

# INSPIRATION

*Blessed to Be a Blessing*

JANUARY 2020



Your  
Springtime  
is Coming!

WHISPER OF  
GOD'S SPIRIT

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## *This Month's Theme Is...*



### **Your Springtime Is Coming!**

If you're going through a winter season in your marriage, your job, your health, your finances, your emotions, or with your children, God wants to give you confident HOPE that a better season is ahead. Read David's article on **page 8** as he shares God's promises for your coming breakthrough.

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This month, Inspiration TV celebrates its 15-year anniversary of taking the power of the Gospel to the world (**pages 4-5**).

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# Proclaiming Jesus Worldwide!

## INSPIRATION TV

This month, Inspiration TV celebrates its 15-Year Anniversary of sharing the power of the Gospel.

Approximately  
**7.7 BILLION**  
people are alive today.

More than  
**2 BILLION**  
people have never  
heard the name of  
Jesus even once.

Each day over  
**150,000**  
people pass into  
eternity – most  
without Christ.

Fifteen years ago, God gave birth to a vision born in David Cerullo's heart. The vision was to launch Inspiration TV as a tool for God to send the light of the Gospel to people around the world who sit in darkness. It was a vision to be a part of seeing the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth like the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14).

This year, Inspiration TV celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> year anniversary with a commemoration of its vision of sharing God's promise with the world. "This is more than a celebration of 15 years of broadcasting the Gospel to the nations of the world, and more than a celebration to thank God for the great things He has done and is doing," said the Inspiration Ministries Founder and CEO. "This is a prophetic call to declare, proclaim, and release a word of breakthrough over your life. God is the God of Breakthroughs!"

For a decade prior to the launch of Inspiration TV, the United States had been Inspiration Ministries' primary target market. But while on a trip to a remote part of Africa, David received a new vision for



sharing the Good News worldwide when he spotted a faded Coca Cola sign on the side of the road. “While half the world had tasted the popular soft drink, billions had never tasted the eternal, life-giving water of Jesus Christ.”

Desiring to honor Jesus’ commission to take the Gospel “to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8), David formulated principles for using media and technology to fulfill the Great Commission. He saw the potential for television, to “help usher in a new era of evangelism and bring new strength to the body of Christ.”

Launching in 2005, Inspiration TV began broadcasting in just 40 countries. Today the network reaches over 200 nations, including many in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Because of our TV and digital evangelistic

outreaches, thousands of people each day are proclaiming Jesus as their Lord and Savior – more than 2.5 million in 2019 alone!

We at Inspiration TV believe this is only the beginning of our impact for God’s Kingdom worldwide as we urgently search for new ways to share the loving touch of Jesus. We are grateful for the millions of souls saved, physical healings, marriages restored, chains of deceptions broken, and financial breakthroughs – but we know more remains to be done.

“This is only the beginning,” said David Cerullo. “Inspiration Ministries’ mission is to proclaim God’s power to people needing healing, salvation, deliverance, and breakthrough. As you, our partners, are blessing people around the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ, He wants to bless YOU in a special way today. Whatever breakthrough you need, He knows your pain and wants to lift your burdens, break your yokes, and bring healing and restoration to your life.”


## **Thank You Inspiration Partners! You ARE Making a Difference!**

Through your generous and faithful giving, you are fulfilling the Great Commission and spreading the life-changing message of Christ to lost souls in over 200 nations. Visit [ini.tv](http://ini.tv) to watch videos on demand and 24/7 streaming of powerful Christian programming, movies, and inspiring documentaries.



# THE LUMP IS NOT CANCEROUS!

**Daisy got good news from the doctors when she stood in faith and trusted in God's faithfulness to heal her.**



When she moved to the United Kingdom from Zimbabwe twelve years ago with her three children, Daisy couldn't have foreseen a time in her life even more tumultuous than fleeing the violence and bad economy she left back home.

"We were asylum seekers," Daisy explains. "Our lives were deteriorating. It was the prompting of the Holy Spirit that told us to move."

So Daisy and her children moved to the UK and joined her husband, who had moved there before them to find a job that would support the family.

Then over a decade later, Daisy faced another trial. A lump was found on her thigh during a routine medical checkup. When she was referred to the hospital for X-rays, she was very scared.

Her doctor told her he suspected that she had cancer, but they had to run some tests to be certain. “I told the doctor I was going to pray!” Daisy says.

First, she prayed with the prayer ministers at her church. “I started praying in the Spirit and laughing in the Spirit,” Daisy describes the scene. “When I asked myself why I was laughing, I realized that I laughed because I knew God was going to heal me.”

She also called the Inspiration Prayer Center and prayed for healing with one of the prayer ministers. Her faith was stirred even more as she watched Inspiration Campmeeting and the other motivating Christian programs on Inspiration TV.

“People were getting healed, and miracles were happening,” Daisy recalls. “I was particularly impacted by David Cerullo and saw that he was doing the work of God. And the preaching and testimonies on Inspiration TV showed me that miracles happen when you give.”

As she awaited the test results, Daisy sowed seeds into God’s Kingdom and continued to pray with her local pastors and the prayer ministers at Inspiration Ministries.

Finally, the hospital called with the test results. “We have good news for you,” they said. “The lump is not cancerous!”

Daisy still is full of rejoicing when she remembers how she felt when she received that call. “God is so good. When your prayer ministers prayed, I could see the faithfulness of God.”

Daisy’s faith gave her confidence that God would deliver her from any illness. She *expected* to receive a miracle from God, and she did.

“You can expect for God to be faithful, and He is *always* faithful,” Daisy says. “If you want physical healing – God is faithful. If you want financial healing – God is faithful. When you see God heal you and bless you, you want to live for His Kingdom.”

*“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23).*

## **As God was faithful to Daisy, He will be faithful to YOU!**

Send your prayer requests to our INTERNATIONAL PRAYER CENTER by visiting **[inspiration.org/prayer](http://inspiration.org/prayer)**, returning the attached prayer card, or calling our faithful prayer ministers TODAY:

**US / CAN / CAR: +1 (803) 578-1800    UK / INTL: +44 (0) 84 5683 0584**



# YOUR SPRINGTIME IS COMING!



**STRENGTHEN**  
*your walk*  
with David Cerullo

What's the weather like where you live?

For most of us, January is the dead of winter. Icy winds swirl outside. Flakes of cold snow may already be on the ground. The temperature keeps dipping lower and lower...and there's no sign of spring in sight.

**But what I'm concerned about is what's happening on the inside rather than the weather outside.**

Even as children of God, each of us will face a winter season at one time or another. This could be a divorce, an illness, the loss of a loved one, a financial setback, or struggles with our children. When a difficult situation brings *winter* into our life, it's easy to feel frustrated, stressed-out, depressed, and overwhelmed.



The good news is that a breakthrough of God's love and favor is available to anyone who truly wants one. It's not a matter of wishful thinking or just trying harder, and we don't have to be in any doubt about where to find such a breakthrough. Revelation 21:5 (NASB) tells us: "*He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making ALL things new.'*"

Perhaps you've been looking for answers to life's questions in all the wrong places: unhealthy friendships, addictions, immorality, binging on food, pornography, or material gain. These may have temporarily distracted you from the real issue, but instead of fixing the ache in your heart, it only grew worse.

However, if you need a New Beginning today, you can be certain where to find it: at the throne of Jesus, the One who is able to make ALL things new!

## **HIS ANSWERS FOR ANY SEASON**

Of course, that isn't a promise just from me...It's from Jesus Himself! The Bible says when we place our trust in Him, we're "*new creatures*" (2 Corinthians 5:17). And since He knows we're living in a broken-down, sin-sick world, and we sometimes fall short of His glory, He walks beside us – He sends us His Comforter, the Holy Spirit.

I'm praying that 2020 will be

more than just a New Year for you – I'm praying it will be a New Beginning...a New Day in the Lord for you and your loved ones! A new season of hope and joy in Him...hope and joy that you experience personally and that you share with those around you!

No matter what season of life you may find yourself in today, His answer is the same. Make sure you are "*looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith*" (Hebrews 12:2). Even if you've been tripped up by life's circumstances, He will lift you up:

*The LORD helps the fallen and lifts those bent beneath their loads.*

*The eyes of all look to you in hope; you give them their food as they need it.*

*When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing (Psalm 145:14-16 NLT).*

God is a faithful God in every season. His mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:21-23). He will NEVER leave you, no matter how difficult the circumstances may seem (Hebrews 13:5).

God can turn your barren winters into fruitful springs...times of drought into abundant harvests (Genesis 26:1, 12). Those who trust in Him never need to worry about the changing seasons:

*Blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit (Jeremiah 17:7-8 NLT).*

What an encouraging picture of the kind of life we can have when our roots reach deeply into the soil of God's love. Like the woman described in Proverbs 31, we will be able to "smile at the future," confident God is preparing blessings and breakthroughs for us in the days ahead (Proverbs 31:25 NASB).

## MY PRAYER FOR YOU

If you're going through a winter season in your marriage, your job, your health, your finances, your emotions, or with your children, God wants to give you confident HOPE that a better season is ahead. However, you may find yourself doubting that you'll ever see springtime again. And perhaps it's hard even to picture what an abundant life could look like.

If so, take a look at this beautiful description of springtime through the eyes of King Solomon:

*Look around you: Winter is over; the winter rains are over, gone! Spring flowers are in blossom all over. The whole world's a choir – and singing! Spring warblers are filling the forest with sweet arpeggios. Lilacs are exuberantly purple and perfumed, and cherry trees fragrant with blossoms (Song of Solomon 2:11-13 MSG).*

Winter can soon be over for you as well, my friend. The chilly atmosphere and barren trees around you can be replaced by blossoming flowers and nature's majestic choir of praise.

Whatever you may be going through today, I encourage you to keep on loving, praying, and believing. Sing one more song. Be steadfast and unmovable. Lay aside every weight holding you down or holding you back. Don't give up until you receive your breakthrough from God.

The more difficult your winter season has been, the deeper your roots can grow in Christ and the greater your coming harvest will be. And because of the lessons of the winter season, a whole new beginning can be yours...new joy...new peace...and a new level of contentment in your life in God.

Springtime is just around the corner – a spring of greater vision, a spring of answers to your prayers.

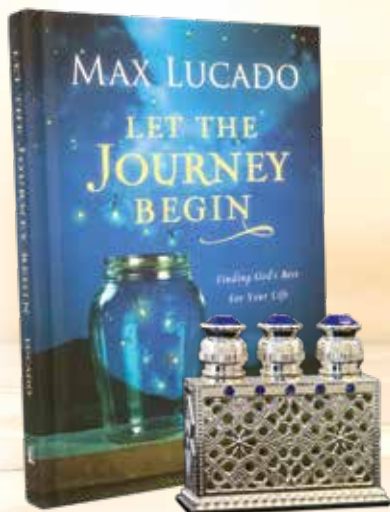
As you await your spring-time, continue trusting in God. Continue crying out to Him. Continue believing His promise to work *ALL* things together for your good (Romans 8:28).

Remember: You're not alone in this journey of faith. Everyone needs a breakthrough sometime – and God offers one to *YOU today!*

Your Partner to Reach the Lost,

*David*

P.S. Don't miss these great resources to help you start a new beginning with God in 2020.



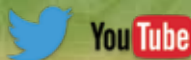
See page 28 for details!

**January 27** through  
**February 14**

**STRENGTHEN**  
*your walk*  
with David Cerullo

LIVING IN  
*The*  
**FAVOR**  
*of God*

David Cerullo provides you with practical, life-changing steps you can take today to experience a new level of God's supernatural favor and blessings.



Visit [StrengthenYourWalk.org](https://StrengthenYourWalk.org) to receive short Bible teaching videos in your inbox every day or to browse the archives of previous teachings.



# The Whisper of God's Spirit

The Bible says, *“Live by following the Spirit”* (Galatians 5:16) and, *“The true children of God are those who let God’s Spirit lead them”* (Romans 8:14). To hear many of us talk, you’d think we didn’t believe these verses. You’d think we didn’t believe in the Trinity. We talk about the Father and study the Son, but when it comes to the Holy Spirit, we are confused at best and frightened at worst. Confused because we’ve never been taught. Frightened because we’ve been taught to be afraid.

May I simplify things a bit? The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in our lives, carrying on the work of Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps us in three directions – inwardly (by

granting us the fruits of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23), upwardly (by praying for us, Romans 8:26), and outwardly (by pouring God’s love into our hearts, Romans 5:5).

The Holy Spirit is on center stage in evangelism. If the disciple teaches, it is because the Spirit teaches the disciple (Luke 12:12). If the listener is convicted, it is because the Spirit has penetrated (John 16:8). If the listener is converted, it is by the transforming power of the Spirit (Romans 8:11). If the new believer matures, it is because the Spirit makes him or her competent (2 Corinthians 3:6).

Working within you is the same Spirit that worked in Philip’s

life in Acts 8:26-27. Sound like a hard fact to swallow? I can hear you mumbling under your breath as you read, "I've never heard an angel's voice." To which I counter, "How do you know Philip did?"

We assume he did. We've been taught he did. The flannel board figures say he did. An angel puts his trumpet in Philip's ear and blares the announcement... But could our assumption be wrong? Could it be that the angel's voice was every bit as miraculous as the one you and I hear?

What?

You've heard the voice whispering your name, haven't you? You've felt the nudge to go and sensed the urge to speak... You invite a couple over for coffee. Nothing heroic, just a nice evening with old friends. But from the moment they enter, you can feel the tension. Colder than glaciers, they are. You can tell something is wrong. Typically you're not one to inquire, but you feel a concern that won't be silent. So you ask.

You are in a business meeting where one of your coworkers is raked over the coals. Everyone else is thinking, *I'm glad that wasn't me*. But the Holy Spirit is leading you to think how hard this must be. So, after the meeting you approach the employee and express your concern.

You notice the fellow on the other side of the church auditorium. He looks a bit out of place, what with his strange clothing and all. You learn that he is from Africa, in town on business. The next Sunday he is back. And the third Sunday he is present, you introduce yourself. He tells you how he is fascinated by the faith and how he wants to learn more. Rather than offer to teach him, you simply urge him to read the Bible.

Later in the week, you regret not being more direct. You call the office where he is consulting and learn that he is leaving today for home. You know in your heart you can't let him leave. So you rush to the airport and find him awaiting his flight, with a Bible open on his lap. And you, like Philip, explain, and he, like the Ethiopian, believes.

Were there lights? You just lit one. Were there voices? You just were one. Was there a miracle? You just witnessed one. Who knows? If the Bible were being written today, that might be your name in the eighth chapter of Acts.



**Max Lucado**, one of America's most read authors, lives in Texas and serves the Oak Hills Church.



# INSPIRATION TV Now On Demand!

**Access your favorite Christ-Centered Shows, Movies, Kids Programs, and so much more today with our NEW On-Demand feature!**



## **The Mum Show**

To the mother who feels overwhelmed, has lost all sense of herself, is in need of a good laugh or cry, and needs some grace for her family or herself...make yourself comfy, *The Mum Show* is for you!



## **Be Still and Know**

A young ministry couple suffers the loss of their two children when they are hit by a truck from behind. See how they choose to honor the legacy of their children.



## **Heaven Bound**

A financially desperate couple rob a mansion and become trapped inside the house by a dying Christian man. The man refuses to let them leave until they repent and follow Jesus.

**Don't miss these and more great programs!** You can watch Inspiration TV 24/7 on Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire, Chromecast, via livestream at [ini.tv/livestream](http://ini.tv/livestream), or on the free Inspiration TV mobile app.

Livestream on  
**INI.TV**

freesat

sky

Roku

apple tv

amazon fireTV



### ***Apokalypsis***

Don't miss this 4-part series as Bible experts explore coming events of the Last Days and unlock Bible mysteries every believer should know and understand.



### ***Fully Alive***

Ken Davis shares his own journey from lethargic resignation to a new life of adventure and spiritual renewal. You'll laugh along and be inspired to live in the power of Christ.



### ***We Were Enemies***

In the war-torn country of Cambodia, they were mortal enemies. Today they fight for a different cause, no longer as enemies, but as brothers in Christ.



### ***Out of the Wilderness***

Step out of the wilderness into a place of peace and abundant life. Pastor Karen Dunham shares how we can live a new and transformed life through Jesus Christ.



### ***Owlegories***

This animated Gospel-centered series follows a group of student owls as they adventure along creatively learning about nature, faith, and God.

Sign up and start watching today at [watch.ini.tv](http://watch.ini.tv)!

# Back to Basics

As we enter a new year, it's time to take an honest inventory of our spiritual lives.



Ben Cerullo

At age 45, Vince Lombardi became a head football coach in the NFL for the first time in his life. It was 1959, and he had the challenging task of leading the Green Bay Packers, a team that had only won two games the previous season. He clearly had his work cut out for him.

But Lombardi wasn't going to let the previous year's record shape his expectations. This was a *new season*, after all – just as 2020 can be a *new season* for each of us today!

When the discouraged group of players gathered for their first preseason meeting, I'm sure they wondered how their new coach was planning to turn things around. Coach Lombardi entered the locker room and stood silently

for several seconds. Holding out a football in front of these men, he spoke one of the most famous quotes in football history:

**“Gentlemen, this is a football.”**

In just five words, the new coach had communicated his philosophy for the team's success: They were going to start with the basics and make sure to execute the fundamentals. You see, the Packers had been losing not because they lacked talent, but because they'd forgotten the basics.

This is a powerful message for us as believers. As we enter a new year, our success or failure will be determined by how well we execute the *basics* of the Christian life.

## A NEW BEGINNING

Vince Lombardi brought the Packers a new philosophy that led to incredible success in the following years, including several league championships and Super Bowl victories. A seemingly hopeless team was given a new beginning, and Lombardi became one of the most successful coaches in NFL history.

What a great lesson! No matter how poorly things may have gone for you in past years, your turnaround can happen amazingly fast. But the *key* to your turnaround is the same as it was for the Packers – you have to get back to the *basics*.

However, going back to the basics means a lot more than just being able to quote a few Bible verses. It means allowing God's Word to become such a part of us that we can stand in victory and impact the world for Jesus.

The first-century church was a great example of this. They were known as “*uneducated and untrained men*,” yet they rocked the world! How did this happen? Because “*they had been with Jesus*” (Acts 4:13).

The Day of Pentecost had brought these early disciples a

new beginning. In a moment's time, they received power from on high – reversing all the failure and frustration that had gone on before. Instead of denying, doubting, or betraying their Lord, they now were bold witnesses (Acts 1:8, 2:1-4). The same can happen to *you*!

## RENEWED COMMITMENT

Just like us, the early church was tempted to get busy with other things and lose sight of the basics that had given them such strength and favor. Thankfully, God brought them back to a renewed commitment, and they said, “*We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word*” (Acts 6:4).

Going back to the basics resulted in a time of breakthrough for the church in Jerusalem, just as it will for us today: “*Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly*” (Acts 6:7).

You see, the world won't be changed by religion or theology, but by believers who've had a personal encounter with the living God. So let's get back to the basics – and turn the world upside down for Jesus!



“*Gentlemen, this is a football.*”

~ Vince Lombardi



# Fear is Not God's Intention For You

**Don't let fear keep you from the destiny God desires to give you.**

**FAILURE.** There's hardly a more terrifying word in the human language – failing economy, failing marriage, failing grades, failing to fulfill your dreams. The fear of failure is so paralyzing that it keeps many people from even reaching for their dreams; they simply cannot face the risk of trying and failing. Fear of failure is listed among the top ten worst human fears. It ranks alongside other learned fears that include the fear of public speaking, rejection, disapproval, making mistakes, aloneness, financial problems, and death.

You were not born with a fear of failure. You learned to be afraid of failing because of what you have

experienced in life. Failure was not God's intention for mankind. Fear entered the human race because of sin.

The first thing Adam did after he sinned was run and hide from the presence of God. The primary evil that Satan released into the earth through sin was fear. Now, people suffer the torment of all kinds of fears that paralyze them, robbing them of a victorious life. But God does not want you to be paralyzed by fear.

What is your dream? Are you afraid to risk failure to walk in destiny? You have to become a fear fighter if you expect to walk in the success God has for you. Only



then can you live in His purpose and destiny where you will know ultimate fulfillment in life.

If you don't quit when you fail, you will ultimately succeed in life. When babies start learning to walk, they begin by hitting every piece of furniture in the house. Falling and getting up, then falling again and getting up again – until they have mastered the balance they need to walk.

## FIGHT FEAR WITH THE COURAGE OF JOSHUA

When my dad died suddenly at age fifty-six, he left behind a congregation that had looked to him as their Moses. I knew that fear had paralyzed them and kept them from their destiny as a church. After his funeral, God gave me a message for that church that would help them move ahead into their promised land.

I preached about Joshua's encounter with God after Moses' death. God told Joshua four times not to be afraid. And He gave him four reasons for not giving into fear. God knew the biggest enemy he would face would not be the giants in the land – it would be the little voices inside telling him he could not do it. It would be the voices of fear screaming, "Who do you think you are? You are not able."

Are you facing a hard situation? Have your circumstances changed unexpectedly? You have to be willing to face down those frightening voices and take a risk to move forward into your destiny. You cannot give in to the spirit of timidity or draw back when times get tough.

God was giving Joshua a pep talk about overcoming fear. He could have told Joshua how to assemble a great army and how to be a great leader. But the one thing He told him was not to allow a spirit of fear to get inside of him. If a spirit of fear begins to dominate you, it will make you draw back from the victory God has for you.

God has all power to work through you when you refuse fear. You have to become a fear fighter to face the giants. Then God will fight for you and win the battle. God is saying to you what He said to Joshua: If you will be bold to obey whatever He tells you to do, you will continue to win! If you can stay free from the spirit of fear, nothing can defeat you.



**Jentezen Franklin** is an author, conference speaker, television show host, and pastor in Gainesville, GA and Orange County, CA.

share

your

story

**At Inspiration Ministries, we love to hear people's stories of how God has given them breakthroughs in their health, finances, emotions, family, or some other area of their life. Your testimony is a powerful tool for God in your life and for others!**

The Bible has a lot to say about the power of your words. Revelation 12:11 promises that you can gain victory over the devil through your testimony of what the Lord has done in your life:

***They overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony!***

In addition, your story of God's faithfulness can help restore hope to the hopeless, faith to the doubting, and joy to the downcast.

If God has blessed you in a special way through Inspiration Ministries, please send your story directly to Billie Jo, our Testimony Coordinator.



[inspiration.org/praise](https://www.inspiration.org/praise)



[MyStory@inspiration.org](mailto:MyStory@inspiration.org)



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***Together, we are impacting people for Christ worldwide through media...Starting With YOU!***

# Be Fruitful and Multiply

WEDNESDAY  
January

1

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: GENESIS 1

The first words in the Bible spoken to the human race were, “*Be fruitful and multiply.*” These same words were repeated to Noah and his offspring after the flood (Genesis 8:16-17). Clearly this principle was important to God. We can imagine that He might say the same thing to each one of us and realize that He is communicating an attitude He wants us to develop.

From these words we see how God wants His people to approach their gifts and resources. He does not want them to indifferently go through life, but to constantly look for ways to be “*fruitful*” and *increase* what they have.

As applied to us, we are to take the *initiative*, seeking to increase and develop what God gives us. We are to take action to spread His Kingdom.

Jesus taught the same principles in His parable about the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). Here the master gave his servants talents (money). Then He watched to see how they reacted. He *rewarded* servants who *invested* their talents, but condemned the man who hid what he had and was afraid to act.

As you enter this new year, remember God's instructions about being fruitful and multiplying. Consider all the resources He has given you: time, talents, and treasures. Don't sit back passively, but look for opportunities to *invest* these seeds and to *develop* the skills you have been given. Be proactive in fulfilling God's plans for you.

*God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”*

Genesis 1:28 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, thank You for the time, talent, and treasure that You have given me. Help me to sow into Your kingdom that I might reap an abundant harvest. In Jesus' name, amen.

# God's Vast Design

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: GENESIS 1

*Let there be a firmament [the expanse of the sky] in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters [below] from the waters [above].*

Genesis 1:6 AMPC

The Biblical account of creation makes it clear that God's design was *vast*. "Swarms of living creatures" overflowed the waters (v. 20 NASB). Massive *quantities* of birds and an *unimaginable number* of created creatures filled the earth.

We see here that God thought in big terms. And He made clear that He wanted human beings to have the same attitude. He instructed people to be "*fruitful and multiply*," to increase what they had been given (Genesis 2:28).

We become so overwhelmed with our limits that we forget just how big God is. Based on our own limited understanding and experiences, we tend to limit Him, too.

The Bible encourages us to realize God wants us to grasp just how big His vision for the universe, for creation, and for our individual lives is. *Nothing* is impossible for Him! The Bible reminds us that He rewards people who act with faith.

As you think about your challenges, do not limit God. The Bible says, "*nothing will be impossible with God*" (Luke 1:37). That is still true today.

As you begin this new year, remember not to limit God in your prayers or your expectations. Put your faith into action and believe Him for tremendous things. Be bold to dream substantial dreams. Dare to conceive of ideas that are in keeping with His boundless imagination. And live in keeping with the vastness and scope of His creation.

## PRAYER :

Father, I commit these situations to You:

\_\_\_\_\_. Thank You for the answers. I believe that all things are possible. In Jesus' name, amen.

# Clear Direction

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 3

The Bible makes this amazing promise that God Himself is ready to guide and lead us.

He is willing to keep us on course. If we make mistakes, He can correct us and help us move in the right direction. If we feel lost or are groping in the dark, He can shine His light and make the pathway clear.

We might find ourselves on bumpy roads filled with potholes, on winding roads where we feel insecure, or on mountainous paths that seem hard to climb. But He can make every path smooth and lead us home.

What wonderful promises! But how can we make them true in our lives? We make them work for us by putting aside our own thoughts, not trying to figure everything out, surrendering our lives to Him, calling on Him constantly, and acknowledging Him in everything we do. We must trust in Him *completely* at all times.

The miracle is that these promises really are *true!* And they are true for *you!* But you need to take action and not take His guidance for granted.

Realize that Almighty God really wants to guide *you* today! He wants to lead you into prosperity and peace, take away your burdens, and keep you on course. Fill Your mind with His Word and put it into practice each minute of the day. Seek Him for your decisions and problems. Have faith that He will direct your path.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these needs to You: \_\_\_\_\_ . I lay aside my own understanding. I believe You will guide me. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.



SATURDAY

January

4

# Paul's New Beginning

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 9

*Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice... "Get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do."*

Acts 9:3-6 NASB

Saul was confident that he correctly understood God and His Word. He had many reasons for his confidence – years of training, a zealous commitment to Judaism, and knowledge of traditions taught by generations of religious scholars.

Suddenly, *everything* changed. A light from heaven "*flashed around him*" with an impact so strong that he fell to the ground. Then, he heard a voice – It was Jesus Himself! In this amazing moment, Saul did not know what it all meant or what to do.

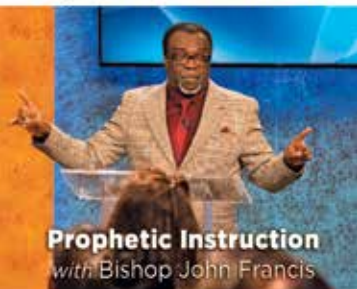
Blinded by the light, this man, previously so self-sufficient, found himself being led by others to a house in Damascus. In his weakness, Paul knew that he needed God's revelation. He needed a new start.

He learned that God wanted to use everything that had happened in his past – his experiences, all that he had been taught, and his gifts and abilities. But God wanted to point this in a new direction to give him new insights, a new anointing, new power, and even a new name, Paul.


Today at the beginning of a new year, realize that there is much more for you to learn. You can learn to be free from habits that block the flow of God's power, shake yourself out of ruts, open your eyes to new possibilities, and give you greater breakthroughs.

Offer yourself to Him. Cry out for wisdom. Let Him change you.

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# Your Teachers

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 5

Good teachers are motivated by concern for their pupils. Teachers want to help students mature and develop their natural abilities in order to fulfill their potential.

Central to this process is warning them of problems they might face. Teachers also acquaint them what others have done, so they can see what worked and what didn't work. Teachers can help students discover what can be learned from these experiences.

But no matter the efforts of teachers, pupils react in many ways. Some simply are not interested in listening and ignore or reject warnings and advice. They are determined to do what makes sense to them, to follow their own desires and interests.

The Bible is filled with guidance to help us recognize these kinds of pitfalls, so we can do the right thing. The warnings of Proverbs 5 address male-female relationships specifically, but the principles here relate to *every* area of life.

If we want to be wise, we will cultivate the habit of *listening*. We won't just trust our own inclinations, but we will *learn* from the experiences of others. We will seek discernment and perspective. We will realize that short-term pleasures may seem appealing, but making beneficial long-term decisions is more important. In your life, practice being sensitive to God's leading. Be careful to whom you listen. Seek wise counselors, spiritually mature believers who are filled with the Spirit, who know God's Word.

*Listen to me...[lest] at the end of your life you groan...and you say, "How I hated discipline...I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors."*

Proverbs 5:7, 11-13 ESV

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to be a better listener. I desire to be teachable. Give me a greater sensitivity to Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

# Standing Firm

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 7

*If you will not believe  
[and trust in God and  
His message], be assured  
that you will not be  
established.*

Isaiah 7:9 AMP

Judah was threatened by the combined armies of Assyria (Aram) and Israel. They plotted the ruin of Judah and threatened to tear Judah apart, to divide it among themselves. With their united resources, these nations presented what seemed to be an adversary that could not be defeated.

God assured King Ahaz of Judah that He knew their situation. His instructions? “Be careful, keep calm, and don’t be afraid.” He wanted Ahaz to remember that He is greater than any army or nation. He is not intimidated by their threats. Instead of worrying about what they might do, Ahaz needed to trust in God.

But there was a *condition*: To receive these blessings and protection, King Ahaz and Judah needed to have *faith* in God. If they did not believe Him, they would not be able to stand firm. Without this level of faith, they would fall and be filled with fear, worry, and anxiety.

The same principles are true for you. You may experience threats and face uncertain conditions. Your adversaries may seem to have overwhelming advantages. They may taunt you and seek to discourage you.

Your hope is to continue trusting in God, look to Him for guidance and help, believe Him, stand on His Word, and stand firm in your faith. No matter what challenges you face, don’t give in to fear or worry. Focus on God. Stand on His promises. Trust in Him.

## PRAYER :

Father, I commit these problems to You: \_\_\_\_\_ . I trust You for the answers. Thank You for Your protection and guidance. In Jesus’ name, amen.

# Perfect Peace

TUESDAY

January

7

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 26

We live in a world filled with stress. We feel it at work, as we drive, in politics and business, as we ponder our finances, and even in our churches. Worry can overwhelm us in every area of our lives. Each of us faces many opportunities to succumb to these forces. We might feel pressure to generate results or measure up to the achievements of others. We might be anxious about family members, our jobs, or our finances. We may feel uncertain about decisions we need to make or demands placed on us. We may be worried about what others think about us or just concerned about the future.

In all these situations, God promises an *oasis*, a place of “*perfect peace*.” This is a place where anxiety, stress, fear, and worry are *banished*, where there is only room for peace because here God rules supreme.

The Bible says that we can experience this peace if our minds are “*stayed on*” God. This means that we *totally rest* in Him, completely lean upon Him. We don’t allow worry to build up, but continually practice trusting in Him.

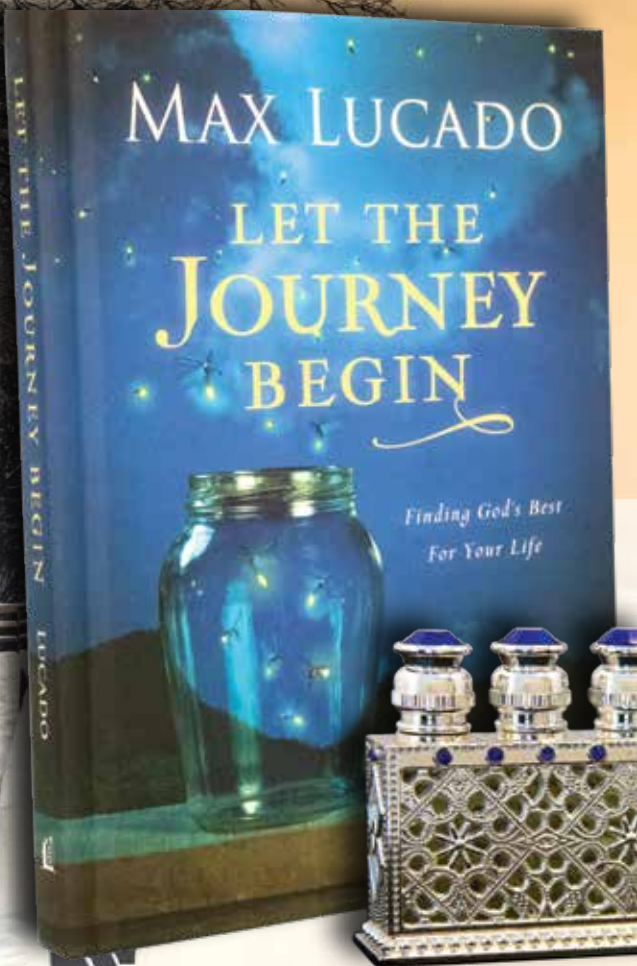
We will still go through challenging situations. We will still have to go to work, drive our cars, and face uncertainties. But if we trust in God, we can depend on His everlasting strength and have His wisdom. And our lives can be filled with His *perfect peace*!

*You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*

Isaiah 26:3 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, I pause to focus on You. I commit every stressful situation to You. I lean on You. Thank You for peace. In Jesus’ name, amen.



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# Renewed Strength

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 40

*Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

Isaiah 40:31 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, I wait on You. I look for Your help and believe that You will provide my needs. I cast my cares on You. In Jesus' name, amen.

In our youth, we are at our peak of energy. We feel confident and invincible. Unfortunately with time, everything changes. We tire more easily and experience more physical and mental limits. In spite of their confidence, even young people can be faint and weary.

But the Bible promises something radical. When we wait on the Lord, He actually can renew us with His strength. This is a promise for *anyone*, regardless of age.

In fact, He promises that we will “*mount up with wings as eagles.*” We still may have physical limits, but the Spirit can give us the energy and strength we need. In fact, we will be able to soar above the turmoil of life.

In your life, you may feel tired and weary. You may be burdened by problems. You may feel like you are running out of energy and strength. But God can revitalize you and grant you renewed strength. Through His Spirit He can give you His power and ability. Interested? Just wait on Him.

Today, spend time with God. Wait on His presence. Listen to His voice. Read His Word. Be filled with His peace. You still may experience the limits of the flesh, but as you seek Him in the Spirit, He can renew your soul. Cast your cares on Him and allow Him to give you the strength and energy you need.

# Friendship with God

THURSDAY

January

9

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 41

How wonderful to think that God wants to be our *friend*! He wants us not to approach Him with just cold legalism, but to have an intimate *relationship* with Him. He told Israel that they were descendants of Abraham. But to God, Abraham was not just a person; he was God's *friend*.

God had a similar relationship with Moses. The Bible says, *"The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend"* (Exodus 33:11).

Friendship was central to the ministry of Jesus as well. He told His disciples, *"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you"* (John 15:14-15).

The Bible urges us to realize that God wants this kind of relationship with each of us. He wants to be your friend, too. He seeks to fellowship with us, teach us, take away our fears, give us strength, and uphold us with His *"righteous right hand"* (v. 10).

Do not stay aloof from Him or treat Him with distance or detachment. He wants the kind of intimate relationship that you have with your best friends.

Spend time with Him and talk with Him. Seek to foster this relationship. He is your God and your friend.

*You, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend.*

Isaiah 41:8 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, thank You for being my friend. Help me to have a more intimate fellowship with you. I love you, Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.

*Remember the former things long past, for I am God...declaring the end from the beginning...I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.*

Isaiah 46:9-11 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, You alone are God. Thank You that You already have declared the end from the beginning. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Why do we allow our lives to be filled with fear and worry? Pondering events in life, our minds race with possibilities. We wonder and ask ourselves question after question. We feel vulnerable and lack confidence.

How different our lives would be if we really grasped the revolutionary insights that God gave to Isaiah. He challenges us to remember that He alone is God. "*There is no other*" (v. 9). Our attitude changes when we *focus on this fact* and when we really believe that God is the Creator. We cannot compare Him with any other person.

But faith rises even higher as we grasp that He *already* has declared the end from the beginning. This fact explains why we can trust Him. For He is not surprised by anything. He knows, He shapes, and He plans perfectly in every situation.

Much of our lives are spent going through circumstances and wondering about the future. But we serve a God who *knows the end*. He already has *declared* how *everything* will end. His purposes will be accomplished. No force can stop Him. If we believe this, our lives can be delivered from fear. We can trust Him with our future and have peace and confidence in every situation.

Today let these truths sink into your heart and mind. Don't let worry and fear dominate your life. Commit everything to God. You can trust Him.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 11

The Bible makes clear that God wants to bless us. More than that, He wants us to *thrive*. In fact, the Bible promises that the righteous will *"flourish."*

This Hebrew word is used to describe vines that bud and blossom, open in the spring-time, and bear fruit. These seeds are fulfilling their destiny, growing into mature plants, and fulfilling the designs of their Creator.

How does this flourishing take place in believers? It comes to those who are *"righteous."* It comes to people whose desire is to serve God and obey His Word, to those who seek first His Kingdom and declare that Jesus is their Lord, and seek to follow Him.

These people will *"flourish like the green leaf"* bearing fruit at just the right time.

But these blessings do not come to those who trust in their riches, think about themselves, or hoard their possessions. In fact, the Bible promises, *"he who trusts in his riches will fall."*

Instead, God promises blessings to those who realize they have been blessed to bless other and are generous and sow seeds with the resources they have been given. Remember, God wants you to *flourish* and thrive in every area of your life. Make sure that you seek first His Kingdom and that you are committed to serving Him. Know His Word. Make Jesus the Lord of your life. Trust Him. Be confident that He desires to help you *flourish*.

*He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like the green leaf.*

Proverbs 11:28 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, thank You for Your desire to bless me. I will seek first Your Kingdom. Help me always do what is right. In Jesus' name, amen.



# God's Guidance

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 49

*He who has mercy on them will lead them... I will make each of My mountains a road, and My highways shall be elevated.*

Isaiah 49:10-11 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these situations to You: \_\_\_\_\_ . Guide me. Give me discernment. Help me to make the right decisions. In Jesus' name, amen.

The problems of life can seem so perplexing. We can feel so alone and powerless as we grapple with the decisions we need to make, both in major mileposts as well as in countless day-to-day issues.

How can we know God's will? How can we make the right decisions and avoid mistakes? When faced with a crossroad, how do we know which path to take?

As we face these choices, the Bible assures us that God wants us to seek Him and turn to Him for the guidance we need. Then, we need to *trust* Him to guide us.

God promised Isaiah that He would guide His people *"even by the springs of water"* (v. 10). They might have seen nothing but obstacles and mountains that seem impassable, but God promised to *"make each of My mountains a road."*

His Word tells us that He promises to guide us with the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). He will guide us through His peace (Philippians 4:7-9). As we seek Him and fill our hearts and minds with His Word, He will give us wisdom and understanding. As He promised David, He will *"instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye"* (Psalm 32:8).

Today, make a commitment to pray about every situation you face, to be guided by God's Word, to be sensitive to His Spirit, and to trust Him.

# Unfailing Love

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 54

MONDAY

January

13

During Isaiah's time, God's people had sinned and disobeyed Him. As a result, He said they needed to be corrected, to change, and to go through situations designed to help them learn to go the right way.

Explaining His actions, God said, *"In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment"* (v. 8). But He assured them that He remained filled with compassion, love, and mercy. He said He would not stay angry: *"With deep compassion I will bring you back... with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you"* (v. 7).

We need to remember these are important truths in our relationship with God. He is holy and cannot tolerate sin. He wants the very best for each of us, for each of us to fulfill our potential. We need to be corrected if we make mistakes. He wants to teach us every step of the way.

But no matter what we are going through, the Bible reminds us nothing can shake His *"unfailing love"* for us, and His *"covenant of peace"* with us cannot be removed.

Today, remember that God has compassion for you. He loves you and has established a covenant of peace with you that cannot be removed. But do not take Him for granted. Seek to obey His Word. Be ready to receive His correction. Always be confident of His love for you.

*"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.*

Isaiah 54:10 NIV

## PRAYER:

Father, thank You for Your unfailing love for me. Forgive me for my sins. Thank You for giving me Your peace. In Jesus' name, amen.

# Blessed to Bless Others

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 58

*Feed the hungry and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness... The LORD will guide you continually... You will be like a well-watered garden.*

Isaiah 58:10-11 NLT

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to bless others and reach out to those in need. Thank You for blessing me. In Jesus' name, amen.

The Bible teaches that God *delights* in blessing us. But He also desires that we be good stewards of what we've been given. While many in the world primarily think about themselves, we are to be motivated by love and compassion for others. We need to realize that He blesses us so that we might bless others.

The Bible teaches that this attitude leads to *greater* blessings. Like a sunrise, God promises to bring light to everything that seems dark. We will have hope, even when situations seem hopeless.

He promises to guide us all the time. Drought may be all around us, but we always will know that He is with us. Our souls will be *satisfied*, and we will not worry, for we will be confident in Him.

God also promises health. We will not be weak, inadequate, or fragile but will have the strength and energy to do what we need to do. And our lives will be fruitful, like an oasis in the desert. Others will look at us and see productivity, results, and blessings.

If you want to experience more of God's blessings, seek to find ways to bless others. Ask Him to show you how you can be a better steward of the resources He has given to you. Invest more of your time, talents, and treasures in His Kingdom and in the lives of others.

# God Promises Success

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 58

God promised in Isaiah that He was ready to guide us *continually*, to satisfy us and give us health, even if we go through “*drought*.” In fact, we will be “*like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not*.”

But these promises have *conditions*. The Bible also says that God wants us to care about others and give out of what He has given us. As we apply this generous attitude, the Bible promises that “*the LORD will answer*” when we call (v. 9).

We should be motivated by the needs of others, ready to do everything we can to take away “*yokes of oppression*.” As we are concerned about the needs of others, He promises that our light would “*rise in darkness, and your obscurity and gloom become like the noonday*” (v. 9-10).

The Bible promises that God wants us to be successful in our work, in our personal lives, finances, health, and ministries. This success starts when we commit our lives to Him, as we are generous with the things God has given us, and use our resources to help others and to spread His Kingdom.

Today, declare His promises to be true for you. Don't give in to doubt, but realize He wants you to be “*like a watered garden*.” He has blessed you that you might bless others. Trust in Him to bring you success!

*The LORD shall guide you continually and satisfy you in drought... You shall be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.*

Isaiah 58:11 AMPC

## PRAYER:

Father, Help me to be a faithful steward of all the blessings You have given me. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

THURSDAY

January

16

# What God Looks For

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 66

*This is the one to whom  
I will look: he who is  
humble and contrite in  
spirit and trembles  
at my word.*

Isaiah 66:2 ESV

## PRAYER:

Father, forgive me for pride. I humble myself before You. Thank You for Your Word. Please reveal more of yourself to me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Who are the kinds of people whom God looks on with particular pleasure?

The Bible reminds us that we can't impress Him with our talents and abilities. After all, these were gifts from Him. We can't impress Him with our accomplishments. After all, He is the creator of all things. We can't impress Him with our physical prowess or appearance.

So, what kind of person does He look for? He looks for those who are *humble*, who love and respect Him so much that they *tremble* at His Word, people who hunger to spend time with Him, and desire to know Him more intimately.

Are you one of these people? Search your heart. Do you sincerely want to draw closer to God? Do you want to know Him better, to receive more of His truth, wisdom, and power? Have you truly submitted your life to Him, and do you seek first His Kingdom? Do you love Him more than the things of the world?

The Bible promises that God is ready to reveal Himself to you and pour out His blessings. But first, He wants to see your motivation and your true character.

Humble yourself before God, and seek Him with a contrite spirit. Hunger to know more of His Word. Crave the opportunity to know Him more intimately, to serve Him, and to be used by Him. Worship Him. Cast your cares on Him. Trust Him.



# Impossible Obstacles

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: MATTHEW 17

FRIDAY

January

17

John Stanley seemed unlikely to have a productive life. Born on this day in 1712, he lost almost all of his sight when only two years old. Yet through diligence and persistence, he went on to become one of England's most celebrated musicians.

He began music lessons when he was seven. His teacher commented that he studied "with great diligence," achieving "astonishing" success. By the age of nine, he was playing the organ at a major London church.

Stanley went on to become the leading English organist of his day, even called "the best organist in Europe." Stanley was also an outstanding violinist. He became a world-class composer, attracting huge crowds to performances of his own works. In 1729 he became the youngest person ever to receive a bachelor's of music degree from Oxford University.

Stanley did not let his limitations prevent him from having a productive life. But many people don't have this attitude. They go through life feeling defeated and hopeless, assuming they never could succeed. We see this attitude in many people who approached Jesus. But He demonstrated that, with God, *nothing* is impossible. He can use every experience and characteristic for His glory.

In your life, be ready to use your experiences and the unique gifts you have been given. Be persistent. Believe God for miracles. Put your faith into action.

*If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.*

Matthew 17:20 NLT

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these situations to You: \_\_\_\_\_ . Thank You for miracles. I believe that with You, all things are possible. In Jesus' name, amen.

# Second Opinions

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 18

*The first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him.*

Proverbs 18:17 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these matters to You: \_\_\_\_\_.

Give me discernment and Your perspective. I seek Your direction. In Jesus' name, amen.

Imagine the courtroom scene. A witness stands before a judge and jury, seeking to explain his perspective on events. Isolated, these explanations can seem sufficient – until the witness is cross-examined.

A clever lawyer digs deeper. He does not assume one side of the story, but tries to spread doubt by attacking assumptions and seeking to paint a revised picture.

What often emerges is that events can be seen from several perspectives. Observers have their own unique conclusions that may be partially correct. But several perspectives are needed to develop a more complete picture of what actually happened.

These may be patterns in the courtroom, but they also provide perspectives that can be helpful in our daily lives. As the Bible reminds us, we can find ourselves just accepting our initial conclusions without really thinking and just going along with the crowd. The Bible encourages us to remember our limits, to realize that we don't always see things clearly. We need to remember to pray about every decision and remember the wisdom of seeking second opinions and the perspective of people we know to be spiritually discerning. As the Bible says, *"there is safety in having many advisers"* (Proverbs 11:14 NLT).

Seek to be a discerning listener. Don't just jump to conclusions, but seek out wise counsel and opinions from mature believers you trust. Pray and seek God's wisdom about matters you face. Ask Him for discernment.

Although Nils Frykman grew up in a Christian home, his life changed forever because of revivals that broke out throughout Sweden in the 1850s. As he matured in his faith, he sensed that God was inspiring him to write hymns. He started carrying a pencil and paper, so he always was ready to write what God revealed.

In 1883 while facing many uncertainties, Frykman wrote a hymn called “My Future.” In Andrew Skoog’s translation, we read how Frykman realized, “I have a future all sublime, beyond the realms of space and time, where my Redeemer I shall see, and sorrow nevermore shall be.”

Looking back, he realized that he had “a precious heritage.” While on earth, he might not understand everything that takes place but “while I tarry here below,” he believed that God “gives me what is best.”

Thinking about God, his heart filled with worship. He knew He had a plan, and God had delivered him from worry: “He bids me cast on Him my care. What then remains for me to bear?”

Frykman knew he could experience “sweet peace” for “all is well,” confident that Jesus “leads me safely throughout life.” He prayed that his “precious Savior” would teach him to live “more true to Thee.”

You may not know the future, but your Heavenly Father does. Commit your life to Him. Be faithful. Trust Him for whatever your future may hold!

*As it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

1 Corinthians 2:9 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all You have done for me. I commit my future to You. I dedicate my life to serving You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

# Rumors

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 20

*He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore associate not with him who talks too freely.*

Proverbs 20:19 AMPC

## PRAYER:

Father, help me control the words I speak. I surrender my tongue and my words to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Many attempts have been made to understand why people are so attracted to rumors and gossip. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, one sociologist concluded that rumors multiply “when the demand for news is greater than is the supply provided through institutional channels.”

Rumors begin to circulate when events don't seem to follow what normally might be expected. They often are inspired “during states of boredom” as rumors “capitalize on minor events, magnifying them into occasions for exciting collective action.”

Rumors are shared most rapidly “among friends, associates, and peers.” Studies have shown that people often can be motivated to start rumors to improve their own positions and that the person who first spreads a rumor can earn perceived prestige.

These may be common patterns in the world, but the Bible warns against these tendencies. Proverbs warns us not to associate “with him who talks too freely” because they aren't trustworthy; they lack *discernment* and *discretion*. We also are warned, “a talebearer reveals secrets.”

Still, many Christians cannot control their words. Because of the rumor mill, many churches, families, businesses, and friendships have been damaged, some beyond repair.

The Bible reminds us that our words are a serious matter. Ask God to help prevent you from being a talebearer. Ask Him for discernment and discipline to help you control your words. Don't start, spread, or even listen to rumors!

# A Life of Giving

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 21

TUESDAY

January

21

Some people seem primarily concerned about themselves. They passionately *hoard* their possessions and indulge in personal pleasures. This lifestyle may bring to mind cranky billionaires or selfish entertainers. But the Bible warns that these also are characteristics of “*the sluggard*.”

These people are not concerned with faithfulness or responsibility, but they do as little as possible. They don't want to work, yet are filled with cravings “*all day long*.” Sluggards may not realize it, but this kind of craving “*puts [them] to death*.” It strangles them.

But people who fear God are different. They seek to please Him and live according to His Word. They seek first His Kingdom and have a balanced attitude toward their possessions. And they work as unto Him.

They also cultivate an attitude of *giving*. They realize that everything they have is a gift from God and that He “*loves a cheerful giver*” (2 Corinthians 9:7). Instead of hoarding, they look for opportunities to give. They are generous and do not hold back.

What is your attitude toward your possessions? Time? Resources? Are you selfish? A sluggard? Or do you try to please God, always seeking opportunities to serve Him with the resources He has given you?

Apply the talents you have been given. Invest your resources in His Kingdom. Seek to obey and serve Him. Cultivate a life of giving. Remember, you have been blessed so that you can bless others!

*The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, for his hands refuse to work; all day long he is craving, while the righteous gives and does not hold back.*

Proverbs 21:25-26 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to be faithful. Help me share the time, talents, and treasures You have given me. I seek first Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name, amen.



## Skills

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 22

*Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings.*

Proverbs 22:29 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I seek to please You in everything I do. Help me to be fruitful and productive. In Jesus' name, amen.

Some people approach their work with a highly casual manner. They take their time doing their jobs or responding to requests. They are more concerned with their own interests than with their assignments or the goals of their employers. They aren't sensitive to the needs of their supervisors. We might say they are *lazy*.

Some are the opposite. Proverbs describes them as being "*skilled*" in everything they do. The Hebrew word here is derived from a word used to describe liquids that *flow easily*. It suggests acting *promptly*, taking action as quickly as possible to move toward a desired goal.

These proficient people have a positive attitude toward their lives and their gifts. They work efficiently; they don't rush unnecessarily, but they are prompt in attacking assignments and *completing* their work.

They develop skills that help them stand out. They are particularly appreciated by the authorities in their lives, who learn that these people are trustworthy and always do their best.

Think about these patterns as you approach your life. Seek to be trustworthy and faithful. Be the kind of person who works with *skill* and excellence. Remember the Biblical principle that "*whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*" (1 Corinthians 10:31). This applies to everything in life.

Be a person who works hard, who seeks to be a good example and a witness to others. Demonstrate how Christ has changed your life. Bring glory to God.

# Your Burdens

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 55

THURSDAY

January

23

A recent study provided what scientists called a direct link between stress and aging. It helped explain why the strains of life “can make people get sick and grow old before their time.”

Commenting about the study, a leading doctor said, “We all know that stress seems to age people.” This new study “demonstrated that there is no such thing as a separation of mind and body – the very molecules in our bodies are responsive to our psychological environment.”

A key factor was “people’s perception of how much stress they are under.” One scientist said, “the findings emphasize the importance of managing life stress.”

Stress is a common problem for people at all ages and all stages of life. Christians are not immune from stress. The Bible promises that God will take away our burdens and give us peace. Yet many Christians still are plagued by stress, troubled by problems at work or home, worries about the world, their relationships, or finances.

Is there any hope? What can we do?

It’s not enough just to read the Bible. We actually need to *apply* Biblical principles in our lives, take steps to trust in God, and not hold onto our burdens but *commit* them to Him.

If you feel stressed, don’t carry these burdens any longer. *Cast* them on the Lord, and *commit* your needs to Him. The Bible promises that He will sustain you and give you His peace.

*Cast your burden upon  
the LORD and He will  
sustain you; He will  
never allow the  
righteous to be shaken.*

Psalm 55:22 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, here are burdens  
I am carrying: \_\_\_\_\_.  
I cast them on You.  
Thank You for giving  
me peace and sustain-  
ing me. In Jesus’ name,  
amen.

# How We Respond

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 24

*Don't say, "Now I can pay them back for what they've done to me! I'll get even with them!"*

Proverbs 24:29 NLT

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these people and situations to You: \_\_\_\_\_. Help me respond in a way that is pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

How do we respond to others? What is our attitude when we feel insulted or offended? The instinctive reaction is to be defensive and retaliate. The Law said we should react in kind, "*a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*" (Exodus 21:23-24).

But Jesus taught that we should react in a *different* way. We are not to strike back. "*If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.*"

If our shirt is taken, we are to "*give our coat, too.*" If we are asked to carry gear for a mile, we are to "*carry it two miles.*" As a general principle, "*Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow*" (Matthew 5:38-42).

Jesus went on to provide the golden rule: "*Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you*" (Matthew 7:12). Proverbs says much the same thing, but from a slightly different perspective.

In the flesh, we might look for opportunities to pay others back for what we feel they've done to us. But Jesus taught that even if others act this way, we are to be *different*. We are to seek first God's Kingdom and trust Him as the ultimate Judge.

We are not to respond in ways we think others deserve, but in ways God *wants* us to – whatever would have the most impact for the Gospel.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 25

Recently a major publication urged its readers to collect dirt on others and then forward to them whatever they found. Why? They were looking for dark secrets that might be twisted into stories.

Many in the world seem obsessed with this kind of investigation, driven to uncover scoops that can propel their careers.

Politicians eagerly scan the speeches of their opponents, hoping to find statements or actions that can be built into a scandal. Photographers and reporters stalk celebrities, hoping to catch them doing something questionable. These might be common practices in the world, but the Bible urges believers to have different attitudes. In fact, we are to be people of *discretion*, to be *trustworthy*. We are to focus on loving people. We are not to be obsessed with revealing the secrets of others. Instead, we are to serve God and be ready to die to self and live for Him to impact lives for His Kingdom.

We are to be people of compassion. As Jesus taught, we are to love *“that is, unselfishly seek the best or higher good”* for our enemies and *“[make it a practice to] do good to those who hate you”* (Luke 6:27). We are not to seek to expose weaknesses or mistakes, but to show love instead.

Remember to ask the Spirit to show us how to see people through His lens to impact lives for the Gospel.

*Discover not  
and disclose not  
another's secret.*

Proverbs 25:9 AMPC

## PRAYER:

Father, give me Your attitude toward others. Fill me with Your love. Give me compassion and discernment. In Jesus' name, amen.

# Simplicity in Christ

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 CORINTHIANS 11

*I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.*

2 Corinthians 11:3 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these needs to You: \_\_\_\_\_.

Forgive me for my doubts. I simply trust in You today. Thank You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who was born 264 years ago this month, was a brilliant musician. As one scholar commented, “he could write down a complicated piece while thinking out another piece in his head, or hear a long piece of music for the first time and immediately write it out, note for note.”

Today his music still is played, revered, and studied. What was his secret? Apart from his extraordinary musicianship, generations of scholars agree that one key was his ability to compose in a way that made everything seem *simple* and *natural*.

A musicologist noted how a study of Mozart's compositions reveals “works which are at once supremely *simple* and profoundly *subtle*.” It was as if the music had not been written, but always existed. Nothing ever seems contrived or artificial. Piece after piece is a miracle of balance, beauty, and artistic perfection.

In contrast, many people think that they demonstrate their abilities and skills through complexity. Many even apply this principle to their spiritual lives.

Paul warned, for example, that some people were trying to complicate the Christian faith, attempting to lead believers astray by “*craftiness*.” He reminded them about the “*simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ*.”

Make sure that you have a simple faith; do not make it complicated. Trust your life to Jesus, and obey His Word. Pray with simple and pure faith, and believe that God will answer your prayers.

The Bible is filled with warnings. We easily develop misdirected priorities and waste our energies by focusing on the wrong things. Proverbs reminds us, “riches are not forever.” All the material things are just temporary. Stressing this principle, Jesus taught, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.” Instead, He urged us to “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19-20). We are to invest in the things that will last.

We constantly must remember that all earthly things are temporary and will eventually fade away. This is true for every form of the world's riches – honors and assets, achievements and possessions.

While having a balanced attitude toward these things, we also are called to be good stewards of the resource we have been given. We are not to allow things to possess our hearts and minds. But God also looks to see how we manage our resources.

Are we responsible? Good planners? How have we invested the seeds we have been given? Have we developed our gifts and taken advantage of the opportunities God has provided for us?

Let God evaluate your priorities. Be thankful for the gifts that you have been given. Don't allow material possessions and accolades to possess your heart and mind, but seek to be good stewards. Remember you have been blessed, so you can be a blessing to others.

*Know well the condition of your flocks, and pay attention to your herds; for riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations.*

Proverbs 27:23-24 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to be a good steward of the resources You have given to me. In Jesus' name, amen.



TUESDAY

January

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# A Christian Soldier

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 2

*Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life.*

2 Timothy 2:3-4 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I dedicate myself to be a soldier for You. I dedicate my life to Your kingdom. Use me to bring victory. In Jesus' name, amen.

Sabine Baring-Gould had brilliant mind. Born on this day in 1834 in Exeter, England, he mastered six languages, became an author, archaeologist, architect, artist, teacher, and folk song collector. He also was a full-time minister.

In 1865, the school at the church where he was pastor planned to join with the school in a neighboring village. He wanted his children to sing while marching, but could not think of "anything quite suitable." He sat up that night and composed a hymn called "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

He pictured the Christian life as a battle. Like soldiers, we should march as to war, "with the cross of Jesus going on before." We are imitating the leading of Jesus, our "royal Master."

He saw the church as "a mighty army" that was following in the footsteps of saints who had lived before. "We are not divided, all one body we, one in hope and doctrine, one in charity." He knew that "Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane" but the church would remain. The gates of hell never can prevail because "we have Christ's own promise, and that cannot fail."

Remember you, too, are a soldier in God's army, fighting a non-stop spiritual war. Do your part to win the battle by serving God with all your time, talents, and treasures. With God on your side, you can be confident of victory! Be bold and go into battle today.

# Holding Back

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 29

Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Our lives change when He *controls* us. There is no clearer way to measure His control than to examine the presence of anger in a person's life.

The Bible teaches, "*a fool always loses his temper.*" This means that they are dominated by reactions to other people and circumstances. If something happens that upsets them, they do not hold back but immediately react. Their words are "*hasty*" (v. 20).

Because such people are often overwhelmed with anger, they tend "*to stir up strife.*" They "*abound in transgressions*" and are characterized by conflict, rather than by wisdom, peace, love, or compassion.

The Bible says that the works of the flesh include strife, jealousy, and outbursts of anger (Galatians 5:19-21). If we find ourselves losing our temper or not being able to control our emotions, this indicates that we are being controlled by our flesh. It means that the Spirit is not in control. It means that sin still needs to be rooted out of our hearts and minds.

Today, examine how you react to people and things going on in your life that are not ideal. Are you under the control of your flesh or the control of the Spirit? Surrender your will, your thoughts, and your emotions to the Lord. Ask the Spirit to guide and control you. He can change you and help keep your anger in check.

*A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back...An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.*

Proverbs 29:11, 22 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, thank You that in Christ I am a new creature. I surrender my life to You. May Your Spirit change and guide me. In Jesus' name, amen.

# Pure In Our Own Eyes

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 30

*There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, yet is not washed from its filth. There is a generation – how haughty its eyes and pretentious its looks...*

*“I’ve done nothing wrong.”*

Proverbs 30:11-20 HCSB

## PRAYER:

Father, I humble myself before You. Teach me. Correct me when I am wrong. In Jesus' name, amen.

Focusing on ourselves is a common condition. We tend to look at the world from a subjective perspective and to draw conclusions that benefit us.

How easily we can be convinced that our way is best. In the process, we can be prepared to *justify* ourselves and reject the perspective of others. We tend to ignore or reject information that seems to contradict our conclusions.

One of life's greatest challenges is to be objective about ourselves. How difficult it can be to recognize our mistakes and limitations, to be able to see when we might be wrong, and to realize that what we think is best might not be best.

Instead of assuming we are right, we need to be willing to accept the advice and conclusions of others and to let others get the credit and the praise.

The Bible offers a sobering perspective on these issues. The fact is that many people have lives polluted by “*filth*.” The Hebrew word suggests things that infect their lives. The problem is that these people are “*pure in [their] own eyes*.” They refuse to acknowledge they might be doing anything wrong.

These people see the world through “*haughty*” eyes. Their looks are “*pretentious*,” and they are quick to justify themselves.

Today, ask God to help you be objective about your life. Surrender to the searchlight of His Spirit. Stay humble before Him; be ready and willing to be corrected.

# Focus and Distractions

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 31

FRIDAY

January

31

Concerned about her son, the mother of King Lemuel gave him advice about the way in which he should govern. She began with three strong warnings. First, to be careful about his relationship with women – in fact, in all his relationships. His mother knew how easily we could be distracted and sidetracked.

Second, she warned of the dangers of strong drink. It can weaken our minds and lead to distorted thoughts. And it can impact our wills and emotions.

Third, she reminded Lemuel that some things might, technically, be permitted but ultimately would cause harm. Paul expressed similar thoughts when he wrote, *“All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify”* (1 Corinthians 10:23).

We need to be aware that some actions, habits, and thoughts can *seem* harmless but ultimately weaken us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. They can corrupt our minds and impair our reasoning.

King Lemuel's mother encouraged him to be concerned for others, to do what he could to help the weak and needy, to be resolute about living according to God's principles, to resist temptations, and to be bold in speaking out for these standards.

Remember that you have been blessed so that you can be a blessing to others. Seek to be faithful to the mission God has given you. Avoid distractions and focus on serving Him.

*Do not give...your ways to that which destroys kings...Open your mouth...for the rights of all the unfortunate...defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.*

Proverbs 31:3, 8-9 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, keep me free from harmful distractions. Help me be more sensitive to the needs of others. In Jesus' name, amen.

# Life-Saving Harvests!

**When Marty sowed seeds for her son's future,  
God gave a harvest of life for the whole family!**

Watching Campmeeting on Inspiration TV one Sunday, Marty knew God was wanting her to take a step of faith:

“The presence of God was very strong, and I was led to sow a \$1,000 seed,” she shares. “At the time, I sowed the seed with prayers for our son – that God would help him reduce his college debt, find a good job and a Christian wife.”

But the blessings God had in store for her, her son and her husband were far larger than she imagined.

Weeks passed before Marty's first harvest. As she tells it: “A man was shooting at cars driving by on the highway. Our son was a security guard at a resort nearby the incident. He went to help. A gunfight ensued! Praise God, no one was hurt, and the man was arrested. God saved our son!”

Soon after, Marty needed a life-saving miracle herself when she

accidentally fell headlong into the family pond, striking her head on a rock as she toppled in. Concerned about losing consciousness and drowning, she cried out to God for help and was somehow able to get to the house and call for an ambulance. Rushed to the hospital, she was treated for a concussion, but she knows it could have been much worse without God's intervention!

Later the same year, Marty's husband suffered an even greater ordeal, collapsing in a seizure while waiting for his order at a lunch counter. After being airlifted to a hospital, they found bleeding on his brain! But God stepped in and performed a miracle. “He is now fine,” Mary exclaims, “God completely healed him!”

Marty rejoices for the blessings that came with her seed for souls. “God is a good God and is faithful. I thank Inspiration Ministries for being on television so I could pledge that seed.”

**As God was faithful to Mary, He will be faithful to YOU!**

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# A Merry Heart...

A merry heart does good, like medicine. – Proverbs 17:22



**Policeman:** Ma'am what's in that bottle?

**Woman:**  
Oh, it's just some water.

**Policeman:** Ma'am, that doesn't look like water. It smells like WINE...

**Woman:**  
Wow! Jesus did it again!



Sometimes finding that special someone requires a creative pickup line...

*Is your name Faith?  
Because you're the  
substance of things  
I've hoped for.*

*How many times do I  
have to walk around you  
to make you fall for me?*

*Are you related to  
Abraham's nephew?  
Because I like you a LOT.*

*Excuse me, I believe one of  
your ribs belongs to me.*

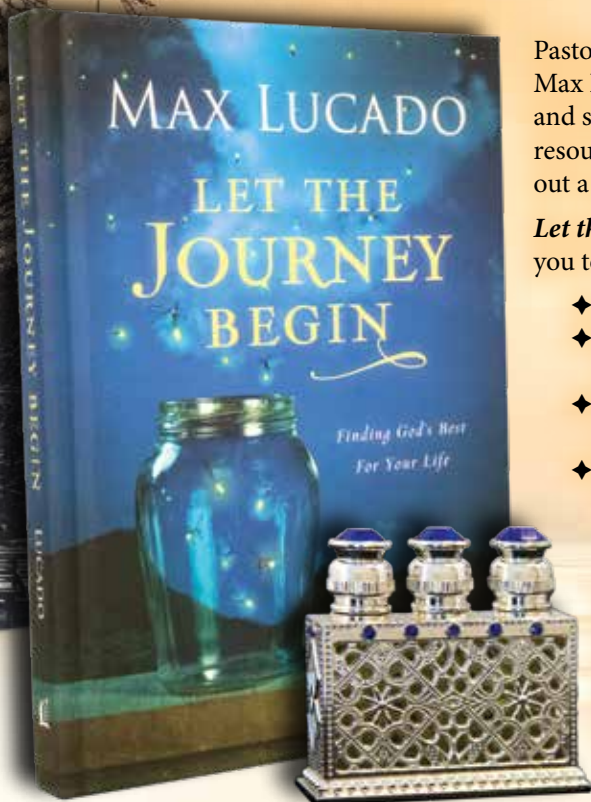
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*Turn to Page 28 for details on how you can receive these life-changing  
THANK YOU GIFTS this month (while supplies last).*