

WOMEN OF GRACE

Summer Refresh

PRIORITIES: GOD'S GLORY ALL DAY, EVERYDAY

Schedule

8:30-9:00
COFFEE + SNACKS

9:00-10:15
SESSION 1

10:15-10:30
BREAK

10:30-11:45
SESSION 2

SESSION 1

What Is A Priority?

A priority is the _____, _____ or _____ that comes _____ all others.

Understanding what _____ desires and taking steps to _____ my life accordingly.

What is the ONE THING? _____

THEME:

THE PRIORITIES OF DAILY LIVING ARE TRANSFORMED BY PERSONAL WORSHIP.

I. The Priority of Personal Worship

a. What is Personal Worship?

- _____ declaring the _____ (value) my Lord has in my own heart
- Daily **delighting in** _____.
- Daily **delighting in** _____.
- Daily **delighting in** _____.
- Taking the _____ each day to express this delight.

b. Why is Personal Worship Necessary?

- Worship allows me to _____ God as He is revealed _____.
- Worship allows me to _____ my heart to God: my _____; my _____; my _____, my _____ for more of Him.
- Worship is my daily connection to the _____ _____ for my life.
- Worship _____ my heart to live in a way that properly represents _____ character.

c. What are the Hindrances to Personal Worship?

- I don't _____ it.
- I'm so discouraged, overwhelmed, frustrated, physically exhausted... I do not have any _____ of worship.
- I don't have _____.
- I am never _____.
- I don't know _____ to do.

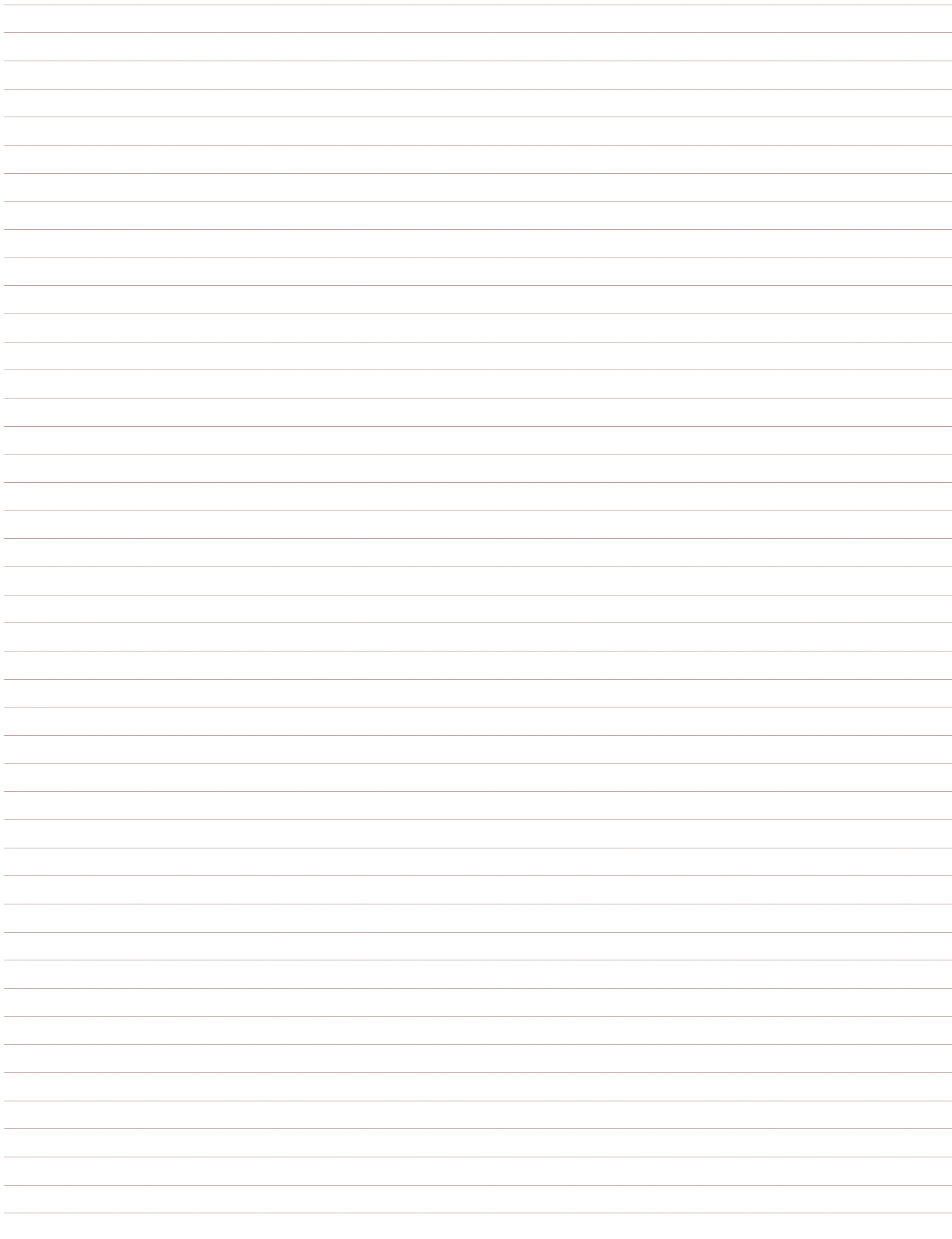
II. The Picture of Personal Worship

Jesus Framework for Priorities	My Framework for Priorities

This is where the battle for priorities begins.

That's why we must learn to _____ our predetermined priorities.

Do not just prioritize the activities on your _____.



SESSION 2

Generating Glory to God All Day Everyday

I. ILLUSTRATION

Luke 10:38-42

The Facts:

Martha:

Mary:

The Focus:

Martha:

Mary:

The Final Assessment:

Martha: A _____ heart.

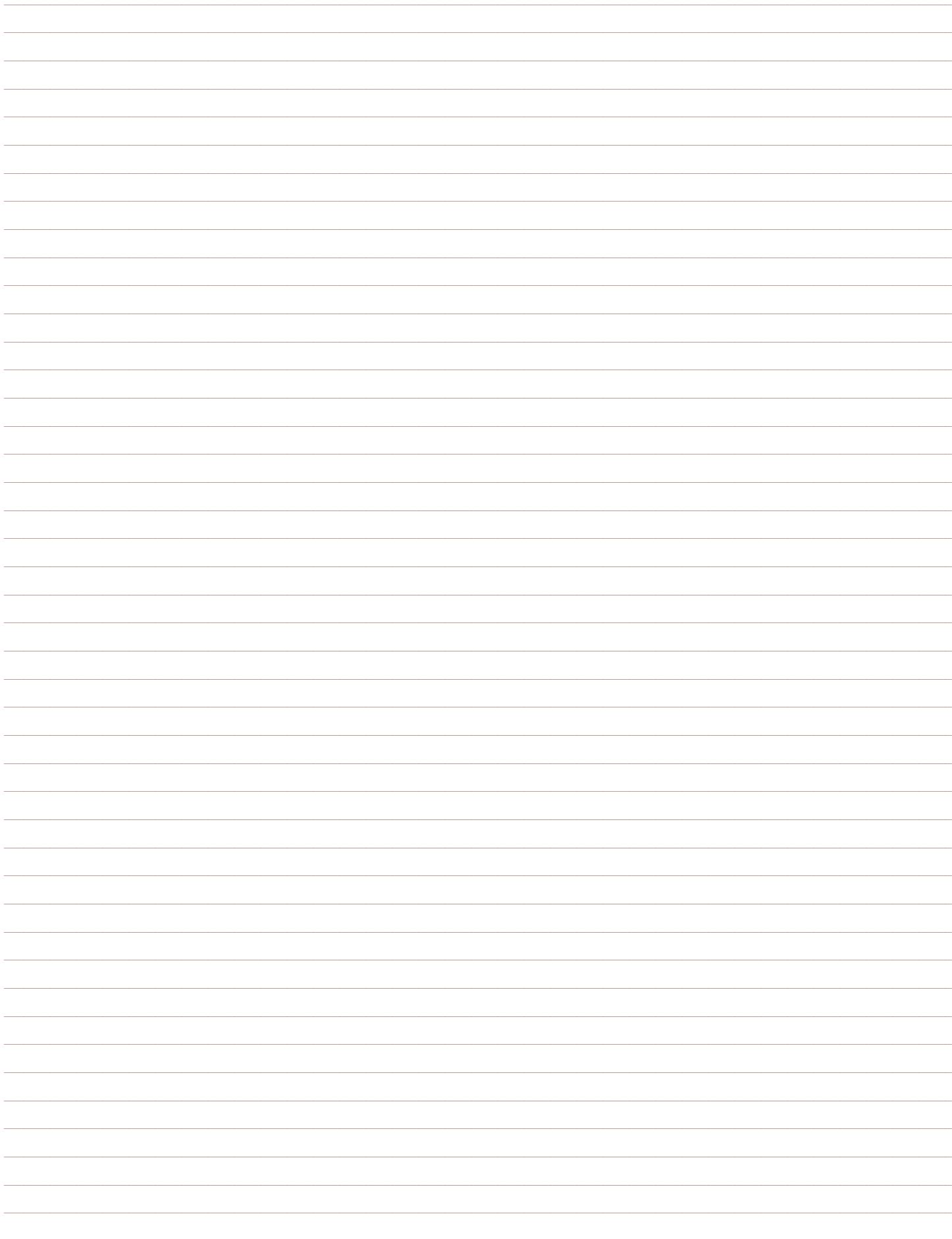
Mary: A _____ heart.

What Jesus did not say:

-
-
- The _____ need to change.

What Jesus did imply:

- You need to _____ while in your current _____.
- Martha, you need a _____ heart while you are serving! He was not correcting her _____. He was correcting her _____. Martha needed to connect her _____ and her _____.
- Mary has chosen an inner _____ that could not be assaulted by the cares of this world. Jesus was affirming her heart _____. He did not just look at her _____. He could see her _____.



- Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.
- Romans 12:1-2 Jesus was asking her to offer a _____ of praise from a _____ heart.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Prepare

- Set an _____
- Purposefully _____ Him
- Recognize you are _____.
- Is the living God a _____ to me?
- Start _____ and _____.

B. Plan

- _____ at His _____.
- _____ without ceasing.
- Sing _____ songs.
- Intentionally _____ Him.
- Accept divine _____ as divine _____ from God.

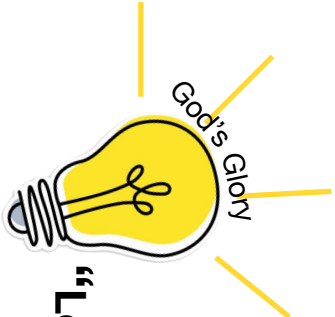
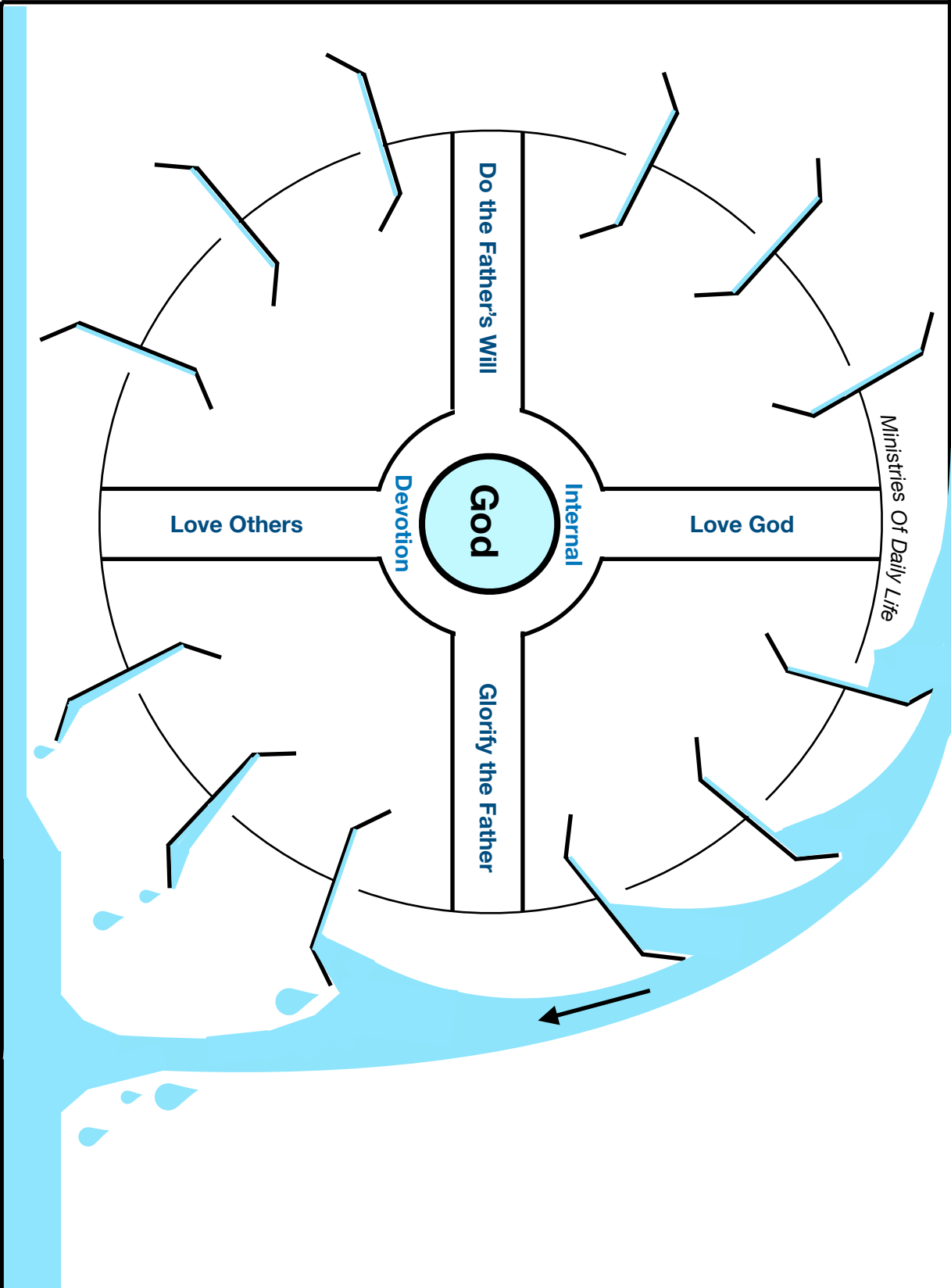
C. Prioritize

- Identify your top priorities from God's point of view.
 - _____ God *Matthew 22:36-38*
 - _____ others *Matthew 22:39*
 - Make _____ *Matthew 28:19-20*
 - _____ on the Word *Joshua 1:8*
 - _____ worship *Hebrews 10:24-25*
 - Love my _____ *Titus 2:4*
 - Love my _____ *Titus 2:4*
 - Worker at _____ *Titus 2:5*
 - _____ one another *1 Peter 4:10-11*
 - Practice _____ *Romans 12:13*
 - _____ maintenance *1 Corinthians 6:19-20*
 - Enjoy God's good _____ *Ecclesiastes 3:12-13*
 - _____ one another's _____ *Galatians 6:2*
 - Identify your time _____.
 - _____ as you walk.
 - Worship as you go to _____.

Generativity glory to God through daily life

Living Water →

The Written Word
& the Living Word



“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

III. INSPIRATION

Meditations for Worship Centered on Christ

The Incarnation

the stable in Bethlehem—The angels singing Glory to God—shepherds worshipping—infant baby Jesus – King of Kings—completely dependent on a poor, young couple for His next meal.

- **Luke 2:7-14** And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. “This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”
- **Col 2:9** For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,
- **Phil 2:5-7** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, **but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.** Being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- **Songs:** *Joy to the World; O Come All Ye Faithful*

The Foot of the Cross with Mary and John

- When Jesus was in the deepest depths of His suffering, concern and care for His mom was on His heart.
- **John 19:25-27** Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!”
- **Matthew 27:41-43** In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him and saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. “HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET GOD RESCUE Him now, IF HE DELIGHTS IN HIM; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ”
- **From Mary’s perspective:** But He is the Son of God. I was there at His miraculous conception and then His birth --the shepherds who saw and heard the angels; The star pointing out His glory; then Simeon in the Temple (**Luke 2: 30-33**) For my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel.” And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed— and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”
- **From Mary’s perspective:** This is the Sword that is piercing my soul! O my God, By faith I will believe that thru this many hearts will rise in belief! But I can see that many hearts are being revealed. The Chief Priests and religious leaders do NOT Believe!
- **Luke 23: 46** And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.” Having said this, He breathed His last.
- **John 19: 27** From that hour the disciple took *His Mother* into his own household.
- **Songs:** *O Sacred Head Now Wounded; Jesus Thank You; My Jesus I Love Thee; What a Wonderful Savior*

Ascension Back to the Father’s Right Hand

- Worship as you observe the throne room of Heaven as Jesus is received back to His Father’s right hand.

- **Acts 1: 2-3** ... when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.
- **Acts 1:9-11** And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”
- **Rev 4: 2-8** ... a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. ... Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. ... And the four living creatures, ... day and night do not cease to say, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.”
- **Rev 5:11-13** And I saw between the throne and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, ... Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”
- **John 17:** Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify you...I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.
- **Heb 12:2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- **Heb 7:25** Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
- **Songs:** *Good and Gracious King; Boldly I Approach Your Throne; You are Highly Exalted; I Stand in Awe of You; Grace Unmeasured*

O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again. For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

ROMANS 11:33-36

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Worship Transforms Circumstances

WHAT WORSHIP LOOKS LIKE WHEN....

... I'm physically depleted with undiagnosed health challenges. There is no quick solution in sight. It is difficult to get through another day...

The struggle is real! Hopelessness can easily dominate my thoughts. The inability to understand what's wrong, to get help or diagnosis, to persevere hopefully toward resolution, to function in my God given responsibilities, like caring for ever present children, without enough energy, the inability to be or do what I used to be and do – it adds up quickly to a feeling of discouraged hopelessness. And yet, God's word says in Jeremiah 29:11, *“For I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you HOPE and a future.”* How then can I feel that hope when feelings tell me, “There is no hope!” when I feel like I'm a victim to my own bodies' frailty?

I'm so thankful for the gifts that God kindly gives us – the graces that speak LIFE into our circumstances because He is and always will be unfailingly good – even when life doesn't appear to be so. Three gifts in particular I've learned to be thankful for through this trial include the gifts of music, fellowship, and history. Yes, history! In God's grace of leading me to homeschool, I've had a very close up glimpse of what God has done throughout time. It leads to a perspective of how great He is and what His power has accomplished. He's the Creator and Sustainer. He's the preserver of His Word and Truth. He's the magnificent director of life. The curriculum we've used has done a phenomenal job of weaving all of history together as one continual tapestry as opposed to isolated events. Looking at it in such a way for the first time in my life has left me unable to NOT see that this same God who orchestrated life since the beginning of time is my same God today. He's still at work in me, around me, using me according to His sovereign plan. My temptations to rail against God for not being fair in straddling me in this weak body grow dimmer as I see what others who have gone before endured and how God used them for his glory – sometimes in ways they themselves never had a chance to see. But I can! I can see how God used their lives to further another part of His plan – and let me tell you, it's worship inspiring, humbling, and faith building. Praise God for His ability to take my eyes off myself and my circumstances and trust that He is an ever present, ever loving, ever working God who is not slumbering in my time of distress. He's not forgotten me.

Just this past week, I read the story of Gladys Aylward leading children through impossible conditions over the mountains to reach safety. She choose to have her children sing *Count Your Blessings* in a particularly discouraging time, which leads me to another of the gifts I'm grateful for: Music! Music is something that God has particularly drawn me to as a means of centering my mind on Him and enabling me to worship Him. I don't write my own worship songs– but I'm grateful for others who have so that, when my heart is weak, their words paired with music can be the instrument God uses to tune my heart to sing His praise. There are so many excellent options that speak truth to my heart when most needed. *Look What God Has Done* by Ghost Ship is an all time favorite due to my love of seeing God at work in my life. God has done so much for me! Another highly influential song would be “My Worth is not in what I own, not in the **strength of flesh and bone.**” Additional phrases bring blessing like “I rejoice in my Redeemer, Greatest Treasure, **Wellspring of my soul.** I will trust in Him, no other. **My soul is satisfied in Him alone.**” Each line of that chorus strikes conviction into my heart when am struggling with the weakness or frailness of my physical body. *Joy in My Morning* by Sovereign Grace says, “You're growing my faith and I'm learning to trust you all of my days.” “How **He watches** o'er his loved ones, those He died to make His own. How for them **He's interceding**, pleading now before the throne,” is part of the Hymn, *Oh the Deep, Deep Love.*

I'd love to list out tons of inspiring lyrics here, but for the sake of your time (and your ability to join me in worship), I'll list a couple more that are particular blessings.

- I Lay it All (Sovereign Grace Music)
- Great God (Sovereign Grace Music)
- Living Hope (Phil Wickham)

- As Long as You are Glorified (Sovereign Grace Music)
- A Christian's Daily Prayer (Sovereign Grace Music)
- The Blood of Jesus Speak for me (West Coast Baptist College)
- Thank you Jesus for the Blood (Charity Gayle) *I don't recommend her other songs*
- Praise the Name (This Hope)

I have to stop listing songs, but could go on and on, so grateful I am for this sweet gift from God of music! The truth of God is powerful, and I'm effervescently grateful for how God uses music to bring His truth and the resulting conviction and encouragement to my mind through this gift.

Thirdly, the gift of community is precious. I often feel discouraged because it seems I never have a good report to give to my caring friends about my health. I also often feel despair and desire to isolate because I feel misunderstood because of my challenges. I don't want to subject anyone else to the constant "drama" or struggle that seems to characterize my life. The tendency is to desire to protect other people by not being honest about how I'm doing, staying away because I just don't have the energy to "be happy and sociable." And maybe even escaping the heartfelt, but no less frustrating comments like "Have you tried (x, y, or z)?" But God in His kindness gave us the gift of community where people who love Him faithfully wrap themselves around me and love me with His love. Who hold me accountable to truth in my thoughts, who show me in numerous ways the love of God through acts of service or companionship without expectation.

My circumstances didn't change for 3 years. Or if they did, they just morphed into some other challenge. But through looking at who my God is, what He's done for me, the gift of music to convict/encourage, and God's people who have loved me regardless of my "unloveliness," God has given my heart the ability to worship through hardship. He's strengthened my faith, exposed areas of sin, and given me a hope that is not built on anything but Him and His fathomless love. God in his grace, has brought me through a lot of that hard season. There are still unknowns I'm currently struggling with. My hope has been wrenched away from doctors and medicine and channeled towards humble, grateful dependence on the ultimate Physician. God has so thoroughly caused my heart to trust that His way is perfect, He never makes mistakes, and that He's doing something beautiful in the broken shell that I am for His glory. "*Some trust in chariots, and some in horses. But we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*" Psalm 20:7. He's worthy of my worship!

... Your heart has been shattered into a million pieces through great loss.

It doesn't even make logical human sense to worship when you've lost something so significant and valuable to you. And truthfully, I have often skipped worship songs because the words were too raw for me. To participate in worship felt insincere and dishonest. How can I praise and adore God in such deep sorrow and profound sadness? The reality is we don't often feel like worshiping in times of grief. And while feelings are a part of God's design in creation, we can learn to navigate our feelings in a way that brings God greatest glory. I have learned that worship isn't a matter of feelings but rather of obedience. When I make the choice to be obedient, God changes my feelings, and I come to a place of sincere and genuine worship.

Psalms have been like a soothing balm to my broken heart because no other book describes the tension between sorrow and worship better than the Psalms. A large part of the book is devoted to psalms of lament, something that I am intimately acquainted with. The Psalms are rich with groaning but also full of God's promises. And I most recently relate to David in Psalm 40 when he says:

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many will see and fear and will trust in the Lord" (Psalm 40:1-3)

We worship God not because we feel like it but because He is worthy. Because of Christ, the resurrection promises are true. Because of Christ, we have the gospel hope. Because of Christ, we have the gift of eternity. And because of

Christ, we can grieve well and worship Him even as our hearts are breaking and our footing seems weak. The Lord is faithful to put a new song in our mouths – a song of praise to our God. Our grief is grounded not in our feelings or circumstances but in the truth of the gospel, the spring of hope. This gospel hope is the foundation of godly and biblical grief. God is generous and kind to hold us close to His heart in our pain, as Psalm 51:12 promises: *“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.”*

In this season of overwhelming grief, the sweet communion with Jesus strengthens my faith and bolsters my worship. I savor the promise in Psalm 34:18 and know intimately the unique closeness of our Lord as he is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. And certainly, our worship in the midst of pain is precious to God because it's costly to us. Worship isn't easy when we're hurting so much, but it becomes all the more sweeter to a God who intimately knows the grief of watching his Son die. So when disappointment, confusion, and sorrow overwhelm my heart, I choose to sing. I worship Him because He is worthy!

... I'm longing for my husband to be a spiritual leader at home but he doesn't seem interested.

As I searched and prayed for a future husband, I envisioned a husband who would lead our family spiritually. For me, that meant someone who would lead our family in prayer, reading God's Word, and discussions on Godliness. I married a man who loves the Lord and His Word, but is not a natural-born leader. At first this frustrated me and I poked and prodded my husband to spur him on to leading our family, but it started to feel like I was nagging him and pushing him in a direction he didn't want to walk in. After studying 1 Peter and reading the verses (3:1-2) that encourage wives to win over their husbands without a word (ie. nagging), but by exemplifying Godly behavior. I know this verse is in reference to unbelieving husbands, but it stuck a chord with me. Maybe by being a woman characterized by prayer and devotion to reading God's Word, my husband would see my actions and want to become the spiritual leader God was calling him to be. So, that's what I did. I continued to be faithful in prayer, asking the Lord to grow my husband as a spiritual leader, while devoting myself to the regular reading of the Word. I then asked my husband if I could read a chapter or two out loud to him each night and he said yes. Now, we are in the Word together every night! It may not have been exactly how I envisioned it or hoped it would look like, but instead of growing bitter towards my husband, we are enjoying sweet snippets of time in the Word together. I have found a new way to be a helper to my husband as I encourage him by reading the Word for him and with him and praying for his spiritual growth.

... I have been waiting for God to bless us with a child and now I have had my hopes and dreams dashed with a miscarriage.

I have long desired to be a mom and when we got pregnant, I was so excited! I started dreaming of all the adventures we would go on together, how I would teach him/her about the Lord, and imaging what their little personality would be like. Never once in all my dreaming did I consider not being able to hold my precious child in my arms. The possibility of a miscarriage hadn't even entered our minds. Our world was absolutely shattered the day we discovered that our baby no longer had a heartbeat. This was the first time I had been truly faced with the reality that the Lord gives and takes away (Job 1:21) and we had a choice to worship God or curse Him. We chose the former, by the Lord's grace. I found much comfort in the Psalms and Job during the healing process in the months that followed. I learned to lament through the book *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, which brought me very sweet fellowship with the Lord as I poured out my heart to Him and He held me ever nearer. As a child of the Sovereign Lord of the entire universe, I knew God had a purpose in our suffering, as He always does. He desires to make us more like His Son through every one of our trials, and that is most certainly what he has been doing. I desperately wish I could hold our baby in my arms, but even more so, I desire to be more like His Son and to bring Him glory in my suffering. I have since read through the Biblical examples of barrenness and infertility and I was so encouraged as I read about each of these couples who struggled with infertility much longer than I have. God is the one who opens and closes the womb. God is the one who creates and sustains life when He chooses (and His timing is always perfect). And I find great solace in the waiting in knowing that the Lord is at work in mine and my husband's life, molding us into the children of God He wants us to be, whether He chooses to bless us with children or not.

... I can no longer get out to work in the yard, take a walk or drive...

...but I can still "Count my many Blessings and name them one by one..." I am thankful for the "routine" things that I can do that I used to take for granted, such as: getting in and out of a comfortable bed, preparing a meal, having fresh water to drink and hot water to bathe in, having toothpaste to brush my teeth, stores nearby to purchase food (not standing in a long line finding out they have none left, as in many countries), having my husband to help me.

- I start my day by praising Him from the moment I awake. In everything give thanks, rejoice, and continually be in prayer. (1Thess 5:16-18) Focus on Neh 8:10: The joy of the Lord is my strength.
- When I am tired and ready to give up, I pray "Jesus, help me" and He does.
- Think of 1 person you can call or email to lift their spirits sharing a scripture that has been meaningful to you.
- Dwell on the good memories you have from the past, not what you are experiencing now. (Phil 4:8; Prov 23:7)
- Claim His many promises you have to look forward to in eternity: being with Jesus, seeing your loved ones again, and those who went before you.
- 1 Cor. 2:9 Remember the "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him."
- We are never alone, God is always with us (Deut. 31:6).
- Sit down with an old book of hymns that were written a few centuries ago. Read the words and apply them. Most of these lyric writers were going through all kinds of trials that inspired them to write down what they felt in their hearts. (Ex. *Amazing Grace, It is Well with My Soul*)
- Read the Book of Proverbs each day in one month, then the Book of Psalms. It is so uplifting in many everyday problems.
- Christ has paid the price for all sin with His sacrifice.
- He is in control and the King of Kings of Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!! (Rev 19:16)

... I have been given a diagnosis of cancer and am unsure of the outcome.

After major surgery, I am now on the uncertain and painful journey of chemotherapy and radiation, which may or may not cure my cancer. Though I am naturally grieving the loss of body parts, potentially devastating side effects from the treatment, and the very real thought that I could miss out on seeing my 4 precious grandchildren grow up, with their ages 1-10, I do not grieve as one without hope.

When facing the extremely difficult decisions on the next steps, my precious Lord reminds me who He is and why I am here. I remember His attributes as revealed in Scripture: His Sovereignty, Omniscience, Love, Wisdom, His faithfulness and goodness to His children, His promises, and His ultimate plan to rescue, save, and perfect a people for His own possession. The verses that most comfort me and steady me are Psalm 139:1-18, with particular focus on verse 16: "Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them." Only God can take my life from me, and it was ordained long ago! When I reflect on that and on all the other perfections of my Savior, I can relax, rejoice, and marvel at all He gives us as His children: **Strength** (Is. 41:10, Phil. 4:13); **Peace** (Is. 26:3, 1 Pet 5:7, Phil 4:6-7); **Assurance of Salvation** (1 John 5:13, John 5:24); **His faithfulness** (Lam 3:22-23); **His provision** (Rom 8:32, Phil 4:19).

When pondering why I am here, I am reminded it is to glorify God His image bearer, to be more conformed to His Sons' image and to expand His Kingdom. A few verses that I find particularly helpful are: 1 Corinthians 15:58, Hebrews 12:3, Luke 9:23, Romans 12:2, Mark 10:45, Galatians 2:20, John 14:21, Joshua 1:8, Hebrews 10:24-25, Romans 1:16, Matthew 4:19. At this time, Romans 8 is precious to me. I also love 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. When I am afraid that I might not be strong enough to finish well, I cling to 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Remembering that I am His ambassador with the precious message of the gospel also gives me purpose to finish well.

My perfect Father is using this trial to refine me and make me more like Jesus. He reveals Himself in ways I would never see otherwise. My faith grows stronger in the only One who deserves all the honor and glory. There is much purpose in my suffering and truth found 2 Cor 1:3-4 and Rom 8:28. These give me comfort and hope. God placed a deep desire in me long ago to hear those wonderful words one day... "Well done, good and faithful servant" and because I trust Philippians 1:6, I know He will finish what He started fifty years ago? All glory goes to Him.

... I have several “littles” that need constant care.

I wake up, grab some coffee and sit down to spend time in the word, a good priority. My daughter wakes up early comes down and needs breakfast. I get her breakfast, get her set up with a book and then go back to time in the Word. I know that its going to be shorter than I'd hoped and maybe more distracted. But for God's glory I believe whatever time I have with him in the Word is a worthy pursuit and I will trust him to maximize my minutes.

My son trickles downstairs for breakfast, I make him breakfast. I'm looking at my to-do list for the day, while trying to clean up breakfast. Kids start to fight about who has more cereal and a bowl of milk spills. I stop cleaning up dishes and help them clean up the milk and work through their selfishness and appropriate discipline. I go up to get my youngest who I discover has a cold. Boogers, fever, cough — the works. We had planned to go to bible study this morning, but now are not able to due to sickness. Bummer! I pray for my table ladies to be built up and encouraged through the time in the word as I change the morning diaper of my sick little.

I throw in a load of laundry. As we go about our morning routine of making beds, brushing teeth etc, I discover a little one has wet the bed and so we strip the bed instead of making it and put it in front of the washer for it's turn to be washed. My phone dings, it's a text from a friend asking me to join a meal train for a new family at church. I look at the calendar, the best day for me to sign up is Wednesday. It will be tight with small group being that night, but we can do it! I will need to plan accordingly. I think through budget, can we do that right now? Yes, I can make that happen in the other meals I plan for the week.

Today is toilet Tuesday and this is my preferred window for me to clean the bathrooms, but going to the park would be helpful to my kids. I put my good desire for clean toilets on hold to serve my kids who are struggling for self-control. Today might need to be a quicker clean in the pre-rest time window. I can adjust that. We get back from the park, I'm making lunch and a friend sends a text asking if I can come help pack up another mutual friend as their moving this weekend. Oh, I'd love to help, but my husband has just asked me if we could have a weekend at home because of how exhausting his work week has been. I respond to my friend that I'm not able to help with packing, but I'd be happy to watch her kids while she helps our mutual friend pack. I want to prioritize what my husband has asked over doing a good thing like helping a friend pack up to move. I repent of my fear of man that pushes in that tempted me to say “yes” out of fear of wanting to be seen as a good friend. I know how hard that can be to pack with toddlers. Instead of saying yes, I pray for her while I make PB and J sandwiches.

We do a quick clean in the bathrooms, didn't make it to the showers this week. Oh well. The toilets are clean. I'll take that win. Kids are down for a rest time. A couple more minutes on the load of laundry in the dryer. I lay down for a 10 minute rest to make it through second half of the day. I didn't sleep well last night. A friend calls just as I lay down. I could ignore it, BUT I know this friend is in a difficult season, she's lonely and we've been playing phone tag for a few weeks. I pick it up, and decide to talk with her while I wash the lunch dishes. My answering is a sacrifice of praise to love my friend and consider her needs as more important than my own which was that 10 min power nap! God is going to give me the grace I need for the 3rd and 4th quarters of my day. “His grace is sufficient.” Dinner prep in the works. Rest time for my kids finishes.

I'm almost done folding my laundry goal for the day. Neighbor kids knock on the door to see if we can play outside. Selfishly I want to stay inside and just keep working. However, I think that a limited time outside will be enjoyable for the kids and we learn much about loving others while playing out front. Okay, lets go. 30 mins time boundary and we can come in to finish dinner prep/ clean up before daddy gets home. That last bit of a laundry pile can wait, everyone has clean underwear in their drawer. It's not eternal. Loving my kids and teaching them to value people is. We finish our dinner routine and get kids into bed and then to stay in bed. I sit down on the couch and I just want to veg. My hubby has more work to do. Do I sit and watch a show, fold more laundry, or exercise? Rest is good. Productivity is good, and exercise is important also. I choose to do a 20 minute exercise video because it's an opportunity to steward my body for his glory and I need to be strong as evidenced by my achy back from carrying a screaming toddler home from the park. I'm reminded my body is a tool to not only carry these children in the womb but to care for them in these little years.

I think back through my day and see that I didn't get all my to-do's done. My first thought is frustration, feelings of inadequacy and guilt "should I prioritize better? How should I do tomorrow differently? Do other mom's feel this way? Am I the only mom on the planet that didn't "finish my to-do list?" In the next minute I am reminded by the Spirit through the word that there is now *"NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ Jesus."* My to-do list is not eternal and my righteousness is not found in how much I can accomplish in a day, but in the ONE who loved me and gave himself up for me. IF he did not spare his own son, how will he also not freely give me all things? That includes the grace for my unfinished to do list. HIS Grace covers my feelings of inadequacy for the day. My desire to obey him because of His great mercy causes me to turn to tomorrows to do list out of delight not duty and ask "Lord, help and give me wisdom to know how I can present my member as instruments of righteousness tomorrow because I desire to do the good works you have prepared for me beforehand that I should walk in them. You are so worthy of that."

I shower and get in bed to read a book. I feel so tired. I forgot to set the coffee pot and start the dishwasher downstairs. I just want to go to sleep. However, I know that both those things are my last chores of the day and those simple tasks help so much to set up my morning for success. I selfishly want to go to sleep, but I know that when I hear the coffee pot in the morning, it reminds me of the appointment I have with the Lord in the morning at my kitchen table. The clean dishwasher starts the morning with less of a "hustle-feel" which give me opportunity to talk with my kids vs feeling behind at the beginning of the day and therefore overwhelmed at the start. My desire to please HIM and be with him at the beginning of my day pushes me out of bed to go down start the dishwasher and get the coffee ready.

... I am struggling with anxiety that feels like it is consuming me.

When anxiety consumes:

Sometimes I wake up already behind in the battle. It could start with a bad dream or just waking in the dark hours, body tired and wanting sleep, mind active and spiraling, seemingly on its own accord, heart pounding, slightly clammy. Sometimes it is one fear. Sometimes it stems out into many. There is not reason or rationality to when, where, and what. Grief, sorrow, and hurt may not be my reality, but they are real. So I make them mine. When will a tragedy hit us? The imagination takes it from there. I get out of bed, go for a teary run, reorient and move on. The cloud hovering. Now I am in the kitchen, feeding my family breakfast. I listen and talk and plan and I am so happy and grateful for this life. As I look across the island at these good gifts, an unwanted thought blindsides me: "These sweet people who I love are going to die. Am I doing enough to point them to Christ? What if they don't choose a relationship with Him? I don't want that for them! Other moms are doing so much more for their kids than I am, spiritually and developmentally. Why can't I do their schedule or have their stamina? What if I am not enough for them?" Now I picture each of them in a hypothetical life without Christ and consequently a hypothetical death (when and how will that be?) without choosing the Savior of their souls. I am not enough to stop that for them. Panic. Sorrow. Breakfast is done. Morning jobs. Keep moving. I kiss my husband goodbye on his way to work: "What if this is the last time? Will there be an accident? Plenty of mornings begin this way and then are changed forever. And if not today, when? And how? I want to grow old with him, but not everyone gets that. What would I tell the kids?" Tears as I hold him close, unable to stop an "inevitable possibility." We are at the park. Laughing, kids running, healthy, happy. I chat with some moms, sharing, edifying — a sweet time. Now a comment about one of their fears and suddenly I now have that fear. Where are my kids? How can I stop what could happen to them? I can't enjoy this moment anymore. This thought is battling for priority in my thoughts, pushing to get to the front of the thought line like a greedy child. Stealing joy from me, stealing the ability to be present and calm. Now I am not enjoying this and everyone says the time with your kids goes so fast and to soak up every moment. I can't soak up this moment. It will all be done soon. They won't be here. A mom says something to me and I am forced out of the thoughts. I was asked to share something for some women at church. I sit down to prep, genuine in my content, but anxious about my delivery. "What is the best way to say this? If it isn't said concisely or in the best order or organized so others can understand, what will they think? I want to feel like I did a good job. No, I want to feel like I did a perfect job. How can I prevent mistakes? Mistakes make me anxious, but so does the 'need' to be perfect. Where is the escape from this? Others seem carefree. I used to be carefree." The speaking is done. It didn't go how I had hoped. Now I am home, replaying, rewriting it all in my head. Anxiously hoping no one else felt it was as bad as I

did, but perfecting it for the audience of one in my head nonetheless. I see a glimpse of the news. Human depravity on full display, dangers abound. An anxiety inducing world that we interact with and live in. Fears for our present and future sprout and grow, dissolving my peace and rest. Kids are down. Dishes done. I plop on the couch next to my husband (who did indeed arrive home safely. Whew! One tragedy averted for today) and turn to him and say through tears after recounting my anxious day, “Why is anxiety my struggle right now? Why do I have to be so weak?” He gently says to me, “I don’t think anxiety makes you weak. Battling that all day is a sign of strength. A strength that is not in you, a weak, limited human, but a strength from Christ in you. So I think it makes you strong because of the grace given to be disciplined and focused in relying on Jesus.” I hug him and I lay in bed and pray for God to keep the swirling tide of “what-ifs” at bay and to give grace sufficient for the troubles of that particular day.

From Anxiety to Worship:

We all have fears. Some struggle more with those than others, but we all have them. God created us as dependent creatures. He perfectly made us to rely on His sufficiency, not on our imaginary self-sufficiency. When our dependence is misplaced, anxiety is the natural result. Because anxiety wants solutions, answers, hope, to relieve the situation (imagined or real), our minds keep working and thinking. Often, I cannot stop that first anxious thought before the spiral. It is unexpected, sabotaging, not premeditated. But with that first thought is the opportunity to feed the anxiety or to feed worship of my God and Savior. Both begin with the reality of who I am: limited, human, created, not in control, not all-knowing, not all-wise, not all-powerful, flawed, in the presence of sin and it’s temptation, not enough. I am, in fact, not self-sufficient. Despair and anxiety take these truths and run with them. We try to fight against these truths as if we could change their reality. Worship, instead, embraces these realities and turns, looking to the One who is unlimited, God, Creator, sovereign, omniscient, wise, omnipresent, holy, has defeated sin, my portion, independent of anyone or anything. I am also, one more thing, a child of God, saved and helped by the Holy Spirit. By His power, I can embrace the reality of my dependence with gratitude, because as a result of the Gospel, we have the One who is enough.

When anxiety consumes me, I can remember: “I am not wise enough to know the future, but the One who does is my Omniscient God who has had a plan from the beginning of time and knows each moment until the end of time when He wins and our days are forever with Him. I am not perfect, but the One who is lived a perfect life in a limited human body and died for me and all my sins so that I could be free from sin today. He can redeem my human mistakes and there is freedom in knowing my righteousness does not depend on my works. I am not strong enough, but the all-powerful God to whom creation listens and obeys and proclaims and who holds the hearts of kings and who will only allow what He deems as good to touch me and who will vanquish my soul's enemy for all eternity is the One I call Father and can approach in earnest, genuine prayer. I do not hold all things together for me or anyone else in my family, but my Savior is before all things and in Him all things hold together. I am not in control, not of my life, nor of my families’ lives, but I know the One who is and He knows me. He not only knows me and my limited human frame, He cares for me. The God of the universe cares for me, sees me and hears me. Praise God, I am not enough! I am completely dependent on the One who is enough and my anxiety reminds me of this truth (2 Corinthians 1:9). Thank you, God for reminding me of my dependence. This anxiety can be used to turn my heart from my own inadequacies (which by themselves would produce fear) to grateful, dependent, trusting worship of the loving, all-knowing, all-powerful God, my Father.”

The beautiful thing about our weak, created body is that God chose it to hold a treasure of surpassing value — the Gospel — and Jesus Christ is put on display in our life when we are weak. He uses our weak, neediness to proclaim the Gospel! In this body, tempted with anxiety, I can choose to be consumed by the anxiety, helpless, or by His grace choose to worship in ways made sweeter by my neediness. In each of those moments of anxiety in my day, I can joyfully praise and worship my trustworthy God for who His, His plan for His Kingdom, and who I am, a weak jar of clay for His glory (2 Corinthians 4:7-10).

Practical Helps for the Anxious:

Stop thinking about it! Anxiety feeds off repetitive thoughts and constantly reworking a problem to find solutions or dwelling on the fear. Spiraling thoughts are a real deal. How do we stop thinking about the color purple? You can’t

just stop thinking about purple, you also need to start thinking of the color pink. Matthew 6:25-34 shows us how to do this: *“Look at the birds of the air... Consider the lilies of the field... Seek first the kingdom of God.”* Notice the words for looking away from your anxiety and in turn to God’s faithful provision for the birds and the lilies and looking to the purpose of our life, the Kingdom of God. Redirect your thoughts to ways God has been faithful to His people in the Bible or better yet, in your own life. Build your repertoire of God’s provision to you so these are quickly there to focus on when you need to stop the anxious thoughts. This is worshipping your great God! You can also involve your other senses by saying out loud: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.

Re-direct your hope! Being anxious means to have “distracting cares,” to have our minds and hearts torn between two worlds. Anxiety distracts us from seeking first His Kingdom in our day to day (Matthew 6:33). It weighs us down (Proverbs 12:25). It places our hope in this life (safety, health, finances, moral culture, relationships, perfection, etc.); hopes of this life are never satisfied, always shifting, always being threatened, needing to be protected and ensured. But this life is not meant to be it for us. Our eternal hope is sure, imperishable, undefiled, unfading and guarded by God's power (1 Peter 1:3-5). Check where your hopes are set. If they are rooted in temporary earthly situations which you are striving to protect and ensure, you are being distracted from the Kingdom work He has for you today, the work that will matter for eternity. The singular focus that Jesus Christ Himself showed us in His human life on earth was of obedience to the Father, hope in His plan, and purposeful living for His Kingdom. By grace, shift your hope back to all that He has promised for eternity and seek first His Kingdom.

Humble yourself & cast your cares on your Father! Pride is woven throughout anxiety. Pride says, “I want to know the future. I should be able to do this, stop that. I shouldn’t make mistakes. I can protect myself and my family. I need ___ to feel safe. If I think about this long enough, I can find a solution. I want control. I want to be self-sufficient.” God commands us to humble ourselves, not to fate or other powers, but under His mighty hand (1 Peter 5:6-7). Humility runs to the Father and throws all fears, imaginary and real, at His feet, saying, “Here it is; take it. I can’t, but You can! I trust You and I know You care for me.” It trusts Him. Proverbs 18:10 says “The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.” Run into the name of Yahweh and find safety and rest from the anxieties that consume you today.

Rehearse God’s character and the certainty of His promises! Start a list of who God is or grab a list from an attributes of God book. Begin to revel in His unchanging character and attach verses to each, if possible. Next, start a list of God's promises. These are sure and solid places to put our hope because of His faithful character.

Remember God’s faithfulness in a gratitude list! Compile a list of ways God has been faithful to you, your family, your church and also throughout Scripture. These gratitudes can be quick go-to thoughts for you when anxiety strikes to land our minds and hearts on God’s faithfulness to us rather than the “what-ifs.”

Jesus has set the example! Study the life of Jesus in the book of John. Look at how He lived His life in obedience to the Father with the focus of His Kingdom, even in human weakness.

Do not neglect God’s Words to You! You are an embodied spirit. You are physical, emotional, and spiritual. Anxiety can affect/be affected by each of these. Regardless of the physical elements that contribute to anxiety, every mental or emotional struggle is also an opportunity for your faith to grow. Do not neglect the ministry of grace by the Spirit through the Word of God in the Bible. Blessed is the one who reads and meditates on it day and night for she will be like a tree able to withstand the storm.

God's Word to Spur on Worship during Moments of Anxiety:

Genesis 16:11-13	Psalms 56:8-13	Habakkuk 3:17-19	2 Corinthians 4:7-10
Deuteronomy 31:1-8	Psalms 73:23-28	Matthew 6:25-34	2 Corinthians 12:8-10
Psalms 3:3-5	Psalms 86	Matthew 11:28-30	Philippians 4:4-9
Psalms 4	Psalms 91	Luke 10:40-41	Colossians 1:15-17
Psalms 6	Psalms 100	Luke 12:22-34	2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
Psalms 16:5-11	Psalms 103	John 10:7-15	2 Timothy 1:7-10
Psalms 20:7	Psalms 119:50	John 10:27-30	Hebrews 4:14-16
Psalms 23	Psalms 119:71	John 14:1-19	Hebrews 10:32-39
Psalms 27	Psalms 121	John 14:26-31	Hebrews 11
Psalms 28:7	Psalms 139:1-18	John 15:1-11	Hebrews 12:1-4
Psalms 30	Proverbs 3:5-6	John 16:16-33	Hebrews 13:20-22
Psalms 31	Proverbs 12:25	Romans 5:1-5	James 1:2-18
Psalms 33	Proverbs 18:10	Romans 8:15-28	1 Peter 1:3-9
Psalms 34:17-19	Isaiah 26:3-4	Romans 8:38-39	1 Peter 4:19
Psalms 42	Isaiah 40:9-31	Romans 12:12	1 Peter 5:6-8
Psalms 46	Isaiah 41:10	1 Corinthians 15:12-28	Revelation 21:1-5
Psalms 55:22	Lamentations 3:17-26	2 Corinthians 1:3-11	

Songs as auditory stimulation to worship when feeling trapped by anxiety:

Be Still, Be Still My Soul by Sovereign Grace Music
Christ Our Hope in Life and Death by the Worship Initiative
Good to Me by Audrey Assad
As Long As You Are Glorified by Sovereign Grace Music
I will trust My Savior Jesus by City Alight
Satisfied in You by The Sing Team
'Tis So Sweet by Jadon Lavik
Better than Life by Caroline Cobb
Jesus, I am Resting by Matthew Smith
Lord, I Need You by the Worship Initiative
Sovereign Over Us by Micheal Smith
Christ is Mind Forevermore by City Alight
Ancient of Days by City Alight
Because He Lives by The Worship Initiative
Shepherd by City Alight
Your Will Be Done by City Alight
O For That Day by Enfield
O Lord, My Rock, and My Redeemer by Sovereign Grace Music
Living Hope by Phil Wickham
Christ the Sure and Steady Anchor by Matt Boswell
Lord from Sorrows Deep I Call by Matt Boswell
Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus by Shane & Shane
Mercies by Matt Redman
Psalms 23 by The Corner Room
Who is Like the Lord by Sovereign Grace Music
Good and Gracious King by City Alight
Give Me Jesus by Shane & Shane

... my child is struggling with rebellion and poor choices that will inevitably impact the rest of their life if things do not change.

As a mom choosing to worship when my teenage son or daughter is rebelling and making poor choices is most difficult. When my relationship with my child crumbles and such tension leaves little hope of repair. When I am fearful for my child's safety, fearful of damaging choices he or she is making. I have no control and no power to even influence my son or daughter. When my teenager is giving up on family. When my son or daughter is rejecting our faith and everything we taught them it seems. When my child is even blaming me for their rejection of God. When my whole life and purpose as a mom seems suddenly toppled, shaken and destroyed. How do I worship in this scenario? Does God really expect me to worship? Am I not justified in not worshipping? Am I exempt in "this season"? No. No. Resoundingly, No! All creatures of our God and King are called to Worship and certainly me since I am made in His image. He has saved me to bring Him Glory! Does not my Omniscient God know all about these distresses that I find myself in?

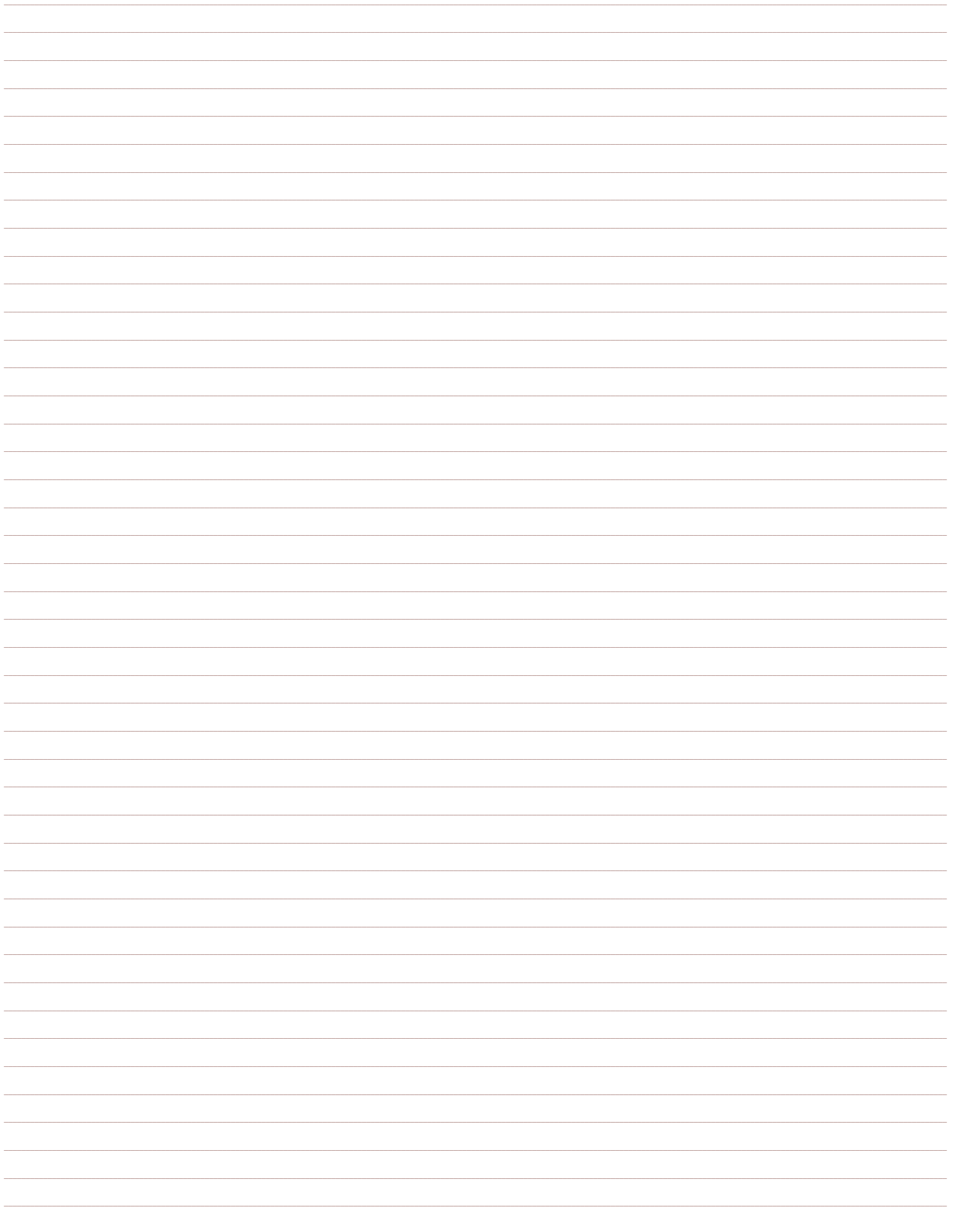
At these most difficult times, when my hopes and dreams for my children are dashed and all I can do is weep before the Lord because I am so broken and hurt. I remember God's promises that, "He is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Ps. 34:18 God tells me to draw near to Him and HE WILL draw near to me! So, I obey, fight my feelings and dig into God's Word. I search for verses about God's steadfast love and faithfulness. Verses that promise His nearness. I meditate on Psalms that speak about God being my Rock, my Strength, my Fortress, my Deliverer. I also play worship music with the same themes. Some of my favorites are: "Sovereign Over Us" by Michael W. Smith, "Merciful Keeper" by This Hope, "I Lay it All" by Sovereign Grace Music, "I Will Trust my Savior Jesus" by City Alight. And of course old hymns about Jesus being my Friend and "I Surrender All."

Battling feelings of being overwhelmed and fearful are daily, hourly, sometimes, moment by moment. When I'm afraid that my son or daughter's life and future will be ruined, I keep fighting to remind my fainting heart of TRUTH. I dwell upon the Almighty Power of God, His Infinite Wisdom and Complete Sovereignty! I choose to anchor my thoughts on Who my God is. Verses like Jeremiah 32:17 "Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! NOTHING is too difficult for You." I must choose to worship despite my feelings.

When I keep seeking God, He meets me in my mourning and my tears. God brings comfort and assurance to my heart. God reminds me that He knows my sorrow, He knows my child and He is the ONLY healing for my soul and theirs. At these moments worship is the only thing I can do! I cry out to my Good and Gracious Father pleading with Him to hold my hand and lead me through the darkness. I choose to believe that, "The LORD is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds. The LORD is near to all who call upon Him." Psalm 145:17-18
By faith I say, God I don't understand but I will TRUST You. Help me to trust You more

Worship in the Struggle Template:

- #1 Express the reality of the struggle before the Lord.
- #2 What truth about God from His Word gives you comfort, hope, or rest?
- #3 Expression of His worthiness to trust because of His character and He is in it with you.
- #4 How does this change your heart even when circumstances do not change?





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