

renew

a 21-Day Devotional Journey



renew

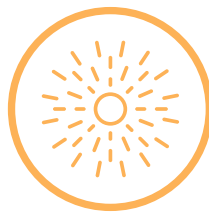
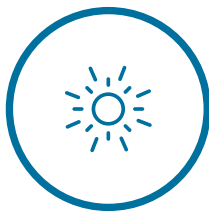
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ABOUT THIS SEASON

When God thinks of vision; He considers your past, present, and future because He resides in all three dimensions of your life simultaneously. He is working in your past as your Redeemer. He is available to you in your present as your Helper. And He is preparing your future ahead of you as the Author of your story. Over the next 21-days of, we'll help you obtain a renewed vision for your future as we guide you through the book of Ephesians together:



Week 1 – Study Ephesians 1 and 2 – We will remember the kindness of our God as we look into and learn from our past.



Week 2 – Study Ephesians 3 and 4 – We will reflect on his goodness as we embrace and address our present.



Week 3 – Study Ephesians 5 and 6 – We will renew ourselves as we discover.

As we begin this journey together, remember that we are in this together as a family. Find a few friends and take someone along with you on this journey. Share with them what you are discovering about God and yourself. Our prayer is that at the end of these three weeks together, you will feel more grateful, more empowered and have a deeper connection to the God who loves you.



remember

Where we recall to mind the challenges
and triumphs of the past.

week one

TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 1

FOCUS

“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.” – Ephesians 1:3

Sometimes, it is so easy to overlook all the blessings that surround us. Life gets hectic and stressful and it seems like all we can see are the demands of the moment – those momentary struggles that Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians 4. At the moment, those struggles may seem overwhelming. You may feel as though they overshadow the joy God tells us to stir up. Like a cloud covering the sun, the struggles we face often cause us to forget how good God is, and how much He has blessed us.

The Ephesians knew a lot about struggling. The believers in Ephesus lived in a very secular and pagan society. Paul writes them this letter to remind them, that no matter how hard life becomes, God has made us a promise that cannot be overshadowed by our present struggles or challenges.

Ephesians 1:3 reminds us that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing. That means that everything we need for life and godliness, we have available to us right now. When we said YES to Jesus, God filled our spirit with every blessing we would ever need to face hard times.

Those struggles you face don't have the power to overshadow your blessings. But you have to remember that the blessings that are available to you and you have to put start putting them into action for yourself.



ACT

Today, take time throughout the day to confess over yourself that you are filled with every spiritual blessing, and no matter what life throws at you, you are well prepared to deal with it. Pray a prayer like the following.

Lord, I thank you that you have blessed me to overflowing. My cup runs over with your blessings. Let me never lose sight of everything you have given to me to ensure that I succeed in this life, and help me to remember that you are always with me. Nothing can hold me back from your best for my life, in Jesus' name. Amen.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 1

FOCUS

"11 Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us in advance, and He makes everything work out according to His plan." – Ephesians 1:11

Today's scripture tells us that we received an inheritance from God, and if we keep reading, verse 14 clearly states that the person of the Holy Spirit lives inside of us as proof we are united with Christ, that we have an inheritance in Him and that everything will work out according to his plan.

Paul says, "The Spirit is God's guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised and that He has purchased us to be his people..." So, when you are stuck in that moment where you are trying to decide where to go next, stop and remember – your guide to God's blessings and promises lives inside of you.

Not including Him in your decision would be like starting a long road trip without directions, but still hoping you arrive at your destination on time. So rather than trying to decide all by yourself what is best for you, stop and remember to consult the One who already knows the way.

ACT

Today, take time to seek God and ask the Holy Spirit to show you directions to the destination that is ahead of you. Remember, He already knows how to get you there, trust the process.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 1

FOCUS

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms." - Ephesians 1:19-20

Here an incredible truth that all of God's children (yes, he sees us as his kids) should see and believe. The same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in a place of honor at God's right hand, is now available to you as His child. What would happen in your life if you believed that truth; that God has given you, His child, access to His power.

But remember... His power is attached to your faith, your willingness to believe Him. That means that God's power is activated in your life when your faith is activated. God loves when you step out in faith when you trust Him to be your power source. That's when big things start happening. So, tap into your faith like a child and believe.

ACT

Today, stand on this scripture and activate your faith. Step out and boldly command God's power to move in your relationships, in your finances, in your soul, and your life. Pray the following prayer today.

Lord, I thank you that you promise to use your great power in my life! Your power is available to those who believe. So today, I choose to believe God is fighting for me and working all things together for my good by His power. I activate my faith and boldly confess that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is working in my life, in Jesus' name. Amen.





BEGIN

EPHESIANS 2

WEEK ONE REMEMBER

TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 2

FOCUS

For He raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.”
– Ephesians 2:6

Today, we begin in chapter two of the book of Ephesians. As chapter one tells of all the spiritual blessings God has given to us, chapter two reminds us of our position in Christ. Paul reminds us that even though we were dead in our sins, God loved us so much He sent His Son to die for us. Now we have a new position in Christ. We are no longer lost. We are found. We are no longer bound up by sin. We are free to live in. Because we are united with Christ, God looks at us and sees the blood of Jesus that was shed to save us.

Now, we are encouraged to see ourselves very differently. When we look in the mirror, we should see someone of value, someone God loves and paid the highest price to save. That should, not only change the way you look at yourself, but also the way you look at your life. Your life has purpose and value because you are united with Jesus.

So, when you are tempted to look at the natural conditions of your life and be discouraged, choose instead to look up. As Colossians 3:1 reminds us: “Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand.”

Look higher than what is right in front of you. If you learn to look to Jesus, the author, and finisher of your faith, and believe his identity is in you, your outward life will begin to change to look like your inward faith. You are so much more than the surface of your life. You are seated with Jesus in heavenly places.



ACT

Today, speak life over yourself. Tell yourself that you are valuable, loved and accepted. Tell your mind to line up with the truth of who God says you are. Pray the following prayer.

Lord, I thank you that when you look at me, you see someone of value and purpose. You see someone your Son died to save. Lord, help me not to be trapped in the surface conditions of my life. Show me how to live out of my new identity in Jesus, and to remember that I am seated with my Savior in heavenly places. Nothing can hold me down, in Jesus' name. Amen.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 2

FOCUS

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.”
– Ephesians 2:10

One of the most famous sculptures in history is that of David by Michelangelo. After completing the piece, the artist was asked how he did it. And his answer was profound. He said, “I created a vision of David in my mind and simply carved away everything that was not David.” He looked at the stone and could see David inside the unfinished material.

In the same way, Paul reminds us today that God looks at us and calls us His masterpiece. We are the pinnacle of His creation. But His masterpiece was not designed to just sit around, gathering dust and looking pretty. When we receive Jesus Christ as our savior, we emerge with a new identity, complete with a new purpose. His vision for our lives was planned long ago.

What is so exciting about our relationship with God is that He helps us to discover exactly what our unique purpose is and how that purpose translates into good deeds that help others. When we get caught up in planning out our lives, that we forget, that God already has plans for us. We are each a stroke of color on the canvas of God’s masterpiece. And together, we become the picture of God’s love and saving grace to a lost world.

ACT

Today, find one person who needs to hear that they were beautifully and wonderfully made. Do your good deed, be bold and let your life shine with the love of Jesus.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 2

FOCUS

“Together, we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself. We are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.”
- Ephesians 2:20-21

Intimacy is an interesting word, and if we are honest, it is a word a lot of us struggle with. Another way to breakdown this relational word is: IN-TO-ME-SEE. When we are intimate with one another, we allow other people to see into us and see us as we are. It can be scary to be that vulnerable, and it is an exercise of trust to let your guard down and let people in.

But today's scripture reminds us that all of God's children are joined together in Him, and together we become his holy temple, the place where He dwells and where His presence can be felt. This is a beautiful picture of how God sees the church. If we are going to be the church the way it is described here, we have to learn how to be joined together.

Like the holy temple, we are built together, brick by brick. If even one person chooses to stand back from this interweaving, a hole will form in the wall. Many of the problems the church faces today are due to a lack of intimacy. We focus more on what divides us than what knits us together.

To be the holy temple of God, the place where God's presence dwells, we have to be intimately knit together, with Jesus as the cornerstone. We have to be unified and open with one another. “United we stand, divided we fall.” Remember, we are stronger and better together.



ACT

Today, if you have any division in your heart, any area of your life where you are holding back from being knit together with the Church, ask God to forgive you and show you how to join more tightly together.



RECAP

This week, we studied Ephesians chapters 1 and 2 together. We learned that we have to remember God's goodness to build a vision, and to see ourselves the way God sees us. Chapter 1 tells us that we have to remember that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing, that we must include the Holy Spirit who serves as our guide, and that we have access to the power of God when we apply our faith. Chapter 2 tells us that we have to remember that we are seated with Jesus in heavenly places, that we are the masterpiece God created us to be, and that we belong as members of the unified body of Christ, His holy temple.

FOCUS

At the end of this week of remembering, make remembering God's goodness a regular part of refining your vision. You cannot move forward before you can look back and celebrate how God has moved in your life. Remembering how much He loves you and how far He has brought you is like looking at your before and after picture. God is in your gap. You may not yet be where you are going, but you are not where you once were. That is worth remembering and celebrating.

ACT

Closeout this week by spending some alone time with God today. But rather than asking Him for things or bringing requests, just take time to thank Him for everything – anything and everything that comes to mind. Celebrate all He has done in your past and how He has prepared you for your present. God is working in your life, and He deserves your thanks.





reflect

Where we meditate on this
present moment.

week two

TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 3

FOCUS

“Because of Christ and our faith in Him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God’s presence.” – Ephesians 3:12

Have you ever seen a child run to the door to greet their parents, and when the door finally opens, they fly into their arms? The love and the excitement the child feels is evident in their approach to their parent.

In today's scripture, Paul is telling us that God wants us to know that if we have given our lives to Christ and placed our faith in Him, we can now come boldly and confidently into His presence, as a child to their parent. This was not something we had the freedom to do before we received Jesus, because our sin could not enter into God's holy presence. But now that Jesus has washed away our sins, we have the freedom to get to know our Father through Jesus Christ. And like a parent who opens the door, He stands to wait for us to come running to Him.

To build intimacy with God, we must regularly reflect on this open access we have to our Father. There are no more divides, anything that stands in our way. Even if you have something going on in your life that you know you have to deal with, that doesn't mean you have to hide from Him. He said in 1 John 1:9, “But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.” So, if there is nothing in the way of you drawing closer to Him, what are you waiting for? Come boldly and confidently before your Father, who is just waiting for you to draw close.

ACT

Today, ask yourself what can you do to allot more time to drawing close to God. Block out time each day (put it on your calendar if you have to), and be bold and press in.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 3

FOCUS

"I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit." – Ephesians 3:16

We have to take inventory of the gold in our field before we can branch out. We have to first reflect on what we have available to us right now. Today's scripture tells us that God has glorious and unlimited resources ready and waiting to help empower us and strengthen us for any task ahead.

And those resources are already available to us now through the person of the Holy Spirit. So, take inventory! What do you need that you already have access to? Do you need peace and patience? Do you need creative ideas for your business? Do you need help in your marriage? Do you need strategies for raising your children? Do you just want to experience a deeper level of knowing God? All of these resources are yours to access right now.

You have every right to claim those resources, and to begin to utilize them to stretch and grow. And God promises us that His resources have the added benefit of empowering us with inner strength. Don't let those resources "gather dust." Get going, and start using what is already yours.

ACT

Today, make a shortlist of resources you need from God – natural and spiritual. Then add today's scripture to the bottom of that list and put it somewhere you will see it every day. Regularly thank Him for the resources He has promised to provide and watch God work in your life.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 3

FOCUS

“And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.” - Ephesians 3:18-19

Have you ever received a gift from someone that was so over-the-top, it left you speechless? When you opened the box, you knew that it was super expensive and extravagant. And immediately, there is some part of you that starts to think, “Oh, that’s too much! I don’t know if I can accept it.” But the minute you try to voice those feelings, the person who gave the gift to you shuts down any thoughts of giving it back. Why? Because they believe you deserve it.

Today’s scripture forces us to reflect on God’s love just like that extravagant present. His love is so over-the-top, so expensive, so extravagant, there is some part of us that thinks “I don’t deserve it”. As His child, you have every right to know His love and to experience its extravagance. His love saved you, forgave you of your sin, gave you purpose, picks you up when you stumble, and here is the best part – it never runs out.

He gave you his love so that you would be made complete in the fullness of Christ. That means you are incomplete without experiencing His love. His love is full of the life and power that you need every.single.day. Don’t push back the gift. Just accept it, cherish it and hold tight to it. It belongs to you now.

ACT

Today, write God a love letter. Ephesians is like a love letter to you, so write one back to Him. Thank Him for His love, and tell Him how much He means to you.





BEGIN EPHESIANS 4

WEEK TWO REFLECT

TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 4

FOCUS

“Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.”

– Ephesians 4:2

There is an old saying that goes: “Family can tilt your crown.” Being patient and walking in love seems to be hardest with those that are the closest to you. You love them, and still, at times they are the source of some of your greatest frustrations. That is part of doing life together with other people. People challenge you to grow.

But the funny thing is that if we reflect on scriptures about the body of Christ, we will immediately notice that God refers to the body as members of His family. That means that just like a natural family, at times you will be challenged to grow in your love walk as you interact with your church family members. Even though that can be challenging work for us, God commands us to be humble and gentle, to be patient and to extend grace for each other’s faults. He is reminding us that only He is perfect; we are not.

When we are frustrated with another person, we need to stop and reflect on how we would want to be treated when our faults show. If we are honest, we would want someone to cover our weaknesses and love us in spite of them. So, if that is what you would want someone to do for you, do the same for your family members. Choose to just breathe... and walk in love. Don’t forget – that’s what Jesus did you.

ACT

Today, if you have been struggling in your love walk with another person, ask God to forgive you and to give you a strategy for loving them despite their weaknesses.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 4

FOCUS

“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” – Ephesians 4:16

Have you ever worked on a puzzle that had over 1,000 pieces? The key is to start with the borders and to create groups that seem to go together in the same area of the picture on the box. As you find your rhythm, you eventually realize that the key is to find pieces that fit together and to start building off those completed groups.

As you fit more and more pieces together, as the pieces make their way to their right fit, more and more of the picture emerges. Until finally (usually hours upon hours later), you can stand back and see the whole picture.

God's family is a lot like a puzzle – just a much, much larger puzzle with a lot more variety to the picture. But the principle of each piece finding their right fit completely applies to the family of God. Only God can take different people from every walk of life and knit them seamlessly together into one perfect whole. But the key to forming the puzzle is the individual pieces discovering where they fit uniquely in the full picture.

All of God's children have their special work. Remember back in Ephesians 2:10 when Paul said, “...He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things (deeds or works) He planned for us long ago.”

When we find out the perfect fit as a member of the family, the whole family grows together. We become healthy and full of love. It is important that as a family member, you are doing your part to help the family to grow. When you find your right fit, then you are a growing member of the family.



ACT

Today, talk to God about your special work and ask Him what He wants you to do as a family member. If you have already found your fit, ask Him to show you know to grow there. If you are still looking, ask Him to direct to the place where you can serve and do your special work. Pray a prayer like the following.

Lord, I thank you again for making me a family member. You said you haven assigned me a special work, something I am called to do as part of the family. Lord, help me to grow and stretch as I find my perfect fit. Remind me that when I do my part, I am helping the family to be healthy, in Jesus' name. Amen!



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 4

FOCUS

“Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.”

– Ephesians 4:23–24

Proverbs 23:7 says: “As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.” This tells us that our life is impacted by our thoughts – good or bad. How many times have you caught yourself worrying over a situation and felt nerves in your stomach? Our thoughts have a way of manifesting in our lives. That is why we are reminded that our new life in Christ must begin with renewing our thoughts and our attitudes.

As we read in Ephesians 4 today, Paul is reflecting on putting off the old man and putting on the new man. He is very clear that you put on the new man by renewing your mind. The funny thing is, it is also the key to taking off the old man! Our mind – the center of our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes – is the place where Christ must take root to help you to grow.

To renew your mind, you have to fill it with the presence of God that is found in His word. The scriptures are called “alive and powerful” on purpose. They bring life to wherever you plant them. So, plant the word in your life by spending time meditating and studying the word.

As you interact with the word of God – as you study the Word, speak the word, stand in faith on the word – you will begin to see the transformation in your life, especially in the area of your thoughts and attitudes.

Your thoughts and attitudes will begin to reflect the nature of God as you fill your mind with the word of God. The more word you put into your mind, the more the new man will emerge in your life.



ACT

Today, select a bible scripture that you want to stand on. Write it down on a sticky note or an index card. Carry it with you. Put it somewhere you can see it. And every time you see it, proclaim it. Let your mind think about the truth of His word all day long.



RECAP

This week, we studied Ephesians chapters 3 and 4 together. We learned that we have to reflect on God's presence that is actively working in our lives every day, and on all that it has made available to us. Chapter 3 tells us to reflect on the bold access we now have to God, on the unlimited resources that are ours to utilize, and on His extravagant love for us that never runs out.

Chapter 4 tells us that we have to daily reflect on how to be a patient and loving family member, on the importance of knowing our right place when we serve the body of Christ, and on the word of God that is designed to renew our minds and transform us daily.

FOCUS

At the end of this week of reflecting, you must make the practice of reflecting on God's active presence in your life a regular part of refining your vision. You cannot plan for the future until you can look at your life as it presently is and see Him at work in you, helping you to grow into maturity. Reflect on how involved He is in your life, and how He is lovingly and masterfully directing your life. God is invested in your success, and He is at work in you now.

ACT

Closeout this week by finding a quiet place where you can reflect on God's goodness. Make a list of all the ways God has shown up in your story just this past year – moments when you saw God move or come through for you in big or small ways.

This list is like God's fingerprint in your life. As you read back over your list, you should be able to see how present God has been in developing your story. Once you finish, tuck the list away in a safe place, and keep it as a memento you can return to when you need be reminded and reflect on how God is working all things together for your good.





renew

Where we reestablish the
vision for the future.

week three

TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 5

FOCUS

“Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.” – Ephesians 5:1-2

Imitation is a powerful tool, and it is one that does not leave us as we grow from children into adults. God gave us this ability so that we would be able to imitate Christ. Today's scripture tells us to renew our life by imitating God in everything that we do. As His children, we are called to follow the example of Christ and walk in love.

How do we imitate Christ? We imitate Christ by serving others with love. Just as Christ gave His life as a sacrifice for the people He loved, so we are also called to serve others with love. It is the act of serving other people, loving those who need to be loved, that sends up a pleasing aroma to God. When we imitate His Son, then we are pleasing to the Father. And at that moment, we look just like Him.

ACT

Today, find just one person you can serve in love. Identify a small, tangible way that you can help them or make their life easier. Maybe it's doing dishes or folding laundry. Maybe it's volunteering to be the ride to the airport. Whatever it is, do it today with love.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 5

FOCUS

“So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise... Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.” – Ephesians 5:15, 17

As we grow in God, figuring out what we are called to do becomes a consuming pursuit. We want and need to know what our purpose is and what kind of impact we are called to make with our lives while we are here. We want to be successful and to have meaning. We look around for answers, and if we are not careful, we can look in the wrong places for those answers.

In looking around ourselves for purpose, we can end up struggling with the temptation to be just like everyone else, following the way of the world and their definition of success. But if we choose to live like the world, we will end up acting like the world.

Today’s scripture challenges us to renew how we think about the way we choose to live our lives. As children of God, we are not called to live like everyone else or look like everyone else. We are called to be different. 1 Peter 2:9 NLT also reminds us, “But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession.

As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.” This means that our answers regarding our purpose are not going to be found by looking to the world or their definition of success.

We have to turn to God and ask Him how we should live our lives. We must understand what the Lord wants us to do. Trying to live like the world is just foolish. Taking the time to seek our Maker and ask Him for His plan for our lives is wisdom. Let’s not live like fools, constantly chasing something that will never truly tell us who we are. Let’s live like the wise, and run to God to get our answers.



ACT

Today, take some time with the Lord and ask Him to talk about your purpose. Ask Him to give you clear steps towards His plan for your life. And expect Him to answer. After all, He gave you the Holy Spirit as your guide. He promised to show you the way. Pray a prayer like the following.

Lord, I thank you that you have called me according to your purpose. I know that I cannot look to the world to supply the answers that I seek regarding my purpose and calling in this life. Lord, help change my perspective in this area and show me how to lean in close to you to discover all I need to know about who you made me be, in Jesus' name. Amen.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 5

FOCUS

“No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church.” – Ephesians 5:29

For the human body to function properly, it needs the right amount of nutrition and care. The physical body is designed to function as it is fed and as it is properly nurtured. It must be fed the right foods and given the right amount of exercise and maintenance, or it will begin to show signs of deterioration. This means that to take care of our body, we have to interact with this uncomfortable word – discipline.

You can't just feed your body whatever it wants at the moment. Inhaling constant junk food is not caring for your body. Becoming a permanent member of the Couch Potato Club, or the Mayor of Netflix Land isn't taking good care of your body. Discipline means that you value yourself enough to give it what it needs to be healthy – even if it hurts a little bit.

Just like you are called to take care of your natural body, God has called you to take care of His Body – as a member of the Church. Just as Christ cares for it, so should we.

This means that you need to feed it what it needs to grow and care for it so it stays healthy. You feed and care for it by serving it with your supply – your gifts and talents. God gave you gifts and talents as tools to nourish the body, much in the same way a farmer needs tools to work the soil so it will produce a harvest. Your supply is designed to help the Church to grow.

But just as you have to discipline yourself to eat right and work out, you have to discipline yourself to keep serving the Body with a loving heart and a grateful attitude. When you do that, the Body of Christ, will grow and flourish for His glory.



ACT

Today, ask God to show you how to use your gifts and talents in a creative way to bless the Church. You might be surprised to find that He just might direct you to do some small thing outside of what you normally do. Follow His leading and feed the Body.





BEGIN EPHESIANS 6

WEEK THREE RENEW

TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 6

FOCUS

“If you honor your father and mother, things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.” – Ephesians 6:3

Today, we begin the final chapter of the book of Ephesians. Our God is all about relationships. Not only do we see how he values relationships by looking to His design in the Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – but we also see how important relationships are to Him by looking at how he created his own family with us as His children.

Just look at how He presents Himself to us – as a loving Father, and one who was willing to sacrifice His own Son to save us from our fallen state. Like a true parent, He goes above and beyond to protect us and to ensure that we are well taken care of.

Today's scripture reminds us that even as God has called us His children, he has also given us human parents to help take care of us. He commands us to honor them just as we would honor Him because our parents are His representatives in our lives. But we also have to face reality.

Some of us have had amazing parents, while others have had difficult relationships with their parents, or never had the opportunity to know them at all. God knows your situation.

And what is so amazing is that He said He would never leave you abandoned or alone. If you look around you, you can probably identify some loving people who have stepped in to be parents to you.

God calls us to love and honor our parents, just as we love and honor Him. Renew the way you think about these relationships. If God gave you people to stand in the place of your parents, love them and honor them as you would love and honor Him.



FOCUS

And just like He promised in our verse for today – when you live a life of honor, things go well for you and your life will belong. Honor is important to God, so honor those relationships.

ACT

Today, identify a parent, either your natural parent or someone who has filled that role in your life and tell them how much they mean to you. Take a moment today to honor them, and love them for taking care of you and being there for you.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 6

FOCUS

“Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle, you will still be standing firm.” – Ephesians 6:13

Moving forward always comes with complications. When you enter into a new season, start a new habit, take a new approach to life or dive into a new level in God, there is always be opposition to that change. Ephesians 6 reminds us to not forget that someone is creating that opposition. We have an enemy who is constantly working against us to make life harder for us.

Ephesians 6:12 NLT reminds us: “For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and evil spirits in the heavenly places.”

There is a clear expectation in this verse that we are supposed to always be prepared to fight and do battle. And God has made available to us the armor we need to protect ourselves. That means that every day, we need to start by suiting up and putting on our armor – the belt of truth, the body armor of righteousness, the shoes of peace, the shields of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. Truth. Righteousness. Peace. Faith. Salvation. The Spirit of the living God.

Notice that every piece of the armor is connected to our identity and relationship in Jesus?

That means we need to renew the way we think about who we are and who He is in us. He is our general and we are His soldiers. Our weapons are ones that were given to us by a Savior who has already won this battle. Our job is to push the enemy back, put him back in his place and stand our ground – we win, he loses. Never forget that.



ACT

Today, suit up! Take a moment to picture yourself putting on each piece of the armor God has given to you. Put on truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation and most importantly, the Spirit of the living God! Renew your mind. You win. Your enemy loses. You got this.

Pray - Lord, I thank you that you have already won! When Jesus died on the cross, victory was secured for me. But let me not forget, I have an enemy who is a sore loser and is still trying his hardest to knock me down. Lord, remind me every day to suit up with my armor, and to push my enemy back. Because you have won, so have I, in Jesus' name. Amen.



TODAY'S READING - EPHESIANS 6

FOCUS

“Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.” – Ephesians 6:18

Prayer is an often-forgotten part of the armor of God, but the truth is, we cannot properly do battle without prayer. Prayer is the way we draw strength and power from God. Prayer is how we activate our armor. It pulls on our power source and reminds our enemy that our reliance is on the God who cannot be defeated.

Without prayer, all of our efforts in this spiritual battle are pointless.

Our greatest battle strategy should be bowing our heads and our hearts to the will of our Father.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 reminds us to “pray without ceasing.” Today’s scripture tells us to “pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion.” This means we should be constantly alert, and continually in prayer. Prayer connects us intimately with the Holy Spirit so we can hear His voice and follow His instructions. And most importantly, prayer renews our minds. It reshapes our reality and connects us to the power of God at work in us.

If we are experiencing an attack, well then, we know we are doing something right. Our enemy wouldn’t attack us if he didn’t consider us a threat. When we activate prayer in our life, we become a threat to our enemy. He may try to attack, but by prayer, we tap into the power source he has no chance of defeating. So, keep up those prayers. When we do, our enemies will flee from us.

ACT

Today, push into prayer. Lift the situations in your life where you are struggling and do battle. Lift the people around you who are experiencing the same. Ask God to release His power into those battles, and watch Him move through your prayers.



RECAP

This week, we finished our devotional together by studying Ephesians chapters 5 and 6. We learned that to move forward we have to renew our lives in light of who God says that we are and the plans that He has already prepared for us.

Chapter 5 tells us that we have to renew our lives to better imitate Christ and His word, to renew our minds so that we can have a better thought life, and to renew our service to better feed the body of Christ – the Church.

Chapter 6 tells us that we have to renew our relationships by loving and honoring those closest to us, to renew our armor daily so we can push back the enemy, and to renew ourselves in prayer to seek God's will and his strategies for our lives.

FOCUS

At the end of this week of renewing, you must make the practice of renewing your life in light of God's promises a regular part of refining your vision. A regularly renewed mindset is a crucial part of moving forward into the plans and purposes of God.

Renewing is the process of reestablishing priorities in your spirit, refreshing environments in your soul and resetting habits in your body. Spirit. Soul. Body. You must renew all three regularly to stay closely in tune with the Lord.

ACT

Closeout this week by writing down how you want to renew yourself this year – spirit, soul, and body. This is more than goals. This is an invitation for the Lord to renew you in those areas you identify and to give you strategies for growth and refreshing.

On a piece of paper, create three columns and label them – spirit, soul, and body. In each column, list no more than 1-2 areas in need of renewing. Don't overdo it; 1-2 will be more than enough. Once you have written down each need, find a scripture that speaks to that need and write it on the paper right underneath it in the appropriate column.



ACT

Now, hang the paper up in the place where you regularly spend time with God. Throughout the year, as you pray, confess that you are being renewed in those areas. Remind yourself He is working, reflect on His faithfulness and watch as He works everything together to renew you.



