

Our setting every morning is, 'Git 'er done.' But what a wonderful alternative to start the day with what God has done—and what he's promised to do—to fulfill his promises to us in Christ!

— **Michael Horton**

Professor, Westminster Seminary California and editor-in-chief at Sola Media

Finding Faithfulness is a one-of-a-kind yearly devotional guide that combines simplicity with viability. Each entry lists seven suggestions on an easy-to-read page that invites participation. The approach is inductive, as readers are encouraged to actually read the Bible and discover its meaning and personal application. The book's careful orchestration begets confidence that reading the entire Bible in a year is not simply a possibility but also an inviting prospect. After reading the opening pages, I felt that I had just been offered the deal of a lifetime.

— **Leland Ryken**

Longtime Professor of English at Wheaton College in Illinois, who has published some twenty books on the Bible, including *Ryken's Bible Handbook* and the *Literary Study Bible*.

Though people often look for a quick fix to their problems, the most enduring solutions are the good habits we build into the rhythm of each day and repeat throughout our lives. This book offers help in the best of habits: daily prayer and meditation on God's Word. Glenda Faye Mathes leads the reader into a daily rhythm of resting, requesting, reading, reflecting, responding, resolving, and reaching—all done by faith in the Word of God.

— **Dr. Joel and Mary Beeke**

President, Puritan Reformed Seminary and Pastor of Heritage Reformed Church Grand Rapids, and his helpmeet; authors.

The English Reformer, Thomas Cranmer, once observed, "There is nothing that so much strengthens our faith and trust in God . . . as continual reading and recording of God's word." Glenda Faye Mathes' *Finding Faithfulness* provides Christian believers with an outstanding contemporary resource to aid them in cultivating such a practice. In an age marked by many distractions and temptations to do otherwise, Mathes offers a creative and stimulating program for daily reading and meditating upon the riches of God's Word.

— **Dr. Cornel Venema**

President and Professor of Doctrinal Studies at Mid-America Reformed Seminary

Finding **FAITHFULNESS**

A YEAR OF READING AND
REFLECTING ON GOD'S WORD

GLENDA FAYE MATHES

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*For all who long to
know and love our faithful God
and his glorious Word!*

Why *Finding Faithfulness*?

Our society writhes with pandemic fear, racial discord, and political conflict—all fueled by media misinformation. Believers in Jesus know only changed hearts can change lives. But how can professing Christians disagree—not just on minor doctrinal points, but on fundamental moral issues—on matters about which the Bible clearly speaks?

As Amos 8:11 prophesied, a famine of God’s Word starves the land. Some professing Christians admit to never having read the whole Bible. Others read passages superficially or out of context. Many read Scripture through the flawed lens of a worldview shaped by culture’s prevailing perspectives. Far too many fail to read the Bible at all.

Many people begin the year with firm resolutions to read the Bible every day, but few maintain their momentum. Good-intentioned participants start strong, powering through Scripture’s interesting narratives, but they become bogged down by long genealogies or repetitive regulations. They may grind to a halt in Leviticus when they come to instructions for bloody sacrifices and skin diseases, which seem irrelevant for modern lives and culture. Busy families and stressful schedules make it additionally difficult to read enough verses daily to get through the entire Bible in a year.

But we can’t really know what God says in his Word if we don’t read it. The whole thing. If we truly believe what God says, we’ll take 2 Timothy 3:16 to heart: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” When God says, “All Scripture,” he means ALL. That includes repetitive instructions or lengthy genealogies. Meditating through the entire Bible opens your eyes to God’s truth. You may even see how Leviticus points to Christ’s ultimate sacrifice while it guides modern readers toward holiness and ushers into God’s presence.

Finding Faithfulness: A Year of Reading and Reflecting on God’s Word fills a unique niche between many modern devotionals and annual reading plans. Rather than relating an author’s personal anecdotes to a few verses, it encourages participants to read the entire Bible and discover its truth for themselves. And instead of simply **reading through** Scripture, participants **reflect on it**. They pray God’s words back to him and allow his Word to shape their perspectives and their relationships with God and other people.

The *Finding Faithfulness* experience yields twofold treasure. As readers develop a faithful devotional rhythm and implement faithful living, they discover more about God’s character and his continuing faithfulness throughout Scripture and in their lives. This book facilitates participant use and benefit through three exceptional features: a viable schedule, a unique presentation, and meaningful participation.

Viabile Schedule

The *Finding Faithfulness* schedule aims toward participant success. It permits some flexibility and opportunities to catch up, while cultivating a daily devotional practice.

Each Day 1 Bible passage is brief. This allows you to catch up with missed readings, reflect more on convicting concepts, or implement resolutions and outreach opportunities. Sunday's prayers are not written out, permitting you to practice crafting your own receptive and reflective prayers.

Entries on Days 2–7 fold Scripture passages into a time of prayer and reflection. Four primary readings are usually from the Psalms, the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Proverbs.

This viable schedule helps participants implement and maintain a Bible reading plan. Unique presentation and meaningful participation enhance that experience.

Unique Presentation

Scripture texts appear in a unique order to engage readers from the start and maintain interest throughout the calendar year. Those experienced in annual plans may find this arrangement refreshing. People new to reading the entire Bible, who might feel overwhelmed at the prospect, will be drawn into the readings and encouraged to maintain momentum.

Verses from the Psalms double as opening prayers and often relate to narrative readings. Some Old Testament texts are linked to their New Testament fulfillment or appear chronologically (especially accounts regarding kings). But many Old Testament books appear in biblical order, beginning with Genesis.

Rather than beginning New Testament readings with Matthew, however, *Finding Faithfulness* begins with the Gospel of John. This highlights similarities between the initial verses of Genesis and John, while introducing Jesus as the living Word and Light who came into our dark world. The reader meets Christ through John's vivid imagery and Jesus' declarations about himself as the "I am" God-man. John seeks to persuade readers about the reality of Christ's divinity and his redemption. The book's clearly stated purpose is for you to "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

Readings from John conclude near the time Lent begins, when many Christians consider the suffering and death of Christ for forty days prior to Good Friday. During this period, Gospel accounts depicting the final week of Christ's life lead into special readings for Easter. Birth narratives from Matthew, Mark, and Luke appear near Christmas. Other holidays feature appropriate texts. Most of Acts, the epistles, and Revelation are read in biblical order. The arrangement bookends New Testament readings with the Gospel of John and Revelation, John's two largest books. He initially depicts Jesus as the Son of God who came to earth for our salvation, and he finally reveals Christ as the Son of Man who will return in judgment.

This presentation is not offered as the best or a superior way to read the Bible. The hope is to draw readers into Scripture and maintain engagement through biblical and calendar connections. Reflection Recommendations lead participants deeper into meaningful meditation.

Meaningful Participation

The most unique feature of *Finding Faithfulness* is its structure around seven Reflection Recommendations, which are designed to increase meaningful participation in the devotional experience and facilitate practical application. These recommendations begin with the letter "R" to make them easier to recall and internalize.

REST: We benefit from quieting our thoughts and bodies to be still and know that the Lord is God (Ps. 46:10).

REQUEST: We ask God to reveal his truth through the power of his equipping Spirit (John 4:24) and to open our hearts and minds to receive it.

READ: We read the texts thoughtfully and receptively, perhaps underlining or noting striking phrases or verses.

REFLECT: We reflect on God's Word, noting how it convicts us or expands our understanding. We may see how different passages reveal corresponding truth.

RESPOND: We respond to God in prayer, thanking him for the revealed truth. We may seek forgiveness, wisdom, or direction.

RESOLVE: We resolve to make changes or take actions, according to the Spirit's conviction. We may decide to conform attitudes more to the mind of Christ or determine ways to transform behaviors or to love others well.

REACH: We reach beyond our devotional time to carry what we're learning from the Word into the world and our interactions with other people.

These recommendations nurture participants in developing a daily practice of prayer and reflection. While they go beyond personal application to interpersonal relationships, they focus primarily on God and his Word.

The viable schedule, unique presentation, and meaningful participation of *Finding Faithfulness* set it apart from other devotionals and Bible reading plans. As you implement its features, you'll develop a devotional rhythm that nurtures godliness and awakens you to God's character and his faithfulness.

How Do I Use *Finding Faithfulness*?

Does reading through the Bible in a year intimidate you? Are you feeling overwhelmed at that thought, let alone the idea of taking time to reflect on what you read? Take heart: You can do this, and you can delight in it!

Please don't think of this plan as a duty or an assignment. Choose to view it as what it really is—an opportunity to nourish your soul by drawing near the living God through his living Word.

To increase meaning and joy, *Finding Faithfulness* lists texts appropriate to the church calendar. Daily entries reflect a mid-range placement for Christian holidays that do not always occur on the same date (Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, and Pentecost).

If you begin *Finding Faithfulness* at the New Year, you'll conclude the book of John near the beginning of Lent, a forty-day period prior to Good Friday when many Christians consider the suffering and death of Christ. The New Testament readings following John, therefore, are Gospel passages depicting the final week of Christ's life on earth. Good Friday and Easter include readings describing his crucifixion and resurrection. Gospel narratives regarding Christ's birth appear during the Christmas season.

Special entries can be read at any time, so feel free to use holiday readings on the specific date. Don't hesitate to use entries out of order, and don't worry about missing days. The Day 1 readings are intentionally short to let you catch up with any missed entries and spend time in additional reflection. Because Day 1 corresponds to Sunday, the short readings also take into account hours spent in corporate worship and private rest. If you have extra time for reading and reflection on Sundays, you may want to move on to future entries. Being ahead of schedule can relieve stress when circumstances make daily reading difficult.

And it can be difficult. You will miss days. You'll likely rush through others without pausing to receive and reflect. If you don't get through the entire Bible in one year, you have not failed. On the contrary, you've begun the beneficial habit of reading and reflecting on God's Word. What does it matter if it takes you more than a year to get through? What matters is that you're fostering a devotional practice of reflecting on God's Word.

As you read and reflect, you'll see the unity of the entire Bible and how Scripture texts relate. No human being can connect all the dots for you, but the Author of the Good Book can—and he does! No matter what plan or specially formatted Bible you use, the Holy Spirit enlightens believing and receptive hearts to God's truth.

How do you spend your God-given minutes each day? Family and work commitments must not be neglected, but how important is God's Word? Is it a higher priority than checking social media or watching a movie? Is it worth

getting up a little earlier each morning? You can choose to invest time in communing with God. And it may be easier than you think. Day 1 readings are usually fewer than twenty verses with an occasional longer text on significant church holidays. The Scripture texts for each of Days 2–7 average around one hundred verses, which could be read in as little as ten or fifteen minutes. But you will benefit from additional time spent in reflection and meditation.

Because *Finding Faithfulness* uses the English Standard Version (ESV), the language and word choices in the daily entries may resonate or seem more consistent if you read Scripture texts from an ESV Bible. The ESV Literary Study Bible provides helpful introductions and literary explanations, while the ESV Study Bible contains a wealth of instructive notes and study aids. ESV Journaling Bible options include lined margins for notes. You may wish to jot down reflections, prayers, and convicting texts in a notebook.

Remember, daily entries are not assignments. The Reflection Recommendations are just that: recommendations. They are only suggestions, which you may implement as much or as little as you find helpful. The following explanation describes how they can be used.

REST is a crucial initial step in preparing our hearts and minds to receive God's Word. Adopting a calm spirit and quiet posture helps switch from thinking about ourselves and our concerns to focus on God and what he is saying to us.

Because we can't know God's will apart from the Spirit's leading, we should **REQUEST** that God reveal his truth to our hearts and minds. Most entries use short portions of Psalms as the first part of this opening prayer and conclude with personal remarks.

We reap great benefits when we **READ** the passages receptively and thoughtfully. You may want to underline striking words or phrases or check mark meaningful verses. Feel free to use whatever method you find helpful, but try to read with an open mind and a receptive heart.

Then **REFLECT** on the texts, perhaps jotting down connections or similar concepts they share. Some people like to write verses on note cards to post in strategic spots as reminders or for memorization. Perhaps God's Word convicts you of sin or expands your understanding of specific teaching or events. This Recommendation asks thought-provoking questions to help you make connections or notice details about God and his truth.

Having read and reflected on the passages, we **RESPOND** to God in prayer. The suggested prayers are based on the readings, but feel free to add your own thoughts or form your own responses. We want to thank God for revealing his truth and instructing us in it. We might ask for more understanding of difficult concepts, or we may need to seek forgiveness for sins of which we've been convicted. We can always thank God for his faithfulness in providing for his covenant people, especially the great gift of salvation. Day 1 entries generally allow participants to practice crafting their own opening requests and responsive prayers.

We then **RESOLVE** to make changes or take actions, according to the revealed biblical truth. We may determine ways to conform our attitudes or thoughts more to the mind of Christ. Perhaps we'll see how to transform sinful behaviors or how to love others well. For the sake of personal accountability, it's helpful to write down such resolutions.

Finally, we consider ways to **REACH** beyond our personal devotional time to share God's love with other people. We may realize how our behaviors toward others could be more loving or think of simple things to brighten a lonely person's day. It's not necessary to come up with new and specific action steps every day, but learning to think about ministering to other people helps us be faithful to God's command about loving others.

Please view these Reflection Recommendations as guidelines to increase meaning and communion. Don't think of them as legalistic decrees that you must incorporate into every meditation. The more you develop this devotional rhythm, however, the more deeply you will meditate on God's Word and commune with him, transforming duty to delight.

That's the goal of *Finding Faithfulness*: to transform devotional duty into soul delight. For you to echo Jeremiah: "Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts" (Jer. 15:16).

Week 1/Day 1

God is faithful, and Scripture is true and delightful

REST

Quiet your body and mind by sitting still and putting aside your concerns and churning thoughts. Take a deep breath and focus on God instead of yourself.

REQUEST

Pray the words of **Psalm 19:7–11** and **Psalm 86:11**.

Follow with this personal conclusion: *Lord, help me understand your word as perfect truth. May I desire your word more than the sweetest things of this world and strive to living according to your truth! Amen.*

READ

Lamentations 3:22–23

John 8:31–32

John 17:17

2 Timothy 3:14–17

Proverbs 1:1–7

REFLECT

What does each dawn remind us about God? How does one abide in the word? In what ways has your view of the Bible changed since childhood? Do you believe ALL Scripture is true and inspired by God? Are you willing to accept God's word as profitable for your own learning, correction, and training in faithfulness? How does the Bible's definition of wisdom differ from the world's?

RESPOND

Pray **Psalm 119:1–8** and **89–90**.

Conclude with: *Help me to discover the joy of faithful living and the truth of your continuing faithfulness. In the name of Jesus, Amen.*

RESOLVE

What specific actions do you resolve to take or what behaviors or perspectives do you determine to change?

REACH

In what ways can you reach out to others with the truth of God's word?

Forever, O LORD, your word
is firmly fixed in the heavens.
Your faithfulness endures to all generations;
you have established the earth, and it stands fast. (Ps. 119: 89–90)

Week 1/Day 2
God's word creates light and life

REST

Rest in the Lord by quieting self-centered thoughts and focusing on the Creator.

REQUEST

Pray the praise of **Psalm 8**.

Conclude with this request for the Spirit's guidance: *Thank you, Lord, for creating our beautiful world and giving people a special place in it. Open my mind and heart to understand your written word and to live faithfully in your created world. Strengthen my faith as you reveal your truth and faithfulness. Amen.*

READ

Genesis 1–2

John 1:1–5

Proverbs 8:22–31 (which is Wisdom speaking)

REFLECT

Why does God emphasize “evening” and “morning” for each “day”? How does Genesis 2:2–3 guide our view of Sunday? What aspects elevate humanity's creation? What strikes you about God's institution of marriage? How are Genesis 1 and John 1 similar? God's attribute of wisdom has existed eternally and was uniquely implemented at creation. What might the personification of Wisdom additionally represent? (Consider Paul's references in 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30; Colossians 1:16.) How were all three persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) present at creation?

RESPOND

Triune God, I praise you for creating our beautiful world and giving your children, including me, a special place in it. Thank you for sending Christ as the eternal light to dispel the darkness in our world and in our hearts. In his name, Amen.

RESOLVE

What ingrained ideas do you resolve to change?

REACH

How could you reach out to others with the truth about creation?

Week 1/Day 3
“Did God actually say?”

REST

Put aside your cares and concerns to rest in the presence of the Creator God.

REQUEST

Praise the Creator by praying the words of **Psalm 33:1–12**.

Conclude with this personal request: *I know you made all things, Lord, and you deserve all praise and glory. By your Spirit's power, make your word come alive in my mind and dwell richly in my heart. In Christ's name, Amen.*

READ

Genesis 3–4

John 1:6–18

Proverbs 8:1–11

REFLECT

How does the serpent's question, “Did God actually say,” relate to our world's problems and our need for regular Bible study? How did Eve also twist God's words? How should Adam have responded to Satan's temptation and Eve's offer? Who did Adam ultimately blame? What hopeful promise appears in God's words to the serpent (Gen. 3:15)? How does God's manner of providing clothing for Adam and Eve prefigure Christ? In what ways might we “murder” our brothers and sisters? What hope do you see in these readings (particularly Gen. 3:15; 4:26; John 1:12–13)?

RESPOND

Thank you, heavenly Father, for your great mercy in providing life through Christ, despite our first parents choosing the way of death. Help us to love light and life and walk faithfully in your ways. In the Savior's name, we pray. Amen.

RESOLVE

What perspective do you resolve to conform more to what God actually says?

REACH

How might you show love to siblings in your family or church?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. (Ps. 33:4)

Week 1/Day 4
Walking with God

REST

Rather than thinking about all you need to do today, focus instead on God and his word.

REQUEST

Seriously consider each concept as you pray the convicting words of **Psalm 33:13–22**.

End your prayer with: *Lord, you see everything I do and know the depth of sin in my heart. Fill me with awe-filled reverence for you. Help me to hope in your steadfast love. Equip me to wait patiently on your will, trusting and rejoicing in you. Grant me understanding as I read and reflect on your word. In the name of Jesus, Amen.*

READ

Genesis 5–6

1 Chronicles 1:1–4

John 1:19–28

Proverbs 8:12–21

REFLECT

Today's readings show that God sees what's in each individual's heart. What did he see about nearly all people living before the flood? Why did Noah find favor with God? Why didn't Enoch die? Do you recall another person in the Bible who was taken to heaven while still alive? (Hint: The reading in John mentions his name.) The passage from Proverbs confirms that biblical wisdom walks in the way of righteousness. What does God promise in Genesis 6:18?

RESPOND

You know my heart, Lord. Forgive my many sins and help me walk with you in the way of righteousness. Thank you for establishing your covenant with those who believe in and trust in Jesus for their salvation. May I be counted among them! Amen.

RESOLVE

What heart inclinations do you resolve to replace with those pleasing to God?

REACH

How can you reach out to someone who struggles to walk with God?

I [Wisdom] walk in the way of righteousness,
in the paths of justice. (Prov. 8:20)

Week 1/Day 5
Salvation from the flood and sin

REST

Push aside personal concerns to focus on and rest in the reigning Lord.

REQUEST

With **Psalm 93**, praise the Lord who reigns over all creation and all people.
Conclusion: *You, O Lord, are clothed with all majesty and power! You are infinitely stronger than any natural power or spiritual rebellion. Your holiness is greatly to be praised! Reveal the truth in your trustworthy word, I pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

READ

Genesis 7:1–9:17

John 1:29–34

Proverbs 8:32–36 (still Wisdom personified speaking)

REFLECT

Was it necessary for all animals to be fully grown or to represent every species? Where do you hear echoes of Eden? What do "pleasing aroma" and God's promise indicate about his relationship with his people? How did God expand the human diet? What should rainbows remind us of? Why did John call Jesus "the Lamb of God"? How does the baptism of Jesus show the Trinity? How would you define biblical wisdom?

RESPOND

Thank you for providing salvation from the global flood and for sacrificing the Lamb to save your children from the flood of sin covering the earth. Fill me with biblical wisdom that I may trust your word more than the words of skeptics and scoffers. Amen.

RESOLVE

What conceptions about the ark and the flood should you conform more to God's truth?

REACH

How can you avoid promoting misconceptions about the ark and flood in others, particularly children?

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

Week 1/Day 6

Epiphany

REST

Quiet self-centered thoughts and focus on the King of the nations.

REQUEST

Pray **Psalm 72**, considering how it and the reigns of David and Solomon point to Christ.

Conclusion: *Lord, open the eyes of my heart to glimpse the scope and power of your eternal kingdom. Open my mind to understand and apply the truth of your word. In the name of King Jesus, Amen.*

READ

Isaiah 60

Micah 5:1–6

Matthew 2:1–12

Proverbs 3:9–10

REFLECT

Epiphany commemorates how wise men honored the child Jesus with gifts and worship. What elements of Psalm 72 point to Christ's everlasting reign over all nations? What specifics particularly apply to the worship offered by the wise Gentiles in Matthew 2? What concepts do you notice in Isaiah 60? In Micah 5, what characteristics of the coming ruler strike you? Does the reading from Proverbs mean that every Christian who honors God will be prosperous?

RESPOND

Thank you, King Jesus, for providing this glimpse of the glory all nations will one day bring to you. Equip me to live in faithful love and joy until you bring me home and I truly worship you. In your name, I pray, Amen.

RESOLVE

In what specific ways can you determine to honor the Lord with your wealth?

REACH

How might you reach someone with the good news about King Jesus?

Week 1/Day 7

Walk with the righteous

REST

Intentionally calm your spirit and rest in the Lord.

REQUEST

Delight in the Lord as you pray through **Psalm 1**.

Finish with personal prayer: *Lord, reveal to me the ways I participate in worldly actions and philosophies. Kindle within my heart a delight in your word and a desire to meditate on it. In the name of the righteous Christ, I pray. Amen.*

READ

Genesis 9:18–10:32

1 Chronicles 1:5–23

John 1:35–42

Proverbs 9:1–12

REFLECT

Psalm 1 sets the tone for the entire Psalter by contrasting the way of the righteous with that of the wicked, a theme repeated often in the psalms and throughout the Bible. But no one is without sin. In what way did righteous Noah fall into sin? The two contrasting responses of his sons demonstrate the antithesis between the righteous and wicked. Does this antithesis still exist? What terms does Proverbs 9 use to describe this contrast?

RESPOND

Work your Spirit in my heart, Lord, that I may be counted among the righteous and be equipped to walk in righteousness. Generate within me awe, respect, honor, and love for you. Let me not be swirling and disappearing chaff, but send down my roots into your word to make me a firm and verdant tree in your kingdom. In Christ, Amen.

RESOLVE

What is one specific way you can walk more righteously?

REACH

How can you pray for someone you think is walking the wrong way?

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. (Isa. 60:1)

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish. (Ps. 1:6)

Week 2/Day 1

Pour out your Spirit and make your words known

REST

Rest in the Lord today by attending public worship and refreshing your spirit through meditation on his word and fellowship with other believers.

REQUEST

Thinking about what you've learned from God's word this week, pray for the Spirit to guide your activities today and your Bible reading now.

READ

Any Scriptures from the previous week that you may have missed or wish to review
Proverbs 1:8–33

REFLECT

How did your parents influence your life for good? If they failed to be godly parents, consider things you may have to forgive or turn over to the Lord. What obvious enticements or subtle sins tempt you? How might you be greedy for unjust gain? How has your attitude toward God's word reflected your feeling toward the knowledge of God? What choices have you made about loving and revering the Lord? What fruits of your own devices have you eaten? What does God promise to those who listen to him?

RESPOND

Craft your own prayer, thanking God for the specific truths he is revealing to you and asking for strength to resist even the most subtle temptations. Ask God to pour his Spirit upon you and make his words known as you listen to him with loving reverence.

RESOLVE

Have you despaired God's reproof about a sin that you should turn from?

REACH

Could you reach out to a lonely person today with a phone call, note, or visit?

Week 2/Day 2

The call to follow faithfully

REST

Be still and know that the Lord is God.

REQUEST

Pay attention to the concepts as you pray **Psalm 2**.

Ending: *Lord, when I feel overwhelmed and discouraged by the strength and success of the wicked, comfort me with this image of you laughing in derision at their futile efforts. Never let me forget that Jesus is the King of kings, who will one day judge all people. By your Spirit, may I embrace his reign and take refuge in him. Amen.*

READ

Genesis 11–12

1 Chronicles 1:24–27

John 1:43–51

Proverbs 9:13–18

REFLECT

What did the unfaithful people of Shinar seek to establish, and what did they want to prevent? What were the components of God's promise to Abram? What attitudes may have fueled Abram's half-truth about Sarai? What did Jesus call his disciples to do? What aspects of sin might the woman Folly personify?

RESPOND

Forgive us, Lord, for our fears and lack of trust. Equip us to follow you faithfully wherever you call us to go and whatever you call us to do. Crowd out our folly with biblical wisdom and wholehearted love for King Jesus. In his name, Amen.

RESOLVE

In what situations should you determine to trust God and follow him faithfully?

REACH

How can you assist someone struggling to follow God?

If you turn at my reproof,
behold, I will pour out my spirit to you;
I will make my words known to you. (Prov. 1:23)

The next day Jesus . . . found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."
(John 1:43)

Week 2/Day 3

A priest after the order of Melchizedek

REST

Rest in the presence of our great High Priest.

REQUEST

Pray **Psalm 110** with an awareness of Jesus reigning at God's right hand.

Conclusion: *Even though we may not see the evidence now, we confess that you are ruling with a mighty scepter and bringing your enemies under your feet. You will one day return in power to judge all people with perfect equity. May we offer ourselves freely to you then and every day of our earthly lives. Amen.*

READ

Genesis 13–14

John 2:1–12

Proverbs 10:1

REFLECT

What motivated Lot's choice of land? Where was Lot dwelling at the time when four kings warred with five kings? Who was Melchizedek, and what roles did he fulfill? How does Abram's attitude differ from Lot's earlier one? Why is it significant that the water jars at the wedding were for purification? What was notable about the wine?

RESPOND

Help us examine our motivations, Lord, recognizing and repenting from selfish and sinful ones. Thank you for providing purification through our eternal High Priest! Thank you for initially manifesting your glory by gladdening hearts and blessing people at a celebration that prefigures the marriage supper of the Lamb, in whose name we pray. Amen.

RESOLVE

What attitudes or views about Jesus might you need to revise or reinforce?

REACH

With whom should your interaction arise less from self-centered motivation?

Week 2/Day 4

God's faithful covenant

REST

Rest in the presence of our covenant God.

REQUEST

Give careful thought to the words as you pray **Psalm 111**.

End with: *Lord, help me thank you with my whole heart and delight in your wondrous works. Thank you for being a gracious and merciful God who never forgets his covenant relationship with his people. You are faithful and deserve our faithful obedience. Praise your holy and awesome name for your redemption! Amen.*

READ

Genesis 15–16

John 2:13–22

Proverbs 10:2

REFLECT

God promises Abram progeny and property. What concrete details does God provide about this people's future? The sacrificial ritual indicates a covenant between two parties, but who is the primary participant? What do the actions of Sarai and Abram indicate about their attitudes? What did Hagar call the Lord, and how did she view him? How does the cleansing of the temple contrast with many portrayals of Jesus?

RESPOND

Praise your name for your covenant promises, Lord! Thank you for being faithful, even when we're not. Forgive our lack of trust, and grant us patient endurance to wait on your will. Thank you for always watching over us. Help us to view your house and your worship with appropriate honor and reverence. In Christ's name, Amen.

RESOLVE

Of what specific sins do these readings convict you, and how do you resolve to eradicate them from your heart?

REACH

To whom can you minister faithfully and uprightly?

The LORD has sworn
and will not change his mind,
"You are a priest forever
after the order of Melchizedek." (Ps. 110:4)

The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy;
they are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. (Ps. 111:7–8)

Week 2/Day 5

God knows our hearts and fulfills his promises

REST

Rest in the presence of our all-knowing and all-powerful God.

REQUEST

Praise God with the words of **Psalm 113**.

Conclusion: *Who is like you, O Lord our God? May your name be praised among all nations for all time. You see every heart and provide exactly what each person needs. In your mercy, you sometimes elevate the lowly and bless barren women with children. Praise the Lord! Amen.*

READ

Genesis 17:1–18:15

John 2:23–25

Proverbs 15:11

REFLECT

What do God's name changes for Abram and Sarai signify? What does Abraham do in Genesis 17:17, and what does Sarah do in Genesis 18:12? Notice how often God reiterates that he will make or establish his covenant with Abraham and his future son, Isaac. How does God stress the certainty of Isaac's birth? God knows the laughter and doubt in the hearts of Abraham and Sarah, and what does Jesus know about all people?

RESPOND

Thank you for fulfilling your covenant promise to bless Abraham and barren Sarah with a son, in whose line our Savior would be born. Truly, nothing is too hard for you, O Lord! Forgive the doubt or skepticism we harbor in our hearts. Help us to trust your word completely and continually. In Jesus name, Amen.

RESOLVE

What does God know about your heart that you resolve to change?

REACH

In what ways can you demonstrate to others your trust in God?

Week 2/Day 6

God sweeps away the wicked but regenerates the righteous

REST

Quiet your thoughts to receive God's word.

REQUEST

Pray the words of **Psalm 11**.

Conclusion: *Lord, you are altogether holy and righteous. You see and test the hearts of all people, vanquishing the wicked and violent. Even if we don't see your victories, help us to trust in their ultimate reality. May we live righteously now and someday behold your face. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

READ

Genesis 18:16–19:38

John 3:1–15

Proverbs 21:7

REFLECT

Note God's gracious mercy to Abraham's incremental requests. Has God, who tests every heart, found ten righteous persons in the cities? In what ways do Lot and his family members show they have assimilated sinful cultural perspectives? Why did Nicodemus meet with Jesus at night? What things did he struggle to understand?

RESPOND

Thank you, Lord, for providing the way of salvation through Christ. May I not assume salvation in anything but a heart regenerated through your Spirit. Equip me to live like one who has born again to new life in Christ. In his name, I pray, Amen.

RESOLVE

What cultural assimilations in your life do you determine to put in line with God's word?

REACH

How can you pray for the righteous who are surrounded by the wicked?

Sheol [the grave] and Abaddon [destruction] lie open before the LORD; how much more the hearts of the children of man! (Prov. 15:11)

The violence of the wicked will sweep them away, because they refuse to do what is just. (Prov. 21:7)

Week 2/Day 7

God so loved

REST

Calm your spirit as you seek the Holy Spirit's leading.

REQUEST

Pray the words of **Psalm 5**.

Conclusion: *Thank you, heavenly Father, for saving me through the abundance of your steadfast love. Lead me to see righteousness and the straight way of your word. May all who take refuge in you exult in your name, I pray. Amen.*

READ

Genesis 20–21

John 3:16–21

Proverbs 10:9

REFLECT

What aspects of the narrative in Genesis seem like déjà vu? How does Sarah refer to the meaning of Isaac's name? What does Ishmael's laughter at the feast indicate? What is God's most frequent biblical command, which appears in Genesis 21:17? The reading from John 3 begins with the Bible's most familiar verse, but how is that clarified in verse 18? How does the verse from Proverbs relate to the Old and New Testament readings?

RESPOND

You are the everlasting God, who in your great love sent your Son for the salvation of sinners like me. Thank you for working belief in my heart through your Spirit. Help me realize how much you hate sin and equip me to walk with integrity. Amen.

RESOLVE

What crooked ways do you need to make straight?

REACH

How can you effectively share the truth of John 3 with others?

Week 3/Day 1

The Lord gives wisdom and watches over the way of his saints

REST

Take care to rest from your work and sins today.

REQUEST

Ask God to guide your times of worship and meditation today.

READ

Any Scriptures from the previous week that you may have missed or wish to review
Proverbs 2

REFLECT

How should you view God's word? What can you do to help you understand it better? What is the source of wisdom? Where does it reside in you? How can it benefit you?

RESPOND

Seek forgiveness for the ways you cling to the sins listed in this passage. Ask God to grant you a heart for his word and wisdom in all you do.

RESOLVE

What ways of darkness in your life need to be forsaken for the paths of uprightness?

REACH

How do you need to act with more integrity toward other people?

Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,
but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out. (Prov. 10:9)

For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,
guarding the paths of justice
and watching over the way of his saints. (Prov. 2:6–8)