

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

DAY
29

WEEK 5

PRAYER AS SPIRITUAL WARFARE

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

2 Chronicles 20:12 is interesting: "Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." Three armies had surrounded the Israelites. Understandably, they were tempted to be afraid, discouraged, overwhelmed, and worried. You can feel it in their words, their pleas. Often, we do not know what to do. Other temptations in the form of the devil's spiritual attacks can seek to neutralize us and drain our spiritual life. When we are faced with personal troubles or attacks from the evil one, when the devil tries to dump all kinds of evil temptations on us, we can stand strong. Christ will lead us on into victory.

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LEAD US INTO LIBERATION FROM THE GRIP OF THE EVIL ONE **LUKE 5:1-11**

Liberation is the act of setting someone free. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free! He made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

Likewise, many on the battlefield have given their lives for our freedom. Lt. Murphy is credited with risking his own life to save the lives of his men when he knowingly exposed himself to enemy fire to gain a better position to transmit a call to get help. In his memory, “Murph” is a workout completed by CrossFitters and Navy Seals on Memorial Day every year. In the midst of running one mile, completing 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups, 300 squats, and finishing with another mile, it is tempting to give into the pain and give up, but many persevere to honor the fallen who have died for our freedom.

Similarly, in life, we find ourselves tempted to give up or give into the enemy’s schemes, but we must keep fighting to honor Christ’s sacrifice and remember that He gives us victory over sin in our lives. He died so that we may be free from Satan’s grip. Not only that, the weapons we fight with have divine power to demolish the strong grip of the enemy. We fight with worship, the Word, and with prayer. In 2 Chronicles 20, worshipers led the march into battle. In response, the Lord sent an ambush against their enemies! The Israelites kept their eyes on the Lord and followed orders to stand firm and watch the deliverance God would bring!



REFLECTION PRAYER

- 1.** Our freedom isn’t free. Spend a moment in silence to honor those who’ve died for your freedom. If you’ve ever been to a war memorial, remember the deep reverence and gratitude you felt.
- 2.** Take some time to remember Christ’s sacrifice. Thank Him for your freedom. Praise Him for the victory He gives over the grip of the enemy! Satan has no hold on you!
- 3.** Take time to worship Him, focus your eyes on Christ, follow His orders to stand firm on the ground that’s already been won by His sacrifice, and be watchful as He brings deliverance!

LEAD US INTO DELIVERANCE

PSALM 23:4

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” –Psalm 23:4, KJV

In times of danger, difficulty, and even death, I will fear no evil. Why? “For thou art with me” in every situation of life. The “rod” (a short club) is a weapon of defense or discipline, symbolizing God’s strength, power, and authority. The “staff” (a long slender stick with a hook on one end) is used to draw a sheep close to the shepherd, guide it in the right way, or deliver it from trouble.

God’s rod and staff reassure us of God’s love and guidance in our lives. We often require deliverance from the onslaught of Satan and the world’s system, which is separated from the holiness of God. Satan is a masterful strategist who seeks our downfall by his various schemes. Some schemes of Satan are failures, disappointments, hurts, depression, worry, fear, grief, anger, conflicts, and broken relationships designed to defeat God’s people. Because of the presence and nearness of God, we can walk in victory and above all our circumstances. Our deliverance from evil is assured by our intimate relationship with Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Almighty God,

You sent Jesus to suffer and die for my sins. Lead me through all things that hinders my walk with You. I call on Your name to deliver me from the entanglements of Satan and everything that impedes me from receiving Your blessings and a victorious lifestyle. By Your grace and mercy, I stand on the promises of Your Word that “thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” In the name of Christ, amen.

LEAD US INTO PROTECTION AND COURAGE

PSALM 125

“Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore.”—Psalm 125:1–2

In 2018, I was assigned to Hill Air Force Base, Utah, which is nestled at the foot of the beautiful Wasatch Mountains. When we arrived, we were awestruck by how huge the mountains were and how close they seemed. They were especially beautiful in the winter—snowcapped and strong, always there, always present.

One morning, I got up early, weary and worried, looking to pray regarding the uncertainty of the future we were facing at the time. I opened my Bible and landed on the above Psalm. After I read these words, I looked out and saw those steady and strong mountains literally surrounding our house. I felt God saying, “You see those mountains there? That’s how present I am with you. Do you trust that those mountains can’t be shaken? Neither can I, because I made them. So trust in me. I’m surrounding you. I’m protecting you. I will not be moved from you, my child.”

When we are in times of difficulty and stress, it can often seem like God is distant. At times, we look for answers or rescue and there seems to be none. This is a reminder that regardless of the trouble we face, God is surrounding us with protection and provision both now and forever.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

When it seems like we are being surrounded by attacks and adversity, may we remember that You do not forsake Your people. Rather, You surround us with Your presence. You are a God who cares for His people and longs for us to cast our cares upon You. We thank You for Your Spirit that guides us in truth, comforts us in our pain, and guards our hearts and minds with Your peace. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen.

LEAD US INTO PUTTING ON THE ARMOR OF GOD EPHESIANS 6:8

You must remember that each day God permits you life on this planet, you are engaged in spiritual warfare. This is not simply a descriptive statement (acknowledging a truth). For the Christian, this is a prescriptive statement (a truth you must act on).

When Paul talks about putting on the armor of God to the Ephesian Christians (Eph. 6:10–18), he makes it clear that it is a necessary first step for every Christian. It is the armor of God that gives you the strength to stand firm (v. 11), fight against the mighty powers of darkness who rule this world (v. 12), and be fully prepared for what He is calling you to (v. 15).

Are you feeling spiritually exhausted? Defeated? Overwhelmed? Unprepared? Are you ready to retreat? Circle the wagons? Wave the white flag of surrender to the world around you? Is the enemy too great and your own strength too small?

Your Father promises you His strength and victory when you lay down your armor and weapons and take up His. Don't be fooled into thinking that acknowledging this truth is the same as acting on it. Paul's final encouragement in this passage is to "pray at all times and on every occasion" (v. 18).

Make it a point today to spend time with Him in prayer. Confess your dependence on Him. Don't stop praying until you are encircled with His peace. Meditate on Scripture. Consider His truth and righteousness. His armor brings the victory today. Put it on, Christian!



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

You have called me to spiritual warfare today. Without You, I cannot win. If I fight this battle on my own, defeat is certain. Fill me with Your peace today. Remind me of who You are. You are the God of truth. You are the God of righteousness. You are the God of salvation. I confess my dependence on Your Holy Spirit. Replace my exhaustion with Your joy and my fear with Your boldness. Fill me with Your strength that I may stand firm and fight faithfully today.

LEAD US THROUGH SPIRITUAL WARFARE

MATTHEW 6:13

You may be familiar with the passage on Jesus and His temptations but have possibly missed a very key aspect: Jesus wasn't there by accident, but rather the Holy Spirit led Him into the desert for the expressed purpose of being tempted by Satan. This may seem at odds with the Lord's Prayer, "... lead us not into temptation . . ." (Matt. 6:13). However, it gives insight into God's relationship with us. God could shield us from all temptation, but He desires for us to trust Him to deliver us, to equip us to face our enemy head-on. The Lord has given us His authority, His power, and His purpose. All it takes to access those tools and weapons is our faith in Christ.

When Jesus was in the desert, He used Scripture to combat the lies of the devil. He also stood firm in His authority, in His sonship, and in His purpose. Using that example, it is clear that our greatest weapon against the enemy is intimacy with the Father. The closer we draw to the heart of the Father, knowing His Word, the more effective we are against the powers and principalities of this world. When temptation comes, our knowledge of our firm place in the Kingdom of God and our connection to the love of the Father will give us the same strength we see Jesus exercise in Matthew 4 when He said, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for Your presence in our lives. Thank You that You knew us and loved us and chose us long before the creation of the world. We stand righteous and redeemed because of Your sacrifice on the cross and because of Your great love for us.

Because of that, the enemy has no ground on which he can accuse us and no weapon with which he can attack us. Draw us more and more near to Your heart, and forgive us when we doubt.

We ask all this in Your holy name, Jesus. Amen

LEAD US INTO VICTORY

DANIEL 7:25

Each week, Christian churches gather together and proclaim songs of God's victory such as, "The Battle Belongs to the Lord!" These songs are both a declaration and a reminder that no enemy can defeat God and His people. This refreshes our faith and challenges us not to get short-sighted when troubles find us, knowing that our sovereign King has already won.

In Daniel 7, Daniel's vision reveals coming kings and kingdoms who subdue the earth. A final king rises up, oppressing God's people. But afterward, Daniel sees that "all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him" (Dan. 7:27). God's eternal victory is guaranteed.

A friend shared with me three "p's" to consider in the midst of present suffering and temporal defeat, to which I will add a fourth. The first is "presence." God is with us in the midst of trials. He will never leave us nor forsake us. The second is "prayer." Petition for God's mighty hand to deliver you while accepting and acknowledging your desire to see His will accomplished regardless of personal pain. Pray for peace regardless of the outcome. Third is "perspective." Reframe your thoughts from temporary sufferings to the eternal victory promised by God. And finally, "perseverance." We run the race set before us, which is an arduous journey guaranteed to contain troubles. We must not give up! God will lead us to victory!



REFLECTION PRAYER

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father,

Yours is the power, glory, and honor forever.

Lead us to victory in Jesus. Help us not to despair in the midst of temporal pain but set our eyes on the eternal hope of glory that we might run well this race that You have set before us. In Jesus' name, amen.