

WALKING IN OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

A 25-Day Prayer Devotional



This 25-day devotional is an invitation to move beyond simply knowing about God and into a life of genuine intimacy with Him. Rooted in the finished work of Jesus Christ, these reflections guide you to understand what it means to live in the reality that “it is finished”—that sin has been defeated, access to God has been secured, and a relationship with Him is now fully available. Each day builds on this foundation, helping you see that the goal of salvation is not merely forgiveness or eternity in heaven, but restored closeness with God Himself.

As you walk through these daily readings, you will be challenged to come out of hiding, surrender control, walk in the light, and develop a consistent life of prayer. This journey will lead you through themes of identity, confession, dependence, perseverance, and spiritual growth. More than behavior change, this devotional is about heart transformation—learning to live with God. Set aside intentional time each day, and allow these truths to reshape how you think, pray, and live.

Sincerely,

Levi Schrock

CONTENTS

WEEK 1	3-8
Sermon Notes	3
Day 1: Living in the Finished Work of Jesus	4
Day 2: Accessing God as Our Father	5
Day 3: Coming Out of Hiding with God	6
Day 4: Trusting God's Unchanging Character	7
Day 5: Surrendering Control to God	8
WEEK 2	9-14
Sermon Notes	9
Day 6: Resting in God's Nearness	10
Day 7: Walking in the Light of God	11
Day 8: Experiencing Freedom Through Confession	12
Day 9: Embracing God's Pruning Process	13
Day 10: Prioritizing Intimacy Over Productivity	14
WEEK 3	15-20
Sermon Notes	15
Day 11: Rediscovering the True Purpose of Prayer	16
Day 12: Learning to Pray by Praying	17
Day 13: Relating to God as Our Good Father	18
Day 14: Honoring God's Holiness in Prayer	19
Day 15: Depending on God for Daily Needs	20
WEEK 4	21-26
Sermon Notes	21
Day 16: Living with Joy Through God's Presence	22
Day 17: Finding Contentment in Christ Alone	23
Day 18: Embracing Your Identity in Christ	24
Day 19: Trusting Jesus as Our Provider and Servant	25
Day 20: Living Confidently in God's Ongoing Work	26
WEEK 5	27-32
Sermon Notes	27
Day 21: Filling Your Mind with What Reflects God	28
Day 22: Enduring by Fixing Your Eyes on Jesus	29
Day 23: Fighting for Focus and Faithfulness	30
Day 24: Remembering Your Daily Need for Jesus	31
Day 25: Living with Eternity in View	32

WEEK 1

Sermon Notes

Scriptures Mentioned

Key Teachings

Key Application

ReThink Podcast

Living in the Finished Work of Jesus

It is finished—three simple words, but an extremely profound statement. When Jesus died on the cross, he substituted himself and experienced the wrath and penalty we deserved for our sins. Intellectually, we may know that Jesus paid it all and that “*it is finished*”, but most of the time we live as if it isn’t finished. We live as if Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross was incomplete or was enough for everyone else, except for me. We let sin have the final word as it casts a shadow deep into our hearts and minds and tells us we are unworthy and deserving of shame. But the cross of Jesus unwaveringly demonstrates that sin and Satan have been deemed powerless compared to the power and love of God.

When Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father, he didn’t just defeat sin and Satan; he triumphed over them. As Christians who believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ, we live in the light of his victory. That changes everything in our lives, including how we view and understand ourselves. As we begin this new study, plan to be diligent in creating time each day to read, meditate, and pray. The time you set aside each day to be with God matters and can greatly change the rest of your life.

When will you set aside time each day to read, meditate, and pray?

How can you intentionally and consistently do this each day through this study?

Accessing God as Our Father

One of the accomplishments of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection is that God has become *our* God and Father (John 20:17). Jesus assures his disciples that now they can personally and intimately know God as their Father. That is a foundational truth for believers today. We can have a relationship with the God who created us. Our sin separated us from God, because He is holy and sinless. But, because of Jesus, that separation has been removed and the penalty of our sin has been dealt with so that we can confidently enter the presence of God (Ephesians 3:12). As you spend each day reading, meditating, and praying, do so with the confidence of Jesus' victory. The temple veil, the barrier between God and his people, has been torn. We have access to God. That invitation to be in God's Presence is available to anyone who, in faith, believes that Jesus removed that separation.

When you think about approaching God, what emotions and feelings do you have?

What hesitations do you have?

How should Jesus' victory give us confidence to enter into God's Presence?

Coming Out of Hiding with God

From the very beginning, sin has cast a desire deep inside our hearts and minds that wants to hide from God. Adam and Eve hid in the garden. We run away from God and hide behind our busy lives, our daily routines, even our own stubbornness. We hide because our sin feels safer than being found by God. But God doesn't let Adam and Eve stay hidden in their sin, nor does he desire for us to stay hidden. He seeks them out and finds them. The challenge of being found by God is that it requires vulnerability. To come before God with everything and nothing. On the one hand, everything about who we are and what we have done is exposed and laid bare before God; on the other hand, we realize we have nothing to offer or bring to God because of our sin. Yet, it is precisely in that moment that God finds Adam and Eve and clothes them. He covers their nakedness and demonstrates his devotion to caring for and providing a means for them to know Him.

In what ways do you try to hide your true self, your inner thoughts, your desires from God?

Today, how can you approach God with vulnerability and honesty?

Trusting God's Unchanging Character

Even though we tend to hide from God, God is a God of relationship. Throughout the entire Bible, God is committed to providing a way for his people to know him. Whether it was clothing Adam and Eve, entering a covenant with Abraham, giving the Israelites the Tabernacle, or sending his message to the lips of the prophets, God desires a relationship with His people. The best example of that desire is affirmed in the person and accomplishment of Jesus. God's holiness demanded that justice needed to be achieved because of our sinful rebellion. But God's love and compassion also required that a substitute be offered in place of us so that we would not be consumed but would be forgiven properly. It is precisely because of God's unwavering character that God in the person of Jesus substituted himself in our place on the cross. It is good news for us that God acts according to his character and not according to our works. The book of Hebrews tells us that because of Jesus, He remembers our sins no more (Hebrews 8:12). As we build a life of intimacy and prayer with God, it begins with trusting God to be who He says He is. God is the same yesterday, today, and always. Because we can trust Him, we should be even more encouraged to come out of hiding and be known by Him.

What stories or verses in the Bible can you use to remember that God's character doesn't change?

How does God's faithfulness and consistency help us to trust Him?

Does trusting God come easily or hard for you?

How does your view of God shape how you approach Him?

Surrendering Control to God

If God has made a way for us to know Him, then why do our hearts and minds continually resist Him? If God can be trusted to treat us with mercy that we don't deserve and grace that we didn't earn, then why do we hide our hearts from Him as if He is looking to smite us instead of lovingly transforming us? The answer is, we don't like to give up control. To approach God is to surrender. To enter the Presence of God means acknowledging that we are not Him—and that is harder than it sounds. Especially in our world today, we try to hold on to anything and everything that we can control, but God cannot be controlled or manipulated by us. To enter the Presence of the Creator of the Universe is a risk of having every act, thought, behavior, and motive exposed. We can't make ourselves sound better or look better than we actually are, because God sees through the charades. Before one can truly pray, there has to be a radical act of surrender and submission. Surrender to God's authority, His power, His will. Submit to His transformation, His timing, His process.

Do a heart check today. What action, desire, thought, or outcome are you trying to control?

How do you need to surrender and submit to God?

WEEK 2

Sermon Notes

Scriptures Mentioned

Key Teachings

Key Application

ReThink Podcast

Resting in God's Nearness

Philippians 4:5 is one of the most reassuring verses in the New Testament. It says, "The Lord is near". Because of Jesus, God is not far away. He is not distant. He sees the entirety of our lives—everything we have done, are currently doing, and will do in the future—and still chooses to be near us. To be near you. To be near me. Nothing in our lives can separate us from the "love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39). If that truth hasn't sunk deep into your heart, then think about it again. Even before you were born, God made a way through Jesus to be near you and to know you. He did that knowing full well who you would become and what you would do. Your successes did not draw Him to you, nor did your shortcomings push him away. Because of His great love for you, He chose to draw near to you through Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-7, Romans 5:6-8). So today, stop trying to gain God's favor. Stop trying to push him away. God has loved you from before the foundation of the world. Accept that gift and let God's closeness change how you view and understand who you are and what you do.

In what ways do you try to earn God's love and favor?

In what ways do you push God away, thinking you are unworthy of his love and favor?

How can you rest today in the truth that before you were born, God demonstrated his love for us in and through Jesus?

Walking in the Light of God

If God is near to us, then how do we draw near to Him? Throughout the Bible, various images are used to describe God. Some of the clearest images are evident in the person of Jesus in the gospel of John. There we see that Jesus is full of light and truth (John 8:12, 14:6). Similarly, in 1 John 1:5-6, we are told that there is no darkness in God. But it doesn't stop there; it goes on to contrast walking in darkness with walking in the light. It is by walking in the light, not the darkness, that we have fellowship with God and experience the purification that Jesus offers to us. You can't expect to draw near to God if your life is consumed by darkness, which is contrary to His character and will. Instead, you draw near Him by letting his light push out the darkness in your heart and mind. If you are constantly creating a web of lies and hiding behind false claims or stories, that doesn't draw your heart close to God. Instead, you approach God with honesty about what is in your heart and life. If He is a God of truth, you can't approach him with deceit and expect to be transformed. When you are truthful about your brokenness, you can start walking in the truth and light of Jesus.

What areas of your heart are still holding onto the darkness of sin?

What habits, patterns, and choices do you make that lead toward darkness rather than truth and light?

How can you walk in the light of God today?

Experiencing Freedom Through Confession

Walking in the light of Jesus requires honesty and confession. 1 John 1:8-9 tells us that "if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness". Prayer and intimacy with God involve brutal, honest confession. Confession results in God's light penetrating the deepest parts of our beings. Confession is acknowledging our deepest brokenness and sins. Confession is acknowledging our need for Jesus in every area of our lives. Don't hold back; confession is a conduit through which we can truly experience God's grace and forgiveness. Even though he already knows what is deep inside of us, confession brings it to light. But don't let the idea of honest confession scare you from being honest with God. Romans 8 tells us, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus". We have been freed from the punishment of sin and death. Confession leads to forgiveness, not condemnation.

Examine your heart and life. What do you need to confess to God?

In what ways do you need God?

Embracing God's Pruning Process

In John 15, Jesus gives his disciples a picture of what it looks like to be in a relationship with him. He describes himself as the "true vine" and our Father as the gardener. As the gardener, the Father cuts off every fruitless branch and prunes the fruitful branches to produce more fruit. Pruning requires intentional cutting, but the desired result is a more productive branch. Being in an intimate relationship with God is submission to His pruning process. This process takes time and can't be rushed or skipped. It must be endured. Often, it isn't fully recognized until the fruit is harvested in greater abundance than before. Only then can one look back and see how and why that pruning was necessary to produce a more intimate relationship with God. However, none of this is possible without remaining attached to Jesus. Apart from Jesus, you are just a dead branch.

Is your life centered and formed around Jesus?

If not, what habits or rhythms do you need to change?

What areas of your life might be areas that God needs to "prune" so that you can bear more fruit?

How is intimacy with God a result of the pruning process?

Prioritizing Intimacy Over Productivity

Focusing on the metaphor of Jesus being the “true vine” also requires remaining intimately connected to Jesus. Apart from Jesus, we cannot bear fruit. But many times we try to bear fruit by our own willpower and strength. We muster the strength and courage to change our behavior or play savior in a family member's life. However, if we are not connected to Jesus, it doesn't matter how many “good things” we do—it isn't the fruit that Jesus desires. If we pursue and prioritize fruitfulness over intimacy with Jesus, we risk producing an undesirable outcome. If we try to measure our worth and value by the fruit of our lives, we are measuring the wrong thing, and that will always leave us empty. What Jesus accomplished was removing the barrier between God and us. He made a way for us to know God and be known by God. Seek after intimacy, and the fruit of that intimacy will come in time.

Would you describe your life as being intimately connected to Jesus? Why or why not?

How do you need to seek intimacy with Jesus and remain connected to him?

What needs to change in your life?

WEEK 3

Sermon Notes

Scriptures Mentioned

Key Teachings

Key Application

ReThink Podcast

Rediscovering the True Purpose of Prayer

Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." In these verses, there is an invitation to approach the God of the universe and talk with him. Prayer is action. Prayer is communication between God and us, even when words aren't used. Prayer is a dialogue with God. Prayer is intimacy with God. Before anything else and above all else, prayer is about approaching God and being near to him. That is the goal of salvation. Unfortunately, our culture has made us focused on outcomes rather than relationships. Even within Christianity, we focus on the reward of "*being in heaven after we die*". We make that the goal. When, really, that is still a gift pointing to the ultimate goal of salvation. Many of us want "*heaven*" but don't see that "*heaven*" is only "*heaven*" because God is there. Salvation is about our relationship with God being reconciled and restored. Our sin has been dealt with, so we can draw near to God and be known by him. Prayer isn't about the outcomes or rewards. Prayer is about God and intimacy with him.

When you think about prayer, do you see it more as getting a desired outcome or as approaching God in a relationship?

How can you see that prayer is about intimacy rather than outcomes?

Learning to Pray by Praying

If prayer is more about God than about our desired outcomes, then how do we pray? When Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them to pray, Jesus responded by *praying*. One grows in prayer by *praying*. It is through praying that you learn to surrender and submit your heart, will, and desires to God. It is through praying that you discover a personal relationship with God is more important than anything else in this world. If you gain the whole world but don't know God, then everything you've strived for is futile. On the contrary, if you know God, you will have all you need, even if you never gain anything else in this world. Lastly, if you have access to God, the source of life, shouldn't we be even more encouraged to seek him out, not just daily, but throughout our day as well?

How can you find time throughout your day to pray and "be with God"?

How can you find consistent times throughout your day to refocus your attention on God?

Relating to God as Our Good Father

When asked how to pray, Jesus offers this prayer as the model prayer: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation" (Luke 11:2-4). In this prayer, it properly defines our lives in relation to God. He is our Father, and we are his children. So many things could be said just about that relationship. The love and goodness of the Father to provide good gifts to his children (Matthew 7:9-11). The fact that we aren't strangers or outsiders, but members of God's family (Ephesians 2:19). More could be said, but even just those two truths help orient our lives toward God and point to the love God has for us. He is a good Father who delights in his children. You are lovable and worthy of dignity because your Father in Heaven loves you. That isn't always the case with fathers on earth, but it is true of your heavenly Father. He loves you and calls you son or daughter.

When you think about the model prayer that Jesus gives, how does calling God your Father affect you? Is that a positive, negative, or neutral term for you to use with God?

How might God want you to see Him as a good Father who calls you a son or daughter?

How does that relationship change how you see and view yourself?

Honoring God's Holiness in Prayer

"Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation" (Luke 11:2-4). After establishing our relationship with God, Jesus properly acknowledges that God alone is hallowed, meaning that He is set apart as sacred. God is holy. When we approach God in prayer, we approach a holy God. But the good news of Jesus is that we can approach a holy God and still live because of Jesus. It also means that where God is, His Presence and holiness create a sacred place. Our desire should be to see His Sacred Presence extended on earth as it is in heaven. With that, since we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us, we are also sacred and set apart. Not in the same way as God our Father, but we have been entrusted with His Spirit and His purpose. We have a role in establishing His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Why is it important to understand that God is holy and distinguishable from us?

How does prayer start with the acknowledgment that we are not God?

Do you desire God's kingdom to be more evident in your life and in the world around you?

What role does God desire for you to play in expanding his kingdom?

Depending on God for Daily Needs

"Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation" (Luke 11:2-4). After properly orienting our lives to God our Father, who alone is holy and sacred, Jesus reorients how we live. It is a reminder that if we aren't willing to go to God our Father with the basic needs of our life, then we haven't really surrendered control to him. Once again, asking for daily bread, forgiveness, and deliverance from temptation is born out of intimacy with our Father. It is going to God with even the most basic of needs—physical and spiritual. The life of prayer that Jesus envisions and teaches his disciples is one of radical dependence and faithful trust in God's provision and protection. God wants to enter our lives daily to show us His love and commitment. When we pray to God with the joys and struggles of our present experiences, we build intimacy with God that leads to a life characterized by His character. We forgive others. We live lives of peace, gratitude, and gentleness. Philippians 4:7 says, "The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

How can you spend time with God today and present even the most mundane parts of your life to Him?

How might God want to provide for even your most basic physical needs?

How does God want to provide for your spiritual needs?

How can you trust God to provide and protect you today?

WEEK 4

Sermon Notes

Scriptures Mentioned

Key Teachings

Key Application

ReThink Podcast

Living with Joy in God's Presence

Philippians 4:4-6 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." What a wonderful new reality believers in Jesus get to experience—the Lord is near to them! That truth is what fuels rejoicing and thanksgiving in the life of a Christian. Intimacy with God results in joy and adoration because it refocuses how you view your life experiences. Our life, including our emotions, is not defined by our life situations, but by our proximity to God. This is what enabled Paul and Silas to pray and sing hymns of worship even though they were chained in a prison cell (Acts 16:16-40). Even in the middle of the night in the inner cell of the prison, Paul and Silas were not abandoned by God. God was not distant. He was with them. The other prisoners listened as Paul and Silas worshipped. The jailor would find joy after coming to believe in Jesus. Rejoicing, thanksgiving, and adoration don't come naturally in this world, but they do flow naturally out of a genuine relationship with Jesus.

How would you describe the attitude of your life?

Is it filled with joy and thanksgiving or bitterness and complaints?

Thinking about your life today, what is one thing you can be thankful for?

How does remembering that God is with you help you be thankful today?

Finding Contentment in Christ Alone

Intimacy with God also radically changes how a believer responds to every situation in this life. Paul calls it the secret behind being content. But the secret isn't just a mindset shift or an attitude adjustment. The secret is that a relationship with Jesus brings a new sense of power and strength in this life, for we do not journey through life alone. The Holy Spirit is with us to guide, lead, counsel, and strengthen us. God's Presence in our lives is a game-changer. Outside of Christ, our hearts always want more. We chase everything that this world promises to bring fulfillment and satisfaction. But the world never satisfies. When we are joined with Christ, there is a shift in what truly matters. For Paul, it wasn't whether he had plenty or if he was in need. It wasn't whether he was well fed or if he was hungry. It was knowing Christ. Because of that, he was willing to endure all sorts of hardships, including imprisonments, beatings, and shipwrecks (2 Corinthians 11:23-33). Knowing Christ enabled Paul to rejoice and find contentment in every situation.

Are you content with your life right now? Your finances? Your job? Your relationships?

Are you seeking more of worldly things or more of God?

How has knowing Christ brought contentment to your heart and life?

Embracing Your Identity in Christ

There is so much to be thankful for in this life simply because of Jesus' accomplishments. Here are just a few things that are now true because of Jesus: you are chosen and blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3-14), you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), you are chosen and God's special possession (1 Peter 2:9-10), you are God's child led by the Spirit and adopted into His family (Romans 8:14-17), and you are God's handiwork created to do good works that He prepared for you (Ephesians 2:10). That list is not exhaustive, but it paints a picture of what is now true of all believers in Jesus. It truly is a blessing to know God and be known by him.

How does Jesus define your identity?

How do those scriptures affect your sense of identity and worth?

How can you take time today to thank God for what is now true of you in Christ?

Trusting Jesus as Our Provider and Servant

When Jesus came to earth, he revealed to us the very character and nature of God. Philippians 2 describes it like this, "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" From becoming human to dying on the cross, Jesus revealed his desire to serve humanity. It is why people were drawn to him during his earthly ministry. He healed sickness and disease. He calmed storms. He restored people in the community and drove out demons. He fed thousands with a few loaves of bread and a few fish. Everywhere he went, he showed people his concern and compassion. Yes, his greatest focus was on what he would accomplish through the cross, resurrection, and ascension. But he was also focused on meeting people's physical needs. Jesus hasn't changed. Even today, he continues to provide for his followers' needs.

In what ways has Jesus provided for your physical needs?

How can you find ways each day to thank God for providing even the smallest physical needs?

What needs do you still need to trust God with and ask Him to work out that need according to His will and purpose?

Living Confidently in God's Ongoing Work

As believers in Jesus, we no longer live in the shadow of sin. When Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God, the Father, he didn't just defeat sin and Satan; he triumphed over them. As Christians who believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ, we live in the light of his victory, and that changes everything in our lives. Paul had total commitment and confidence in the finished work of Jesus Christ. It is what led him to write, "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6). God wants to work in your life, and we should have confidence that God will continue working in our lives. He has a purpose and plan for you. Knowing how to be content and joyful in every situation, Paul had this mindset: "to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Paul understood that to continue in this present bodily existence was to witness Jesus working in and through his life and the lives of those around him. His intimacy with Jesus and the prospect of other people coming to know Jesus intimately meant that his life was victorious in Christ. But even if he should die (when he wrote those words, he was in prison), he would be with Jesus immediately and eternally. Either way, he would be with Jesus.

How might God want to continue to work in your heart and life?

How is the fear of death removed for believers in Jesus?

How does gaining Jesus, whether in this present age or in the age to come, motivate you to follow Jesus more intimately and share that with those around you?

WEEK 5

Sermon Notes

Scriptures Mentioned

Key Teachings

Key Application

ReThink Podcast

Filling Your Mind with What Reflects God

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:8-9). If you have ever wondered how you should live your life as a Christian, this is it. Remember back to day seven. As Christians, we can't expect to grow closer to God if we are walking in darkness. Everything you watch, post, listen to, say, do, and think reflects what is going on in your heart and mind. If you want to grow in your relationship with God, you need to pursue things that reflect His character, not those that oppose it.

Do your heart and mind desire the things listed in Philippians 4:8-9? Honestly, why or why not?

Today, evaluate everything you watch, listen to, participate in, say, and do. How do they stack up compared to Philippians 4:8-9?

What might you need to cut out of your life to pursue God more intimately?

Enduring by Fixing Your Eyes on Jesus

I get it. Life gets busy. Emotions take our lives on a roller coaster ride. Sin entangles and is hard to overcome. Life isn't easy. Enduring in your faith isn't easy either. So how do you continue in faith and your identity in Jesus? The writer of Hebrews gives some insightful instructions. It states, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (Hebrews 12:1-3). A life of prayer and intimacy with God is marked by the continual refocusing of your life on Jesus. His example, his character, and his accomplishments provide strength and refuge when we need it. Jesus understands what it means to be human and to have struggles in this world. He experienced pain and death. But he never lost sight of his Father in heaven and the purpose of his ministry. He endured to the end. He remained obedient through it all. So, in our lives, when we look at him, we see someone who has truly walked the walk and talked the talk. Focus on Jesus, and you will find the strength that will help you endure through it all.

How is Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith?

How does Jesus provide an example for you in your current life situation?

How does focusing on Jesus build endurance in your faith?

Fighting for Focus and Faithfulness

Perseverance is key to spiritual maturity. In one of Jesus' parables, he describes four possible types of responses to him. The first response is that the message of Jesus doesn't even take root in a person's life. The second response is that the gospel message is received at first but quickly fades away. The fourth response is the model response: people who hear and accept the gospel message produce a fruitful harvest. But it is the third response that tells us a lot about what it means to follow Jesus. The third type of response hears the gospel message, but the "worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful" (Mark 4:1-20). Their attention is distracted from what really matters. The things of this world overshadow Jesus. Intimacy with Jesus must be fought for. It doesn't just happen. It takes intentionality, consistency, and perseverance. It is the habitual choice to center your life and focus on Jesus that produces fruit. It is loyalty in the everyday, ordinary life of a believer.

In what ways are you tempted to make the worries of this life the focus of your life?

In what ways are you tempted to make the deceitfulness of wealth the focus of your life?

In what ways are you tempted to make the desires for other things the focus of your life?

How do you need to refocus your life on Jesus?

Remembering Your Daily Need for Jesus

Even though we live under the finished work of Jesus Christ, let us not forget our daily need for Jesus. Let us not forget the work that Jesus has accomplished in our lives. 2 Peter admonishes Christians with these words, "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins" (2 Peter 1:5-9). It is a marvelous thing to accept that you are truly loved and saved by God through Jesus on the cross. But as you grow in your understanding of that lavish love, don't forget why you need that grace and mercy. Regular acknowledgment of why you need Jesus will greatly help keep your heart and mind surrendered to Jesus.

What are the dangers of knowing God but not remaining humble in your need for Jesus?

Today, how do you need to acknowledge your need for Jesus?

What sins might you need to confess?

Living with Eternity in View

Right now, we live in the in-between. Jesus established his Kingdom through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, but it won't be fully consummated until he returns and the new heavens and new earth are united. At the present moment, Jesus is "at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (Romans 8:34). When we pray to Jesus, we are taking an active participation in his ongoing heavenly ministry of intercession. There is power in prayer, because Jesus' ministry has not stopped. He is actively advocating for us and presenting himself as our source of righteousness. Jesus is working to present us "to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (Ephesians 5:27). We should live with the future age in mind. God's purpose for us and for the world is moving towards new creation (Revelation 21-22). We focus our lives on Jesus now and every day as we wait for the day to come when we see God face to face. We pray the final words of scripture, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Are you more focused on the temporary things of this world or on God's eternal plan?

How might your life look different if you prayed "Come, Lord Jesus" every day and kept that as your focus?

How might Jesus be leading you to find your role in his ongoing ministry?

