

# 21 days of prayer

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# make room for what matters

day 1 / pastor jason burns

*Proverbs 8:17 // Those who seek me diligently will find me.*

Here's a hard pill for some people – you have time for what matters to you! It's true. No matter how busy or responsible you are, there's always time for what matters to you.

If you value family time, you'll orient your schedule around that. If getting to the gym matters, you'll get up early or stay up late to make it happen. If you're like me and love football (no matter how bad my team is!), you'll find a way to watch the game.

Today, we're kicking off an initiative of 21 days of intentionally making room for what, or better yet Who, should matter most.

Experts say it takes 21 days to create a new habit, so let's do that together. Let's create a habit of spending time pursuing God.

If you're a Christian, my assumption is that time with God is something you'd like to do regularly, but it's easy to drift.

Most Christians don't fall away from God in one moment. It happens gradually... one missed prayer, one rushed morning, one neglected moment in His presence at a time.

The enemy doesn't need to destroy you. He just needs to distract you.

Here's why we must make space for God a priority: God meets people who make space for Him. Your daily time with God is a delight, not just a religious obligation.

It's your lifeline.  
It's your anchor.  
It's your soul's oxygen.

Let me give you 3 big reasons this will be worth it:

## **1. It aligns your heart with God's**

The Word of God is not just informational, it's transformational. In Psalm 119:105, David said, "Your word is a lamp to my feet."

A lamp doesn't light the whole path, just the next step. That's why daily time matters. God guides you one step at a time.

## **2. It renews your mind to become like God's**

Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Did you notice that? Our minds are either being conformed or transformed, but in either case, they are being formed into something. Think of all of the things that are constantly forming our minds:

- News
- Social media
- Work stress
- Family
- Friends

Making room for God's presence transforms our minds to become more like God's. It is the first step in knowing God's will for your life! Hear this – this transformation is not a moment, it's a habit.

## **3. It gives you the spiritual strength you need**

You cannot fight a spiritual battle with a spiritually depleted soul.

The reason many believers get overwhelmed is simple: They are spiritually dehydrated.

Just like physical dehydration causes fatigue, spiritual dehydration causes discouragement, confusion, and temptation.

Time with God changes everything!

I challenge you. Make this a priority. Give God the best of your time every day, not the leftover time if you have any energy. We form our habits, and then our habits form us.

What if this year, we allowed our habit of making room for God's presence to transform us into the people God called us to be!

## prayer

*God, give us the wisdom to pursue You. Help to reorient our lives around your presence. Forgive us if we've drifted.*

*May we be the kind of people who don't just know about You, but who actually know You.*

*Thank you that time with you transforms us into the people You've called us to be. May we become more and more like you, Jesus, as we develop the habit of making room for You!*

## thoughts & reflections

# make room for silence

day 2 / pastor lis burns

1 Kings 19:11-13

As a child, I got in trouble for one thing and one thing only: talking. Talking is not bad, of course, but talking can be done out of place, out of a wrong heart, and, simply, out of turn.

My mom and dad would shake their heads and smile when they read my report cards – mostly glowing with a kind “needs to work on talking less in class” thrown in for good measure. I love to talk.

I don’t mind silence, but there’s nothing that beats a great conversation and some laughs with a loved one.

The only problem with my proclivity for verbosity (my yearning to yap) is that God often speaks in my silence. It’s not that God can’t yell or scream or send a lightning bolt to get my attention, but He just doesn’t seem to.

Often, He’s in the silent moments waiting for me to finally quiet my heart and mind and listen. Don’t believe me? Check out this passage of Scripture from the book of 1 Kings:

*1 Kings 19:11 – 13 // The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”*

*Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.*

*When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.*

Elijah had run and fled from Jezebel right after a

decisive Spiritual victory. Here, alone at Horeb, Elijah waits on God and is surprised that He comes not in the wind or the earthquake or the fire.

Can anyone relate to a season where your life felt like a series of storms with you in the center, expectantly waiting for God, only to seemingly be disappointed?

Why does God come in the gentle whisper?

God is all about us knowing that He is God and we are not. When we silence our hearts and minds (and mouths) and listen, He gets to speak the narrative He wants for our lives.

It’s unfair when we talk and ignore Him and then beg Him to intervene in the way we want Him to. God is always speaking, but am I being silent enough to hear Him?

Let me encourage you today: God isn’t silent. Your prayers may feel unanswered, but what if it was simply an awareness issue, not an activity issue? Take a moment or two of silence today. You may be surprised by what you hear!

prayer

*God, give me the wisdom to know when to be silent and when to speak.*

*I acknowledge that there have likely been times when I accused you of silence, but really, it was me with the silence problem.*

*I know you are moving and speaking, and I promise to make space to hear.*

# make room for rest

day 3 / pastor derek shackelford

*Matthew 11:28–29 (NIV) // “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

One of the most common phrases we hear today is, “I’m just so tired.” Whether it’s from endless responsibilities, emotional strain, or the pace of modern life, exhaustion seems to have become our default setting.

We convince ourselves that if we just push through a little longer, if we check one more box, or handle one more task, then we’ll find rest.

But Jesus offers a different kind of invitation—a rest that can’t be achieved by doing more, but only by coming to Him.

When Jesus said, “Come to me... and I will give you rest,” He wasn’t talking about a quick nap or a weekend off. He was offering soul rest—a deep renewal that happens only in His presence.

He followed it by saying, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.” In other words, He invites us not just to stop working, but to walk with Him, to match our steps to His, and to learn a gentler, unhurried rhythm of life.

The problem is, we often make no room for that kind of rest. We fill every moment with movement, noise, and responsibility. Our calendars overflow while our hearts run on empty.

Yet rest is not a luxury, it’s a spiritual necessity. Without it, we lose clarity, joy, and even connection with God. When we don’t make space to be still, we begin to believe that our worth is tied to our productivity rather than our identity as God’s beloved.

Jesus modeled a different pattern. Even with crowds pressing around Him and needs everywhere, He regularly withdrew to solitary places to pray (Luke 5:16).

He understood that rest wasn’t a break from ministry; it was part of it.

In rest, He received strength, perspective, and communion with the Father. If Jesus, the Son of God, made room for rest, how much more should we?

Making room for rest means saying no to some good things so we can say yes to what’s best.

It may mean setting aside your phone, carving out quiet time with the Lord, or simply breathing deeply and remembering that He is in control.

Resting in Christ isn’t about escaping responsibility; it’s about realigning our souls with His presence so we can carry His yoke, which is easy, and His burden, which is light.

## prayer

*Lord Jesus, You see my weary heart and restless mind. Forgive me for the ways I’ve filled my life so full that I’ve left little room for Your rest.*

*Teach me to come to You—not as another task to complete, but as the source of true renewal. Help me slow down long enough to breathe in Your peace and remember that my worth is found in You, not in my work.*

*Today, I choose to make room for rest (real rest) in Your presence.*

# make room for forgiveness

day 4 / pastor terrell dawson jr.

*Ephesians 4:31-32 // Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Forgiveness is one of the hardest things Jesus asks us to do. Not because it's complicated, but because it's deeply personal.

Yet forgiveness is also one of the clearest ways we "make room" for Him. Unforgiveness takes up space in our hearts that God wants to fill with His peace, His presence, and His healing.

Paul tells us in Ephesians to "get rid of" bitterness, anger, and resentment. Those words aren't casual. They're intentional.

Bitterness doesn't leave on its own... it must be confronted. And Jesus knows that as long as those emotions live in us, they will slowly take over the space meant for Him.

Let's be honest....We often think forgiveness is about weakness, caving in, or giving up. It's not.

Forgiveness is about letting go. It's about reclaiming ownership of your heart, your mind, and your body. Forgiveness is about you deciding to no longer carry the weight someone else has put in your backpack. It's about taking the bricks out and setting them down so you can move forward lighter and freer.

Forgiveness is about freedom.  
Forgiveness is about you.

And forgiveness is not a conditional contract. Jesus didn't stretch out His arms and say, "Father, forgive them... if."

He simply forgave. Freely. Fully. Completely.

When we withhold forgiveness, we're often holding on to the past in a way that steals our future. Face the past... don't fear the past. Not dealing with our

past robs us of what God wants to do next.

Forgiveness is one of the primary ways we face it — not by pretending it didn't hurt, but by refusing to let it control us any longer.

Forgiveness is not saying, "What happened didn't hurt." It's not pretending things are fine or letting someone escape consequences. Forgiveness simply means releasing the weight you were never designed to carry.

It's choosing to put the situation in God's hands instead of your own. It's trusting that He is a better judge, a better healer, and a better restorer than we could ever be.

There's a reason Jesus talks about forgiveness so often: it affects our closeness to Him more than we realize. Unforgiveness hardens the heart, and a hardened heart has little room for God to speak, lead, or comfort.

But when we forgive, something supernatural happens — God begins to heal places we didn't even know were broken.

Forgiveness frees you before it frees the other person. It makes room for joy, for compassion, for emotional clarity, and ultimately for Jesus to breathe healing into the space bitterness once occupied.

And God never asks you to do something He hasn't already done for you. "Forgive... just as in Christ God forgave you."

You've been forgiven fully, freely, and completely. From that place of grace, God empowers you to let go — even when it feels impossible.

## prayer

*Jesus, show me where unforgiveness has taken up space in my heart. Give me the courage to release what I've been holding onto.*

*Today, help me take one practical step of forgiveness—whether that's praying for the person, releasing the memory, or choosing not to replay the hurt again.*

*I trust You with the pain, the disappointment, and the outcome. Fill my heart with Your peace, and heal what only You can. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## thoughts & reflections

# make room to worship

day 5 / pastor cody henson

*John 4:23 // “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.”*

Jesus meets a woman at a well in the heat of the day. She's weary, carrying the weight of her past, just trying to get by. Most people avoid her, but Jesus doesn't. He goes out of His way to meet her right where she is.

She comes for water, but Jesus offers something better, living water that satisfies the soul.

Their conversation turns toward worship, and the woman brings up a long-standing debate: “Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews say the right place to worship is in Jerusalem.”

She's really asking, “Where do I have to go to find God?”

Jesus answers her with truth that still changes lives today. He says it's not about the right mountain or the right place. God isn't limited to a location or a ritual. He's looking for people who will worship Him from the heart. In spirit and in truth.

That means worship isn't something we do once a week. It's a daily invitation.

Worship happens when we pause in the middle of our busyness, open our hearts, and invite God in.

To worship in spirit means it's real. It flows from deep within, not from obligation.

To worship in truth means it's honest. You don't have to clean yourself up to come to God. You can bring your joy, your pain, your doubts, and your gratitude, and He welcomes it all.

- When you stop focusing on what's missing and start thanking God for what's present, you make room to worship.
- When you choose to forgive instead of holding a grudge, you make room to worship

- When you trade distraction for stillness, you make room to worship.

Every moment is a chance to pause and let His presence fill your heart again.

The Father is looking for worshipers who will make room for Him—not just in church, but in the everyday rhythms of life.

So wherever you are today—in the middle of work, stress, joy, or stillness—take a breath and make room to worship.

## prayer

*Father, thank You for seeing me and inviting me into Your presence.*

*Teach me to worship You in spirit and in truth. In every moment, help me slow down, open my heart, and make room to worship. Amen.*

# make room by quitting

day 6 / pastor mike burns

*Philippians 3:13-14 // Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

You've probably heard the adage, "QUITTERS NEVER WIN, AND WINNERS NEVER QUIT!" and that is true in so many areas of life.

If you're trying to gain muscle, you cannot quit the gym. If you're trying to climb a mountain, you can't stop in the middle.

If you're running a 5k, don't expect a gold medal by only running the first 2.5K, then getting Wendy's! You get the point. Although a Baconator sounds delicious right now!

BUT! – and hear me out – What if quitting is an essential key to living the lives that God has called us to? We just have to quit the right things!

One of my favorite authors, Bob Goff, talks about how he quits something every Thursday. Sounds daffy, right?

If I were him, I'd be tempted to quit annoying things like broccoli or changing the oil in my car – but that's not what he's talking about.

In our attempts to be more like Jesus, there can be so many things that weigh us down and hold us back from the fullness in life that Jesus promises. What if we quit those things?

What if we quit the bad habits?  
What if we quit the distractions?  
What if we quit the unforgiveness we have towards someone?  
What if we quit believing the lies that have been spoken over us or that we tell ourselves?  
What if we quit reliving our worst mistakes?  
What if we quit believing that we have to be perfect?

This list could go on and on forever.

If we are going to make room for what God has for us, we need to be the best kind of quitters.

In Philippians 3, Paul says, "Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Let's do that together – quit what lies behind and press towards our goal!

## reflection

*What is something you can quit today to make more room for more of what God has for you?*

# make room for God to speak

day 7 / pastor ryan jordan

*2 Timothy 3:16 // All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*

*Hebrews 4:12 // For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

In a world filled with constant noise — social media updates, news alerts, emails, and endless opinions — it's easy for the voice of God to become drowned out.

We say we want to hear from Him, yet our lives often have little space for Him to speak.

Making room for God to speak is not about waiting for an audible voice from heaven; it's about creating intentional space in our hearts and schedules where His Word can come alive and lead us.

Paul reminds us in 2 Timothy 3:16 that "All Scripture is God-breathed." The Bible isn't just a collection of ancient words; it carries the breath of God — the same breath that created the heavens and gave life to Adam.

When we open Scripture, we are opening our lives to the living voice of God. His Word teaches us what is right, corrects what is wrong, and equips us to live in a way that honors Him.

But that can only happen if we slow down long enough to listen.

Hebrews 4:12 describes the Word of God as "alive and active." It's not static ink on a page. It's living truth that moves with power, piercing our hearts and transforming our thoughts.

The Word has a way of exposing what lies beneath the surface — our motives, our fears, our pride, and our pain. When we make room for God to speak through His Word, we allow Him to shape us from the inside out.

So how do we make that room?

It begins with quiet and surrender. We can't hear God when our minds are racing or our hearts are filled with clutter. Turn off the noise.

Set aside time each day to sit with the Word — not rushing through it, but allowing it to sink deep. Pray before you read, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal truth and convict where needed. Journaling, meditating on a single verse, or simply sitting in silence can help you remain attentive to His whisper.

God still speaks — clearly, faithfully, and powerfully — through His Word and by His Spirit.

The question is not whether He's speaking, but whether we've given Him space to be heard. When we make room for God to speak, His Word will do what it has always done: breathe life, bring clarity, and draw us closer to His heart.

## reflection

*What in your daily life competes with God's voice?  
What practical step can you take today to create space for Him to speak?*

# make room by surrendering

day 8 / pastor shawn mahannah

*John 3:30 // He must increase, but I must decrease.*

John 3:30 is what I like to call my life verse. When I first became a Christian, it grabbed my heart and has stayed with me to this day.

It was such an easy verse to remember but I have found that this small little verse will take a lifetime to live out.

If you are anything like me, there have probably been times when you found yourself asking for the Lord to move in your life. Asking for more of his peace, his presence, and his blessings.

Yet, as we are asking for “more” of the Lord, if we are honest, the trouble is that our hearts are already crowded with things like self-ambitions, our worries, our own expectations, and our need for control.

This is the tension we find ourselves in. We want the Lord to pour in something new, but we’re still gripping what He’s asking us to surrender.

John the Baptist understood and lived in this tension. His ministry was flourishing, yet he knew that God’s work could only continue if he surrendered his will and his ways. His surrender, or becoming less, made room for Christ’s increase in his life.

John choosing to surrender his will and ways didn’t diminish his value; it actually helped align himself with God’s great plan!

When we make room by surrendering, we are confessing that we should let go of anything that competes with Him.

I had a pastor once who put it this way, “God won’t fill what we won’t empty.”

Today, my prayer is that you will not see surrender as a loss, but rather as an exchange.

We exchange our abilities for his strength.  
We exchange our fear for his peace.  
We exchange our striving for His leading.

When the great exchange occurs, I pray that you will find His thoughts, plans, and purpose to be better.

## reflection

*What am I holding onto that God may be asking me to release? Where is my desire for control crowding out space for trust? What would it look like for me to “decrease” so Christ can “increase?”*

# make room for joy

day 9 / pastor ida mundell

*Psalm 118:24 // This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

It's the perfect bumper sticker or coffee mug verse, one many of us can quote, yet rarely pause to truly ponder. "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

When I first think of this verse, I imagine the big, happy, mountaintop moments. The days when prayers are answered and everything feels right.

But over time, I've come to realize the psalmist wasn't just talking about those kinds of days. He was talking about this day.

Yes, this very ordinary, maybe stressful, possibly frustrating day. The one filled with routines, responsibilities, and moments so simple they surely do not feel sacred.

Could this kind of day...the messy, unremarkable, in-between one...also be the day the Lord has made? Yes.

"This is the day the Lord has made." That means today. Not yesterday, the one we wish we could redo, and not tomorrow, the one we keep hoping will be better. This day, with its slow beginnings, interruptions, laundry piles, and traffic lights, is the day God has made.

And this is where true joy begins, not in the spectacular, but in the slow. Joy is born in the quiet recognition that God is here, at work in the middle of the ordinary. We make room for joy when we start looking for Him in the very places we once believed He couldn't be found.

We often think joy will come when life finally settles down, when our circumstances line up, or when we get exactly what we want.

But joy need not wait for perfect conditions. Joy grows when we pause long enough to notice God's hand in the small, steady gifts of everyday life.

This short and simple verse calls us to rejoice in this very day. Joy is the fruit of gratitude, and gratitude begins with perspective, so when we CHOOSE to see God in the everyday moments of life, we begin to make room for more joy than we ever imagined.

Making room for joy doesn't mean ignoring the hard things. It means refusing to let them have the final word. It's a quiet trust that says, even here, even now, the Lord is near, and that alone is reason enough to rejoice.

Maybe today doesn't feel special. Maybe it feels too ordinary to be holy. Maybe it feels painfully difficult. But THIS is the day the Lord has made. Yes, this moment, this breath, your one beautiful life...all of it belongs to Him. And when we begin to see it that way, and begin to see Him in all things, joy grows in ways we cannot contain.

## reflection

*Take a moment today to notice God's presence right where you are. The day doesn't have to be extraordinary to be joyful. Often, the most sacred and profound joy is found in simply recognizing that the ordinary moments of your life are already held by an extraordinary God.*

## prayer

*God, thank You for this day. Thank you for the breath in my lungs and the simple moments that remind me of Your goodness.*

*Help me to see Your presence in the ordinary and to find joy even in the middle of my routines, interruptions, and challenges. Teach me to rejoice not just when life feels perfect, but because You are always near. Fill my heart with gratitude and renew my joy in You today. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

# make room for truth

day 10 / tara jessup

*3 John 1:5-12 // Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth. I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church. Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.*

Do you know someone who is just a troublemaker wherever they go? For you, it may not be someone, but something. At home, one of our cats loves being an absolute pain to everyone around him.

He will bother our other cats and then trot away happily like his work is done because things are out of sorts. Now our entire house is on edge because he likes stirring the pot.

It's hilarious to me how John calls out a troublemaker in this passage from 3 John. He refers to Diotrephes (a good baby name if you're looking for one) in this passage as someone "who loves to be first" and is unwelcoming, spreading lies, and stopping the work of the church.

The worst thing about Diotrephes? He's a part of the church! A believer that's working against other believers!

Have you ever known someone...or even BEEN the person causing a problem in the church or your community? What do you think might be the cause of someone doing that? It can be easy to focus on our own thoughts and feelings and lose sight of what God's truth is.

This is why we're supposed to be taking time to learn about God's truth for our lives every day.

The things of the world are constantly battling for a place in our minds and hearts, pointing out flaws in ourselves and others that try to tear the church

apart. Gossip, anger, jealousy, and resentment are all things that keep us from God and other believers.

Even as believers, the world is quick to tell us how we need to treat others – if they are not like me, they are wrong.

However, John points out two people in the rest of 3 John, Gaius and Demetrius, who are leaning into God's truth – they're hospitable, joyful, and kind.

Are you letting what the world sees as "truth" into your mind and heart, or are you letting God's truth into your heart and relationships?

Are you quick to point blame and talk badly about someone else, or do you see them as God sees them? John points out that when we speak well of people, our testimony is true. Is your testimony true today?

## prayer

*God, in my busy days, I'm tempted to look at others and label them as problems and not people.*

*As I go through my days, help me to take time to dive into your word and be a person of peace for myself and for my community.*

*Guard my heart in the ways of your truth and help keep my words from division. Amen.*

# make room for obedience

day 11 / pastor barry baugh

*1 Samuel 15:22 // But Samuel replied, What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.*

Have you ever been in a moment where you felt God asking you to do something, but you hesitated? Maybe you tried to negotiate with God, or delay, or even convince yourself you know a better way.

Obedience to God is something we talk about often, but if we're honest, it's one of the hardest things to consistently live out.

Many of us genuinely want to obey God. We want to follow Him, honor Him, and say "yes" when He speaks. But desire doesn't automatically create obedience; making room does.

Making room in our hearts. Making room in our schedules. Making room in our priorities and habits. Obedience grows where room is made for it.

This is where many of us struggle. We want to follow God, but we are so full of our own plans, full of our own opinions, full of fear, full of pressure, full of noise. It's not that we don't care about obedience; we just don't create the margin required to walk it out.

When our lives are cluttered, obedience becomes something we try to squeeze in instead of something we build around.

We see this played out in 1 Samuel 15. God gives King Saul a clear, specific command. Saul hears it. Saul understands it. But when the time comes to obey, Saul chooses to follow some of what God said and while ignoring the rest of what God said.

When he is confronted by Samuel, Saul says, "But I did obey the Lord." Saul truly believed he had done enough to call it obedience. Samuel responds to Saul in this moment, and this is what he says in 1 Samuel 15:22:

*"What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams."*

In other words, God is not impressed by what we offer Him if we're not willing to obey Him. Partial obedience, obedience on our terms, in our timing, in our comfort, is still disobedience.

But here's the hard truth: Saul didn't fail because He didn't love God. He failed because he didn't make room in his heart to obey God fully.

He allowed fear of people, desire for control, and his own judgment to crowd out God's voice. Saul wasn't too "wicked" to obey; he was too crowded to obey. And that's the danger for us today.

Obedience becomes optional when our hearts are full of other things. Obedience becomes delayed when our schedules are too packed. Obedience becomes negotiable when our pride is in the way.

If we want to be people who obey God, we must become people who make room for God.

Obedience begins by making room for God to speak. It starts with a quiet heart, an uncluttered mind, and a willingness to say "Lord, whatever you ask, I've already given you my yes."

Today, ask yourself: Where do I need to make room so obedience can grow? What voices am I letting crowd out God's? What areas have I been giving partial obedience instead of full surrender?

As Samuel said to Saul, "I say to you, Obedience is better than sacrifice."

## prayer

*Lord, give me a heart that obeys You. Help me to trust You more than myself. I surrender my plans, my fears, and my hesitation. Lead me, and I will obey. Amen!*

## thoughts & reflections

# make room for peace

day 12 / wayne derry jr.

*John 14:27 // “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”*

Life can feel loud. Our thoughts run faster than our bodies, our calendars stay packed, and our hearts carry worries we don't always speak out loud.

Yet in the middle of all this pressure, Jesus offers a gift we deeply need. In John 14:27, He says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

Those words were spoken to the disciples at a moment filled with uncertainty. Jesus was preparing them for His departure.

They did not know what the future would look like, but Jesus wanted them to know this: His peace would remain with them. And this same promise reaches us today.

The peace Jesus gives is not the kind the world offers. The world offers peace that depends on circumstances, quiet moments, solved problems, and predictable days.

But that kind of peace changes quickly. One unexpected phone call or difficult conversation can make it disappear. Jesus says He gives peace “not as the world gives.”

His peace remains even in hardship, disappointment, or change.

To make room for this peace, we must slow down and recognize that it is a gift, not a reward. Jesus does not say, “Work for my peace,” or, “Prove you deserve it.” He simply says, “My peace I give to you.” We receive it by faith.

But Jesus also gives us a choice: “Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” The word *let* matters.

It reminds us that anxiety does not have to lead us, fear does not have to rule us, and trouble does not have to own us. We cannot always silence our circumstances, but we can choose which voice we trust.

Making room for peace might mean releasing control of things we cannot change. It might mean turning off noise so we can hear God's whisper.

It might mean praying when we'd rather panic, worshiping when we're weary, or resting when our minds say keep running.

Peace comes when we remember that Jesus is present, not distant. He doesn't promise a life without storms, but He does promise Himself within them.

So today, make room. Tell fear it no longer gets the first word. Let the peace of Jesus fill the places where worry tries to live.

## prayer

*Jesus, Your peace is a gift, and today I choose to make room for it. Quiet my heart where it is troubled.*

*Drive out fear that keeps me from trusting You. Teach me to receive Your peace, not as the world gives, but as only You can give. Amen.*

# make room for the Word

day 13 / caleb parsley

*1 Thessalonians 2:13 // Therefore, we never stop thanking God that when you received his message from us, you didn't think of our words as mere human ideas. You accepted what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it is. And this word continues to work in you who believe.*

Picture yourself getting ready to go on a long-awaited vacation. Bags are packed, snacks in the cupholders, playlist ready. You type your destination into the GPS, and you're off! You turn out of the neighborhood and hear that familiar voice coming from your phone:

“Turn right in one mile.”

You hear it... and then immediately turn left because you suddenly remembered a “shortcut.”

Two minutes later: “Make a U-turn.”

“No, no, I know what I'm doing.”

“Turn left.”

“I'll think about it.”

The cycle repeats, and after a while, you become frustrated and angry that you're not getting any closer to your destination. You're moving, but you're moving in the wrong direction.

Even though everything you needed was right in front of you, guiding you exactly where you wanted to go, you didn't follow it.

As a result, the journey became longer, harder, and may have even kept you from reaching your destination at all. A GPS can only help when you trust it enough to follow where it leads.

Have you ever actually done this? Probably not! But what if this is sometimes how we approach the Word of God?

We leave church on a Sunday morning feeling filled and excited about the new things we're going to put into practice... and then life happens.

Work gets busy. The family schedule fills up. The stress of life convinces us that we don't have the time to “check off that religious box.”

It becomes easy to wonder where God is through all of it, when in reality, His words have been sitting untouched on a bookshelf, waiting for us.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul tells the church in Thessalonica that he is thankful they received the message of God not as a human idea but as what it truly is: the living Word of God.

Because they received it that way, the Word was consistently working in their lives and shaping their steps.

When we take the Word for what it truly is, it doesn't just pull us closer to God—it gives us strength for everyday life and slowly shapes us to look more like Jesus.

The Word isn't a man-made rulebook or checklist. It's God revealing Himself to us: His heart, His ways, His wisdom.

So the next time you're asking God for a sign, a promise, or an answer, remember: He's waiting for you in that unopened book on the shelf, where He has already spoken everything you need.

God is always speaking through His Word.

The question is: Have you made room for it to speak to you?

## reflection

*Make room for the Word by committing this week to read at least one Bible verse a day. See how five intentional minutes in Scripture can begin to change your heart, your joy, and your life.*

## prayer

*God, thank You for giving us Your Word to guide our steps. Help me make room for it every day.*

*Open my heart, my mind, and my schedule so Your truth can shape me and lead me. Speak to me through Your Word, and help me follow where You lead. Amen.*

## thoughts & reflections

# make room for community

day 14 / rachel mahannah

*Acts 2:42 // They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

*Hebrews 10:24-25 // And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Life has a way of pulling us toward busyness, doesn't it? Our schedules fill, our minds crowd, and without meaning to, we drift into living life alone. Yet this was never God's design for us.

"It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). This isn't simply about marriage—it's about the deep human need for companionship, shared purpose, and spiritual support.

Making room for community isn't a luxury; it's a spiritual discipline. But do we really look at it through this lens?

In Acts 2, the early church gives us a picture of what life together can look like: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

Community wasn't squeezed into the cracks of their lives; it was woven into the rhythm of their days. They devoted themselves to it. Community requires devotion—intentional time, open hearts, and a willingness to be known.

If you are like me, that can sound both wonderful and overwhelming at the same time. I mean, I'm already maxed, right?

But making room for community doesn't always mean adding more to your calendar. Sometimes it means reordering what's already there.

It means asking God, who have You placed around me that I am overlooking?

This could look like joining or leading an Access

Group, reaching out to a neighbor you usually pass by, or choosing a coffee with a friend over another night at home with a screen.

Hebrews 10:24-25 reminds us of the importance of showing up for each other: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together...but encouraging one another."

The phrase "not neglecting" implies intentionality. Community rarely thrives by accident; it grows when we make space for it.

Yet community is not only something we receive—it's something we give. When we make space for others, we imitate Christ, and I believe we get to know him better.

Jesus was consistently present with people. He welcomed interruptions.

He paused for the woman who touched His garment. He ate with sinners. He invited His disciples into both His ministry and His grief.

Jesus made room for community even when He was tired or pressed. If the Son of God lived life alongside others, how much more do we need that same rhythm?

## reflection

*Today, consider one simple way you can open your life a little more to the people God has placed around you. Community doesn't start with grand gestures—it starts with small yeses.*

*A text. A prayer. A conversation. A shared meal. And as you make room for community, you'll find yourself living more fully into the life God designed for you—connected, supported, and rooted in love.*

## thoughts & reflections

# make room for others

day 15 / haley smith

*John 15:12-13 // “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”*

Let's set the scene: Faith Kipyegon goes to break the four-minute mile. A crazy feat! Watching the clip of her sprinting down the track is absolutely insane, but even more inspiring is watching her pacers.

If you haven't seen it yet, pause right now and go watch it! (Search Faith Kipyegon breaking 4.)

Her pacers were set around her for one mission: to help Faith break the four-minute mile. They were there to support, assist, encourage, and uplift. She had a squad at the front, side, and back, surrounding her in an inspiring bubble of pure athleticism and friendship.

It didn't matter their own breakthrough in holding the pace because they were not running for themselves. They were running for Faith, so they pushed faster and held formation to push her forward. They trained hard so that Faith could fly.

It was an act of selflessness, support, and encouragement. Faith did not break the four minute mile, but it didn't even matter. She attempted what hadn't been done before, and her pacers were absolutely beside themselves with excitement!

They knew that Faith attempting the four would lead to more attempts. They knew that what she did would pave the way for someone to one day beat the four minute mile, and they couldn't believe they got to be a part of the journey!

What would it look like if we made way and pushed hard, not for the betterment of ourselves, but for the betterment of others? What would that shift look like if we ran this race called life in such a way to ensure that someone else could cross the finish line?

Love costs us something. It should move us to action. In John 15, it shows us that to love is

sacrifice. To love as Jesus loved requires putting down our own needs and wants and picking up the needs and wants of another.

May we be like the pacers, using our strength, ability, and talents to fully and joyfully support one another. May we not obsess over the event or the moment, but over people. May we train hard not for our own victory, but for the victory of others.

The pacers had one goal: to get Faith across the finish line, and nothing was going to stop them from accomplishing that.

Who has God placed in your life that you can celebrate, support, push, encourage, uplift, and love? May you train hard for someone else to fly.

## prayer

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for showing me what it looks like to love without limits. To see others and be moved to action.*

*Help me to love others the way you loved me. Thank you for being the perfect example. Put people in my path that I can love and encourage. Train my heart to love others without restraint. Amen.*

# make room for His presence

day 16 / seth langley

*James 4:8 // Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

*1 Kings 19:12 // After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.*

When I was a kid, I had a weird habit. I whispered. It didn't matter who I was talking to or where I was; I just did.

I remember one time I was in a store with my mom, leaning in and whispering something to her. She stopped me and said, "Son, I can't hear you. You need to speak up." Instead of raising my voice, I got closer, next to her ear, and repeated myself. Then she heard what I had said.

That moment stuck with me because it reminds me of the story in 1 Kings 19, where the prophet Elijah is on the mountain seeking God.

He experiences a great wind, an earthquake, and fire, all dramatic and loud, yet the text says the Lord was not in the wind or the earthquake or the fire. It was after all that when Elijah heard a "gentle whisper."

We go through trials and the circumstances of life where we're looking for a big sign, a huge breakthrough, or a loud voice from God.

We may feel like we're not hearing Him. But maybe the issue isn't that God isn't speaking, but that we're not close enough or quiet enough to hear His whisper. The whisper is subtle.

Just like when I moved closer to my mom so she could hear, we, too, need to draw near and get closer to the Lord.

As James writes: "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." That's not only in the moment of trials, but in our everyday life.

So here's a question for you: When was the last

time you were still and close enough to the Lord to hear His gentle whisper?

Maybe it's in a quiet moment, a walk, a pause, or even in doing something simple that removes distractions.

God is inviting you into His presence. And when you draw near, He draws near.

## prayer

*God, Thank You for always being near. Help me today to quiet the noise of life and draw closer to You.*

*Teach me to listen for Your gentle whisper. In that stillness, may I hear You, may I respond, may I rest in Your presence. Amen.*

# make room for gratitude

day 17 / em shackelford

*1 Thessalonians 5:18 // Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*

Gratitude isn't just an emotion; it's a posture of the heart. Scripture doesn't say give thanks for all circumstances, but in all circumstances.

That means thanksgiving is not dependent on what is happening around you, but on the God who dwells within you.

Life will hand us seasons we did not choose...loss, waiting, uncertainty, disappointment. And yet, God invites us to give thanks right there.

Why? Because thanksgiving shifts our focus. It lifts our eyes from the problem and places them back on the Promise Keeper.

It reminds our souls that God is still present, still faithful, and still working even when we cannot see it.

Just like when Paul and Silas began to sing praises while imprisoned — they chose to make room for gratitude in a place where gratitude made no sense.

They worshiped in the dark. They praised while chained. They thanked God before the miracle came. And the miracle did come. The chains broke. The doors opened. Freedom rushed in. Salvation came to the jailer and his family.

But notice this: The miracle followed the praise. It didn't start with deliverance, but it started with gratitude.

A grateful heart is powerful. It disarms fear. It quiets anxiety. It opens our eyes to what God is doing instead of what we feel He isn't doing yet. Gratitude is a declaration of "God, I trust You here."

Sometimes the most profound act of worship is whispering "thank you" through your tears. Not because everything is perfect, but because HE is.

Gratitude doesn't erase your grief—it carries you through it.

## reflection

*If gratitude is a declaration of trust, what does my current level of gratitude reveal about where my trust is resting?*

## prayer

*Lord, give me a heart that chooses gratitude in every season. Teach me to see Your goodness even in the places that feel confusing or painful.*

*Let my "thank You" become an act of trust, a declaration of faith, and a reminder that You are near. I believe You are working all things for my good. I choose to thank You right here, right now.*

# make room for what matters most

day 18 / andy brown

*Luke 10:41-42 // “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”*

One of my favorite things to do is clean out the garage. I’m sorry! Did I say “favorite?” I meant to say “despised.”

One of my most despised things to do is clean out the garage. There. More truthful.

But as much as I dislike this activity, it is very necessary to do it on occasion. The whole point of my garage is firstly to give us a space to safely park the car, and secondly to store necessities.

But what ends up happening is non-necessities end up getting put in there, too, from time to time. Like that old footstool my wife wants to get rid of, but I want to continue using.

So it ends up in the garage, taking up way too much space for no reason. If I’m not careful, pretty soon, the main reasons for having the garage will no longer be possible because there is so much clutter taking up so much space.

Martha was a friend of Jesus. When He came into her home, she was honored to make His visit comfortable and enjoyable.

She served Him tirelessly while her sister sat lazily (in her view) at the feet of Jesus, taking in His very presence.

When she voiced her displeasure with her sister to Jesus in hopes of Him admonishing the lazy sister, she was surprised to face a bit of a gentle rebuke instead.

*“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”*

It is important to note that Jesus was not saying, “Hey, lady. Serving me doesn’t matter. Just sit and do nothing.”

In fact, serving others through action can be one of the greatest displays of love and one of the greatest instruments in spiritual growth as we become more like the one who came “not to be served, but to serve” — Jesus Himself.

It is clear that His rebuke of her was more to draw her attention to her need to be filled in His very presence so she could serve others more effectively.

If you want to make a true impact in your world in the coming year, you need to be intentional about making room for what actually matters by clearing out the clutter.

You cannot give something that you do not have inside you.

So if you want to show people Jesus’ love, you must be well acquainted with His love through spending time in His presence.

Resist the urge to fill your time with things that are not as important. Instead, make room for what is truly important by clearing out the clutter.

## prayer

*Lord, I admit my tendency to make the lesser things primary. In this way, I fill my time with the things that don’t matter as much at the expense of what matters most.*

*Help me to make room for your presence in my life by prioritizing it over activity. As I do this, I ask you to empower my actions as your Spirit fills me.*

# make room for hospitality

day 19 / kayla erickson

*Genesis 18:1-5 // And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.”*

I visited the great Notre Dame in Paris my sophomore year of college. I was severely jet-lagged, as the only day for us to sightsee was the day we arrived in Europe, but it was impossible not to be awe-struck by the cathedral's grandeur.

Gazing up at the centuries-old ceiling and its hand-painted stars, it's easy to see how someone could stand in that building and be captivated by a great Creator.

What if I told you that the four walls of your home, your apartment, your RV (if you're adventurous), have the same power?

While it may not have the splendor of a cathedral – and there is nothing inherently holy about plaster, paint, and a long oak table – it, too, can be the meeting ground between your neighbors and the living God.

The word “hospitality” doesn't usually bring to mind the life-changing biblical practice.

Often, when we think of hospitality, we think of a Martha Stewart tablescape, turndown service, and expectations we can never live up to. True hospitality is much more simple.

One of the earliest pictures of hospitality in the Bible is in Genesis chapter 18, when Abraham greets the three strangers by the oaks of Mamre, right after his circumcision.

Later in this passage, it's clear these are no ordinary men as they prophecy of Sarah birthing Isaac.

However, there is no indication that Abraham

knows this when they arrive. To him, he sees three people walking toward his campground and jumps at the opportunity to make them feel welcome.

He invites them to kick their feet up, enjoy some food, and stay awhile.

There's something different about Abraham's hospitality. We don't see many expressions of this kind of kindness in our present day, outside of the stereotypical bed and breakfast owner in a Hallmark film.

If we can be honest, many of us don't think of hospitality as an opportunity to serve people, but rather to impress them. This misses the point.

As author Shauna Niequist remarks, “True hospitality is when someone leaves your home feeling better about themselves, not better about you.”

We don't need to overcomplicate it. Hospitality can be as simple as folding chairs, paper plates, and a big pot of spaghetti. The life-changing part of this practice is our power to treat everyone at the table like a valuable image bearer of God.

If you feel tempted to shrug off hospitality as one more thing your calendar can't afford, remember:

Not everyone will accept an invitation to church, but almost no one will refuse an invitation to dinner.

There – at your kitchen table, on your front porch, or in your living room – you can make room for your neighbors to encounter their great Creator.

## reflection

*Take a moment now to reflect on a person or people in your life you feel the Holy Spirit nudging you to invite into your home for a meal.*

## prayer

*Heavenly Father, You are the greatest host, the epitome of a hospitable presence. As we start this new year, give me open hands when it comes to my calendar and my home so that I can make room for my neighbors. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## thoughts & reflections

# make room for the whisper

day 20 / joel wilkes

*1 Kings 19:11-12 // The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.*

Have you ever been so busy with everything around you that you missed what was around you?

One time, I was driving my car with my brother and his girlfriend. We were all laughing and having a great time when all of a sudden the car came to a sudden stop.

I had hit the car in front of me because I was busy talking to those around me. Instantly, I was filled with fear, afraid to face the consequences of my actions. But to my surprise, the driver I had hit was not angry but gracious.

In 1 Kings 19:11-12, we see a powerful conversation take place. While Elijah runs in fear after his battle with the prophets of Baal, he finds himself in a cave far from where he thought he would be.

Elijah prayed that God would even take his life because of how overwhelmed he was! But the Lord did not instead, he provided and gave him strength.

How often in our life have things gotten so tough that we plead with God to take the pain away? I know I have been there so many times in life, crying out to the Lord that he would find me in the midst of my trial.

What trials have you walked through? What was your response? Was it like Elijah's? I have so often been Elijah, but what is true is that God always shows up to those who seek Him!

Though the way God shows up usually is not how we expect! When I read the Bible, I see these big grand ways Jesus healed and spoke outright to people's lives.

Sometimes I wish Jesus would appear right in front of me and just tell me what to do. I'm sure we all do, but what if God actually was trying to do that very thing?

However, our mind is so crowded with the busyness and chaos of life that we've missed the Small Whisper of God.

The whisper to answer the praying you've been praying for a decade, the whisper of healing, restoration, maybe even the whisper of blessing!

## reflection

*I challenge you, in the busyness of life, to take a second and breathe. Breathe and listen for the whisper of God telling you the best next step. Don't get lost in the chaos of life, but remember that God is always there with you.*

# make room for a habit

day 21 / pastor jason burns

*Matthew 6:11 // Give us this day our daily bread.*

Remember when blogs were a big deal? It seemed like everyone had one.

Maybe you noticed this too. A friend on your social media would post about their new blog. They all said something similar – “check back regularly for fresh, inspiring content!”

Then you’d check back in a week, and the only post was the one promising inspiring content. Then a month or two later, still nothing fresh!

What happened?

It's actually quite simple. Inspiration is easy. Implementation is the challenge.

You've made it this far. Let's make this making room challenge a habit.

We all have the same amount of hours in a day, and we all probably are juggling too many things. I've learned this to be true – we always have time for what matters to us.

It's not coincidental that when Jesus taught the disciples to pray in what we now call the Lord's Prayer, one key line He gave is “Give us this day our daily bread.” (Matthew 6:11).

All of the disciples who heard this would've immediately known what He was talking about.

In Exodus 16, God had miraculously delivered the people of Israel from generations of captivity and slavery in Egypt. On their way from captivity to the land He promised them, He miraculously provided for them.

One of their greatest needs was the provision of food, and every day, God provided a bread miraculously for them called Manna. We don't

exactly know what Manna is, but I'd like to believe it was a bread better than Red Lobster's Cheddar Bay Biscuits.

Here's the point. The Israelites were dependent on God to provide for every need. Every day, they relied on God.

My prayer for you is that these 21 Days of Prayer have served as a launching pad to your new habit.

I'd like to end this devotional with a simple prayer that I'm writing for you!

## prayer

*Father in heaven, thank You for this time with You. I pray for my friends who have taken this 21-day journey with us.*

*May it not be something we do once a year, but may it be the daily bread that sustains us.*

*Thank you that as we draw near to You, You can't help Yourself – You draw near to us!*

*May we make room for what matters this year. You're what matters.*

*We love you! In Jesus' Name, amen!*