRUIT — JOHN 15:8

Jesus said that if we abide in Him, we would bear much fruit. We were designed to have the life of God flowing through us; ornamenting and enriching every branch of our lives. In other words, we were made to be fruitful. Our lives and attitudes are changed when we are *Rooted* in Him. Relationships are enriched when His life flows freely through ours. A strong God-connection provides power to live at a higher level. This is characterized by the fruit of the Spirit, listed in Galatians 5:22-23, being revealed in us. There is a sweetness that comes from abiding in Him. When we are connected to the vine, all of His goodness and His nature are allowed to flow through and manifest in us. Fruitfulness is often confused with accomplishment or achievement, but it is so much more than that. Our lives are fruitful when the life and the nature of Jesus are seen in us.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. What does "fruitful" mean to you?
- 2. What kind of fruit do you think God wants your life to produce?
- 3. What does the fruit of your life tell you about the condition of your root system?

GIAL: Identify the areas where you lack spiritual fruit in your life.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Which of the nine fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23 are most evident in your life? Please list them from the most prevalent to the least.		

m DAY~5-roots~don't~just~happen!-galatians~6:8-9

Being Rooted begins with being planted. Before a plant can grow, a hole must be dug, weeds and rocks removed, and then a seed must be surrendered to the soil. Once planted, root development takes time. The same is true in our lives. We cannot expect great God-connection if we are not willing to dig, invest, and continue to be patient through the process of growth. We must choose to make the kind of spiritual investments that will get us Rooted in both the person and nature of God. An effortless pursuit of God will ultimately yield little or no harvest. Being Rooted in God requires time with God. We can never truly be connected to Him without a time investment. It starts as a choice and it becomes a way of life. We must sow to the Spirit so that we may reap the life and fruit of the Spirit in years to come.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Can you identify areas in your life today where you are benefiting from past spiritual investments?
- 2. If you did not make any changes to your current prayer and study habits, what kind of a Christian would you be three years from now?
- 3. What is one thing that you can start doing today to give God greater access to your mind and heart? Write about it.

COLL: Identify one or two spiritual investments you want to start making today.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Using a concordance, look up the words sow, soweth, and sown. Study the process a sowing and reaping. List the process in as much detail as you can. How does this apply to your spiritualife?

M 6 — ALONE — MATTHEW 6:6

In Genesis 32:24 we read that Jacob was left alone and while alone he had a life altering encounter with God. We live in a world driven by the pursuit of connection. We have come to believe that together is good and alone is bad. While it is true that being with other people can be tremendously rewarding, it is also true that being alone with God has its own rewards. In our fast-paced society, our minds have been trained to need constant social stimulation. The problem with this trend is that it allows little, if any, time for personal reflection and private connection with God. Jesus understood our need to be alone with God. He invited those listening to His Sermon on the Mount to enter in to their prayer closets, close the door behind them, and pray in secret.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Why do you think that Jesus referred to this experience as a "prayer closet" and encouraged the person praying to "shut the door"?
- 2. List some of the ways in which your prayers are different when they are prayed in secret. Are you more emotional? Are you more transparent and honest with God?

CONT. Establish a dedicated time and private place to pray each day.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Using a co Bible.	ncordance or dictionary, res	earch the word alone and	its usage throughout the
			<u> </u>

DAY 7 — THE POSTURE OF PRAYER — PSALM 95:6

In the Old Testament, the prophet Daniel provides a great example of what a prayer life should look like (Daniel 6:10). He had a specific time, a dedicated place, and a particular posture. We live in world addicted to leisure and comfort. We attempt to be as comfortable as possible at all times. Yet, it can be difficult to be mentally and spiritually productive when you are in a reclined posture. The truth is that our posture often affects our productivity. We are less likely to do our best work lying in bed than we would be sitting or standing at a work station. The right posture keeps us focused on the task at hand. When we try to pray from a position of relaxation, we are more likely to be distracted or even to fall asleep. Daniel chose to pray from a kneeling position. The Bible is filled with examples of different kinds of prayer postures: lying prostrate before God (Gen 17:3), kneeling before the Lord (Ps 95:6), bowing before the Lord (Gen 24:52), looking up into heaven (Ps 121:1-2), and lifting our hands to the Lord (1 Tim 2:8). People may differ on which posture they prefer, but it is important that our prayer posture be distinct and intentional in some way. Whichever posture we use, it should serve notice to our flesh that we have come to pray.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. How does a particular posture such as kneeling, rocking, or bowing down help us remain focused on connecting with God?
- 2. What attitude does your prayer posture convey focus, reverence, worship, etc.?

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Using a concordance or dictionary research the key words in Ps 95:6.

DAY 8 — THE FRUIT OF OUR LIPS — HEBREWS 13:15 & PSALM 55:17

It is not uncommon for the mind to wander during prayer, especially when the mind is not conditioned to uninterrupted time with God. If you are like most people, you have a tendency to drift in your thoughts. Praying with our voice, and not just our mind, is one of the best ways to overcome distraction and to exercise our faith. When we attempt to pray silently, our prayers are much more likely to meander. However, when we use our voice in prayer, it is much easier to keep our thoughts from wandering. Furthermore, verbal prayer is a faith-builder.

When we use our voices to speak to a God we cannot see, we are expressing and stretching our faith. The more we do it, the more comfortable it will become. Never forget that God gave you your voice and He loves it when you use it to reach for Him.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Why do you think it is so challenging for some people to use their voice when praying?
- 2. Why do you think it honors God for you to use your voice in prayer?

GAL: Evaluate how comfortable you are praying verbally. Be intentional about using your voice as much as you can to both pray to and worship God.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Using a concordance or Bible app, look up how many times the phrase "my voice" appears in the book of Psalms. Write out those verses that stand out to you.		

MY 9 - our father: praying in the context of relationship - romans 8:15-17

Prayer must begin in the context of relationship. Jesus taught His disciples to begin their prayer by saying; "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name..." (Luke 11:2). He encouraged them take time as they prayed to focus on the nature of their relationship with God. God is not a distant, dispassionate Deity. He is our Father! That revelation is a game-changer. When we pray in the context of relationship, our prayer life is fundamentally transformed. We are no longer trying to curry favor with God, nor are we attempting to overcome His reluctance. We are simply sharing our heart with the One who has claimed us and redeemed us to Himself. Too many people approach prayer as if it were a performance for God instead of a conversation with God. We should never view our prayer time as a religious event, but as an intimate time of sharing with a Father who loves us. Abba Father!

OUESTIONS:

- 1. How relational is your communication with God? Do you approach God as your father or do you see Him through a more distant and disinterested lens?
- 2. If you are currently struggling to view God as your Father, what can you do differently to help change that?

Begin daily prayer by focusing on your relationship with God as your Father.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Psalm 103:13 & Matthew 7:7-11. List the ways in which the Bible says a father should respond to the mistakes and needs of a child. If this is how God expects natural parents to behave, how do you think He responds to your failures and needs?

DAY 10 - THY KINGDOM COME - MATTHEW 6:10

The greatest thing we can ever do, in this life, is to invite the Lord to establish His kingdom in us. Jesus never intended for this portion of the Lord's prayer to be pure lip service. It is one of the most difficult yet rewarding aspects of an effective prayer life. Prayer is not about constraining God to do our will. It is about bringing our will in sync with His; surrendering our agenda and embracing His vision for our lives. Jesus demonstrated this for us when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, saying, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). God-connection takes place in the fertile soil of surrender. Incorporating personal surrender into our prayer life guarantees the presence of God. When we humbly, and in faith, invite His kingdom to be established in us, God will graciously respond to our invitation.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. What does "Thy kingdom come" mean to you?
- Imagine what it would be like if God was in full control of your life for one day. How would you spend your time? Who would it affect? What would you watch or read? Write about how you think that day might look.
- 3. Can you identify any areas where there may be tension between God's will for your life and your own will for your life?

GAL: To Invite His kingdom into every area of our lives.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Look up the word kingdom in the dictionary. Write down any defining characteristics of kingdom and ask yourself how these apply to Christianity. Or, using a concordance or Bible app, look up the phrase "the will of God" and list any prominent characteristics of His will.

MY 11 - PRAY WITHOUT CEASING - 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17

Pray without ceasing. That sounds time consuming! Some may even brush off Paul's commandment as unrealistic. Yet, Paul was not implying that we abide in a physical posture of prayer twenty-four hours per day. That would be impossible. Rather, Paul was calling the reader to pray in an unceasing way. Luke recorded similar words from Jesus in Luke 18:1 when he wrote; "that men always ought to pray and not lose heart." As Christians, our lives are to be seasoned with prayer. While we must have time alone with God, that cannot be the only time we connect with Him. Our prayer life should also involve the kind of prayer that happens while we work, drive, shower, or do any number of other tasks throughout the day. We should whisper prayers all day long. Our hearts and minds should never be too far from God. That's what it means to be *Rooted* or to abide in Him. Our awareness of God should set the melody of our heart (see Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 5:18-20).

OUESTIONS:

ADDITIONAL OTHER

- 1. What can you do to create a greater awareness of God throughout your day?
- 2. What do you think the phrase "making melody in your heart to the Lord" means? How does that find expression in your life?
- 3. What do you think it means to quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19)?

IIII: Pause 3-4 times throughout your day to whisper short (30-60 second) prayers of worship or thanksgiving to God.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Using a concordance or Bible app, look up how many times the phrase "filled with the Spirit" appears in the New Testament. How does being filled with the Spirit affect the believer? What did the apostles and early church do to stay filled with the Spirit?

DAY 12 — THE POWER OF DAILY — MATTHEW 6:11

It is impossible to be "occasionally rooted." Roots do not visit the soil – they stay there. Maturity only happens when the root remains united with the soil. Too many Christians have accepted a version of Christianity that allows for occasional contact with the nature and person of God. That version of Christianity prevents a person from experiencing the fullness of His power at work in their lives. We can only know the fullness of God's nature when we know it on a daily basis. Daily is the key word for a successful walk with God. Weekly just won't cut it. Jesus taught us to pray and to seek daily bread. Daily prayer brings daily benefits. Daily worship provides daily joy. Daily study delivers daily bread. This is a daily journey! If we forget that, we can become discouraged at the perceived lack of progress. Never forget that we grow into Him one day at a time.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Why do we struggle to do the small spiritual things on a daily basis?
- 2. We must have vision for our lives, yet we can get overwhelmed when we realize how far we have to go. How can you stay focused on the big picture and still live one day at a time?
- 3. In the Old Testament the Children of Israel were commanded to gather manna each day. They could not store it, but only gather what was needed for the day. How does that relate to our prayer life in the New Testament?

GAL: Learn to find God in the moment; not in the destination.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Using your concordance or Bible app, look up the word <i>daily</i> . Write down each time it car be applied to a Christian's life. Observe any disciplines, behaviors, or promises that should occur on a daily basis.

DAY 13 - DRAWING NEAR - PSALM 34:18

Being Rooted in Jesus is all about relationship! The epistle of James challenges us to draw near to God (James 4:8-10). Drawing near to Him is an intentional act of relationship. Getting close to someone is not always easy. It requires trust, humility, and vulnerability. In our relationship with Jesus, we must be willing to remove the masks we wear and be real with him. This may involve sharing sins, doubts, tears, fears, and wounds. Tears and brokenness are clearly a language that God understands, and He draws near to those whose hearts are broken. These types of ugly prayers are often the most effective prayers, as they intimately bind our heart to His.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Is it hard for you to share deep thoughts and feelings with God? If so, why?
- 2. Define the phrase "draw near" as best you can. What does it mean to you?
- 3. How does a person give God access to their emotions?
- 4. Why do you think it is important to share your emotions with God? What role does it play in intimacy with Him?

GML: To develop greater intimacy with God by giving Him access to our hearts and tears.

God say about th	nese conditions?	Are there any	/ promises linke	ed to them?	

DAY 14 _ YET I LIVE _ GALATIANS 2:20

The most important thing we can do with our lives is to lay them down at the feet of Jesus. Self-denial is the key to kingdom living. Self-preservation is at odds with God's plan for each of us. We are called to carry a cross; not to live in comfort and safety. The highest benefits of Christianity are always found on the other side of our surrender. Every day, we encounter people trying in vain to make themselves whole, full, and happy. It is counter-intuitive, but if we want to find abundant life, we must be prepared to embrace a cross. Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ, yet I live..." The truest and highest living we will ever do will happen after we have been crucified with Him.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. In a practical way, what do you think it means to be crucified with Christ?
- 2. List any un-crucified areas of your heart and life. How can you change these?
- 3. Why do you think so many people get hung up on the "I am crucified" portion of this text and fail to embrace, celebrate, and pursue the "yet I live" portion?

EMAL: Embrace the call of Jesus to take up a cross and follow Him. ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Matthew 16:24-25, meditate on it, and write your thoughts.

DAY 15 - SEARCH ME - PSALM 139:23

GML: Daily invite the Lord to search your heart.

Our hearts are complicated. Few people really know themselves. The prophet Jeremiah asked the question, "who can know the heart?" He then answered the question by reminding us that only God knows our hearts (Jeremiah 17:9-10). One of the most important invitations we will ever give is the invitation for the Lord to search our hearts and to know us. When this prayer is prayed in earnest, the Spirit of God will gently begin to open our understanding and we will see our lives through His lens. This is where prayer becomes intimate and transformative. This kind of prayer is an act of trust and it helps us settle into His unconditional love. The Lord is gentle toward us and as we invite Him to search us He is faithful to settle us and show us what we need to know.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. What role do you thinking listening should have in our daily prayer time?
- Beyond the words themselves, how do we invite God to search us? What attitudes serve as an invitation to Him?
- 3. What are some of the ways in which God shows us what is in our heart?

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Using a concordance or Bible app, look up the words search or examine.

DAY 16 — BY THE MERCIES OF GOD — ROMANS 12:1

Without controversy, the concept of forgiveness is one of the most beautiful themes in the Bible. Jesus came to save and forgive sinners. The assurance of forgiveness makes the Christian life possible. Everything we do must be *Rooted* in this glorious truth – I am forgiven! It is this assurance that brings peace to our minds, joy to our spirits, and a hunger to honor God with our lives. No wonder, Paul prefaces his appeal for us to present our bodies a living sacrifice with a reflection on the mercies of God – "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God..." The revelation of God's mercy and forgiveness can make even radical consecration seem reasonable. If we ever lose our sense of being forgiven, we will begin to feel entitled. I owed a debt I could not pay, so He paid a debt He did not owe. Anything I do for Him is reasonable!

OUESTIONS:

- 1. What does it mean to be a living sacrifice? How is a living sacrifice different from a regular sacrifice?
- How does understanding His mercy and forgiveness empower or motivate you to live a consecrated life?
- 3. Why do you think the Apostle Paul called this kind of devotion reasonable?

CONTRIBUTION To make the goodness and mercy of God a principle motivation for my devotion and consecration to Him.

DITIDIAL STUY: Identify 3-4 keys words in Romans 12:1. Using a concordance or dictionary, resety words. Also, using a concordance and dictionary, look up the word <i>mercy</i> and see how escribe God's attitude toward us. Write about His mercy.	earch these tit is used to

DAY 17—AVOIDING THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS — MATTHEW 6:12

The Scriptures often refer to bitterness as a root sin (Hebrews 12:14-15). Bitterness can become a devastating hindrance to the grace of God in our lives. Bitterness defiles, stains, jades, and poisons everything it touches. If we are going to be *Rooted* in Jesus, we must avoid the root of bitterness. We are empowered to overcome bitterness when we are firmly *Rooted* in forgiveness. One of the hardest, yet most rewarding, things we will ever do is to learn how to forgive those who hurt us. We cannot allow the offense of another person to hinder the flow of His mercy in our own lives. When we refuse to forgive we literally damage our God-connection. Being established in mercy means that we receive it for ourselves and that we extend it to others. Mercy becomes one of the many fruits manifested in us as we allow His nature to flow through us to those who have hurts us.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. In Matthew 6:12, Jesus said that we were to ask for forgiveness even as we forgive others. Why do you think Jesus made receiving forgiveness from God dependent upon our giving forgiveness to others?
- 2. Why do you think unforgiveness and bitterness are so destructive to our relationship with God?
- 3. What does it say about our faith when we will not forgive and release others to God in prayer?

GML: To forgive and release those who have hurt us.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Using a concordance or Bible dictionary, look up any verses in which Jesus and the Apostles use the term <i>forgive</i> . Make a list of these verses and note any descriptions of what forgiveness looks like, how often we should do it, why it matters, and how God views it.			
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DAY 18 — CONNECTED IN EVERY SEASON — ROMANS 8:35-39

Like everyone else in the world, Christians will face challenges and the changing of seasons. Yet, for those who are *Rooted* in their relationship with Him, there is a marked difference in their experience. In the Old Testament, Joseph faced unimaginable challenges in his personal life. He was hated for his dreams, assaulted by his brothers, stripped of his most beloved possession, sold into slavery, falsely accused of a horrible crime, imprisoned, and forgotten. Nevertheless, Joseph would be referred to in the Scriptures as a "fruitful vine" (Genesis 49:22). Joseph was fruitful in his affliction because he discovered the presence of God in every season. He may have been uprooted from his earthly father and uprooted from a comfortable position in Potiphar's house, but he remained rooted in relationship with God. The Lord was with Joseph! Like Joseph, we can remain deeply connected to God no matter what the circumstances of our life. Deep roots are never at the mercy of the sun and the wind.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. How do you think Joseph knew the Lord was with him?
- 2. Read Romans 8:28. How does that apply to Joseph's life? How does it apply to your life?

GIAL: To understand that seasons may change, but our connection to Him does not have to.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read the story of Joseph found in Genesis 37-50. Can you identify the major seasor changes of Joseph's life? What did not change with the seasons? Can you identify the things that remained true in every season? Look for the constant behaviors from God and from Joseph.

DAY 19 — WHAT IS SUCCESS? — MARK 8:36 & PHILIPPIANS 3:7-8

Success is one of those things that most people pursue, but few take the time to truly define. Ask yourself the following questions: Can a person in poverty be a success? Can someone with poor health and limited access to medical care succeed? Can a person in constant pain be considered successful? Can a man or woman in a third-world country be successful? Can a divorced person or a single person be a success? Does having children make one successful? What about a house, a job, a car, or even clothing? What is your standard of success? For many people in America, some of these things are the metrics of success. What about us? Many times, we are pursuing a goal we have not clearly defined. When we do this, we sentence ourselves to a life of frustration and dissatisfaction. Jesus had a very defined view of success! For Him, success had nothing to do with gaining something in this world, but it had everything to do with possessing, feeding, and caring for the soul. So how is your soul? Is it fed? Is it connected to its source? If it is, then you are a success!

OUESTIONS:

ADDITIONAL CTIIDV. -

- 1. What has made you feel successful in the past?
- 2. What would God's standard of success be for each area of your life?
- 3. How does His definition of success differ from society's definition? Be specific about certain areas of your life such as marital status, parenting, career path, education, etc.

GIAL: Scripturally evaluate your definition of success in as many areas of your life as possible.

until 11011: Read Philippians 3:7-8 in the New Living Translation. Using a concordance or diction arch the word <i>gain</i> and its usage throughout in the New Testament.	ary,

DAY 20 - PRIORITIES - MATTHEW 6:19-21 & 33

The Scriptures speak of people who actually "oppose themselves" (2 Timothy 2:25) and also of others who live with a "divided heart" (Hosea 10:2). It seems remarkable to think that we can affirm one thing with our words and be in direct opposition to those things with our lives. Unfortunately, far too many Christians live in ways that simply do not match their stated priorities. We must bring our lives back into harmony with kingdom values. This involves evaluating how we invest our time, energy, resources, and how we direct our families. More than ever, Christian homes must be *Rooted* in God-centered values and priorities. As long as we are alive, we will continually have to make hard choices about our priorities. We must be ever vigilant to ensure that our hearts and our homes remain uncompromised by this world.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Looking back at the priorities chart on page 8, how well does your life match your stated priorities? In what areas are you living in opposition to the very things you said were most important?
- 2. How have your priorities been affected by the culture or by unsaved friends and family?
- 3. If your priorities have been skewed, how can you begin to re-establish kingdom priorities in your life?

GAL: Write down your top three priorities. Review these often and ask yourself if your choices are serving your stated priorities.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Luke 9:57-62 and ask yourself what the true priorities of those responding to Jesus were. Do you see any parallels between this passage and the way you have responded to God in the past? Write about it.

DAY 21 — SPIRITUAL HABITS — 1 TIMOTHY 4:7-8

The term "habit" refers to a settled, regular tendency, or practice. It is often used in a negative sense, but the term "habit" can also be used in a positive, spiritual sense. Our spiritual disciplines should become habits. As Christians, we are called to follow certain spiritual paths. Johnathan Edwards once said, "The highways built by God, to the oceans of Himself, are the spiritual disciplines." Simply put, spiritual disciplines, such as daily prayer, study of the Word, gathering for worship, and regular fasting, are vital pathways to the heart of God. Spiritual disciplines will always carry us further than spiritual desire. When desire fades, disciplines hold. In a physical sense, habits or repetitive movements leads to muscle memory. If repeated movement can train our muscles, it is also true that repeated spiritual activity can train our mind, our heart, our will, and even our bodies to reach for and respond to the presence of God.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Using a dictionary, look up the definition of the word *habit*. Based on that definition, what spiritual practices in your daily life would you consider to be a habit?
- 2. With the understanding that all disciplines require regular practice, what does *practice* look like? Is it flawless or is sometimes clumsy? How does this apply to the development of spiritual disciplines in your life?

CONTINUE: To understand the importance of work and the effort it takes to establish consistency in spiritual disciplines.

DITIONAL STUDY: Using a Strong's Concordance or Bible dictionary, look up the word exercise in 1 Timothy 7. What do you think Paul meant when he wrote, "exercise yourself toward godliness"?

BONUS DAY 22 — THE MIND OF CHRIST — PHILIPPIANS 2:5

We are called to have the mind of Christ. That is not something that comes naturally. Our natural mind is not attuned to the will of God; it must be renewed. We often adopt another person's mindset and attitude as we get close to them. Our relationship with God is no different. Jesus invited us to yoke together with Him, to walk with Him, and to learn of Him (Matthew 11:29). We learn of Him on the path and in the yoke. The yoke of daily prayer brings our hearts and minds into deeper connection with God. When we live with God-consciousness, we are able to sense His heartbeat and we learn His voice. You cannot stay that close to God without it transforming the way you think. When we do the hard work of giving God our time in prayer, God does the deep work of changing the very way we think and feel.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Describe how spending time with a person can cause you to start thinking like them. How does this apply to your walk with God?
- 2. What are some key areas of your thinking that need to change?
- 3. Do you think you learn more about a person through occasional interviews or by living with them every day? Explain your answer and share how this relates to your walk with God.

GAL: To understand that our thinking must change and that it will change as we spend time with Jesus.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read and pray over Matthew 11:29 and Ephesians 4:20-24. ple of yokes and write about how it relates to your walk with Jesus.	Or study the agricultural princi-

BONUS DAY 23 — LED BY THE SPIRIT — ROMANS 8:14

To be connected to God means that our lives are also directed by God. One of the greatest privileges and most exciting aspects of our walk with God is that we can be led by His Spirit. The Christian life is not cold, rigid adherence to a religious manuscript. On the contrary, it is a vibrant and fulfilling journey guided by an unseen hand and by the living Word of God. The victory and intimacy of the Christian walk is found in the leadership of His Spirit. When the Children of Israel crossed the Red Sea and entered into the wilderness, God met them with a cloud. That cloud guided them daily on their journey and brought them safely to the Promised Land. We too have a cloud! There are many things about this journey that we may not know, but we can access the resources and wisdom of His Spirit to sustain and lead us every day.

OUESTIONS:

ADDITIONAL CTIIDV

- 1. What does it mean to walk in the Spirit?
- 2. What does the word *led* denote? How can we be led by something that we cannot see or physically touch?
- 3. What are the principle channels that God uses to speak into or direct your life?

GAL: To learn how to walk in the Spirit.

ADDITIONAL 21001: Using a Bible app or concordance, look up the phrases "led by the Spirit" and "walk in the Spirit." Write out the scriptures that use these phrases and then list the benefits or promises associated with each scripture.



NOTES AND ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

^{*}Journal devotions and prompts written by Pastor Joseph Hanthorn



NOTES AND ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

"I AM THE TRUE VINE...ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU. AS THE BRANCH CANNOT BEAR FRUIT OF ITSELF, EXCEPT IT ABIDE IN THE VINE; NO MORE CAN YE, EXCEPT YE ABIDE IN ME. I AM THE VINE, YE ARE THE BRANCHES: HE THAT ABIDETH IN ME, AND I IN HIM, THE SAME BRINGETH FORTH MUCH FRUIT:

FOR WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING."



"BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT WALKETH NOT IN THE COUNSEL OF THE UNGODLY, NOR STANDETH IN THE WAY OF SINNERS, NOR SITTETH IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL. BUT HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD; AND IN HIS LAW DOTH HE MEDITATE DAY AND NIGHT. AND HE SHALL BE LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE RIVERS OF WATER, THAT BRINGETH FORTH HIS FRUIT IN HIS SEASON; HIS LEAF ALSO SHALL NOT WITHER; AND WHATSOEVER HE DOETH SHALL PROSPER."

PSALM 1:1-3

