

2021



A Daily Walk Through Psalms

A 31-DAY DEVOTIONAL



**Denmark
& Malmö**

A Daily Walk Through Psalms: a 31-day devotional

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To our incredible church family,

What a year 2020 has been! We don't think that anyone, back in January, could ever have imagined what was ahead. The hashtag "2020vision" seems like such a distant and ironic memory as we now stand poised for the start of 2021.

As the months of this year unfolded, and the far-reaching impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic touched all of our lives in many different ways, Kat and I were continually amazed by the faith, resilience, courage, generosity, flexibility, and conviction displayed by our congregations across all locations of Hillsong Denmark & Malmö.

I've often said, "Choose when you're strong who you want to be when you are weak." A year like 2020 definitely puts those choices to the test!

Kat and I really believe that we, as a church community, have been powerfully reminded afresh of the daily need for God's anointing over our lives – His empowering presence that enables us to fulfil His calling for our lives regardless of circumstances.

Which brings us to the reason for this gift. *A Daily Walk Through Psalms: a 31-day devotion* is a compilation of the first 31 studies I did of Psalms on Instagram Live during lockdown.

It is our prayer that this little booklet will help you start January 2021 strong – inspiring you to read the Bible daily.

We want to encourage you, during the first 31 days of 2021, to read the devotion for that day, and then open up your own Bible and read that Psalm in its entirety. Once January comes to an end... keep on going!

May you experience the truth of this declaration over your life throughout 2021:

Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.

Psalm 23:6a (NIV)

Wishing you and your loved ones a Happy New Year.

God bless,
Thomas & Kat Hansen

Lead Pastors
Hillsong Denmark & Malmö

PSALM ONE

Sometimes in life, we can end up in situations in which we ask ourselves, “How did I end up here?” This doesn’t happen overnight, but gradually – we start out walking in a direction, then slow down to a standstill, only to eventually sit down.

Psalm 1:1 (NIV) makes it clear that who we choose to walk with (and not walk with) is so important: *Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers.*

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the church in Corinth, gives this warning: *Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character” (1 Corinthians 15:33 NIV).* In other words, “Show me your friends, and I’ll show you your future!”

Today, make a decision to surround yourself with people who delight in the right things – the Lord and His Word (see **Psalm 1:2 NIV**).

LET'S NOT LOSE THE WONDER OF WHO HE IS.

PSALM TWO

The moment we become familiar with anything or anyone, we lose our gratitude. We replace what is not broken, and we exchange the seemingly old (yet fully functional) for something new and more exciting.

At first glance, when reading **Psalm 2:11-12 (NIV)**, it seems the Psalmist is presenting us with an emotional paradox: *Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Kiss his son, or he will be angry...*

Could it be that the Psalmist is encouraging us to not become familiar with God, to not take the opportunity to serve Him and celebrate His rule for granted, but rather to recognise who He still is?

In C.S. Lewis' book, *Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, a conversation takes place between the humans and Mr. and Mrs. Beaver where the beavers are trying to explain to the humans who Aslan (i.e. Jesus) really is. The conversation concludes with:

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver, "don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

When it comes to our relationship with Jesus, it is easy to become familiar and take it for granted. Today, let's decide to stay amazed. Let's not lose the wonder of who He is. Let's decide to remain grateful for all that He has done and is doing for us, in us and through us as individuals and as a church community.

**EVEN WHEN YOU SEE
NOTHING, GOD IS DOING
SOMETHING.**

PSALM THREE

“It may look like I’m surrounded, but I’m surrounded by you.” These beautiful words are from the chorus of Michael W. Smith’s worship song, *Surrounded*. They are inspired by a story in the Old Testament (**2 Kings, chapter 6**), where the prophet Elisha’s servant was terrified because they were surrounded by the enemy army.

Elisha prayed for the servant’s eyes to be opened to see that they were not just surrounded by the enemy army, but also surrounded by an even greater army of angels.

When writing this Psalm, King David was fleeing from his son Absalom who had conspired against him and who wanted him dead. In **Psalm 3:5 (NIV)**, he writes: *I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.*

When we sleep, we are vulnerable. We are not able to protect ourselves, so one can say that sleeping is a sign of trust that someone else will protect us. King David was confident that he could truly rest. He didn’t lose sleep due to worry and stress over a situation out of his control, because the Lord was working on his behalf.

When you are in the midst of a battle, don’t lose your peace. Even when you see nothing, God is doing something. You can rest and trust that He is working!

Today, as you consider your life and present circumstances, where can you stop striving and start trusting?

PSALM FOUR

People-watching can be fascinating. As an observer, it can be easy to make assumptions and judgements based on what you see. You see a person smile, so you assume happiness. You see a person dressed in fine clothing, so you assume wealth.

King David wrote in **Psalm 4:8 (NIV)**: *In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.*

As an observer, it would be easy to dismiss this statement. He lived in a palace, after all, and we can assume that he was surrounded by bodyguards and security. In the natural, he appeared to be safe. But while he might have been in the safety of his palace when he wrote these words, he still acknowledged that it was God alone, not his bodyguards, that made him safe.

While we do our part in the natural, we must also recognise that true peace comes, not when we are in control, but when we know that a good God is.

In the natural, King David had bodyguards, but God was his safety.

In the natural, an employer provides the pay-check, but God is our provider.

In the natural, a doctor prescribes medication, but God is our healer.

Today, remember that it is God alone that makes you dwell in safety. You can rest because He is in control.

PSALM FIVE

When faced with challenging circumstances, it is so easy to fall into the trap of worrying and complaining. So often we end up spending valuable time and energy feeding our anxiety.

In **Psalm 5:3 (NIV)**, we get a front-row seat to how King David responded to what was going on around him. He wrote: *In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.*

His first response was not to worry, but to pray.

It is important to note that if something is big enough for you to worry about, it is also big enough to pray about. Sometimes people look at their problems and think they are too small in comparison to someone else's, but the reality is that God loves you and cares about the details of your life. **1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)** says: *Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*

King David's first response was to pray. What is your first response? When our first response is prayer, it doesn't mean that we discount the natural, like medicine or great advisors. It simply means that we recognise the need to first take it God.

I want to encourage you to pray as if everything depends on God, and work as if everything depends on you. Martin Luther said he was "too busy not to pray." What an inspiring thought!

I have a rule in life that I am not allowed to complain about something I have not yet prayed about. Reality is that if you haven't prayed about it, you haven't even given God a chance. King David showed us that we ought to wait expectantly. We pray and we wait, not in a passive way (it will happen if it happens), but with a sense of expectation, believing that an answer is coming.

I wonder, have you taken the time to pray about that which you are thinking about, talking about and worrying about? Today, let's give God an opportunity to move in our lives; let's pray with expectation.

HE HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD, AND THIS STORM WILL PASS.

PSALM SIX

Feelings are powerful. When we feel something strongly, it drives us to act based on instinct rather than reason. For example, this is why you should not go grocery shopping while feeling hungry. Instead of thinking of the long-term benefits or consequences, you are driven by the need for immediate relief, and so you likely end up leaving the store with items you do not need.

This Psalm is marked by the pain and weariness King David was experiencing. He wrote in **Psalm 6:6-7 (NIV)**: *I am worn out from my groaning. All night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. My eyes grow weak with sorrow; they fail because of all my foes.*

King David's vision was blurred by grief. Just like tears make it hard to see in the natural, so pain, like any other strong feeling, can change our perspective.

In life, we will all go through valleys and storms. It is inevitable. **John 16:33 (NIV)** says: *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*

Storms are temporary. Because your feelings can distort how you look at life in a storm, the key is to not make permanent decisions in a temporary season. This is where we can distinguish between reacting and responding. Reacting is stepping in for a quick fix to get emotional release. Responding is stepping back, creating space for God's grace, and considering your values and convictions before a decision is made.

Let's choose today and in this season, to respond and not just react. If your vision is blurred today, reach out to a friend and ask them to help carry you through this season. Take your time, and take heart! He has overcome the world, and this storm will pass.

PSALM SEVEN

As we read the book of Psalms, we are reminded of the humanity of the Bible. These psalms were written by real people with real feelings and questions. They express someone's journey with God, and demonstrate that God does not require perfection. He is not afraid of questions or emotions; what He desires is authenticity. We can come as we are.

Psalm 7 is a cry for help. King David appears to be in trouble, not because of anything he had done, but because of someone else's evil intention against him.

In times of trouble, it can be easy to question what God is or isn't doing. The reality is that God doesn't always do what we want Him to do when we want Him to do it, and we don't always understand.

King David reminds us that our trust is not in what God does, but in who He is. **Psalm 7:10 (NIV):** *My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart.*

Many people believe that God is in control, but they question whether He is good. Others believe He is good, but question whether He is in control. If you can believe that He is both good and in control, you will find peace in the midst of the storm.

Romans 8:28 (NIV): *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

Today, let's continue to trust that God is good and in control.

**THESE PSALMS WERE WRITTEN
BY REAL PEOPLE WITH REAL
FEELINGS AND QUESTIONS**

PSALM EIGHT

So often when asking someone if I can pray for them, they respond that I should not worry about them because surely God has bigger things to consider than their small problem. I disagree. While His greatness is displayed in how He holds the universe in His hand, His greatness is also seen in His attention to detail. He is not too busy to look at your life.

It appears that the psalmist, King David, had a sobering moment when he penned this psalm. It is almost as if he caught a glimpse of his own reflection and then asked “Why? Why me?” **Psalm 8:4 (NIV):** *What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them.*

At a different time in his life, David prayed a similar prayer. It is found in **2 Samuel 7:18 (NIV):** *Who am I, Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?*

There is a very thin line between being blessed and being spoiled – being grateful versus assuming upon it all. We live at a time and in a culture where it is easy to forget and start thinking that we are self-made, that we did this ourselves.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV): *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

May we always remember that there is a good God thinking of and outworking His good plans for our lives. Everything we have is because of Him. And may we always remember that our majestic God is not too busy to pay attention to the details of our lives.

Today, consider this: If it matters to you, it matters to Him. His greatness is seen in His attention to detail.

PSALM NINE

Memory is fascinating. I am sure we have all had the experience of forgetting something important; like keys or being somewhere at a certain time. I am sure we can all relate to remembering something we'd rather forget; like a mistake or awkward moment.

The amazing grace of God never ceases to amaze me. In **Psalm 9:6 (NIV)** it says: *Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies, you have uprooted their cities; even the memory of them has perished.* In other words, not only will God restore and redeem, but He's even able to restore us to the point of healing our memory.

I think success or failure in life comes down to what you choose to remember and what you choose to forget. Too many of us forget what we should remember, and remember what we should forget. The past is the past, and choosing to go back there and re-live the pain and regret is not helpful. Of course, we don't need to pretend that the mistake or hurt did not happen, however, when we surrender it to God, I believe He can heal that memory.

Psalm 9:9-10 (NIV) says: *The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.*

Today, let's consider our memory. What are things you should remember and what are things you should forget? Can I encourage you to meditate on the goodness of God today? Let's thank Him for all that He has done and is doing, and let's tell others about His goodness.

PSALM TEN

It can be frustrating to see people, who choose a dishonest path, prosper and do well. Especially if it's at your expense. This is what had happened to King David when he penned this psalm.

All people will be held to account for their life. **Psalm 10:15 (NIV)** says: *Break the arm of the wicked man, call the evildoer to account for his wickedness that would not otherwise be found out.* This might not happen as fast or in the way we would want it, however, it's important to remember that God fights for you.

God desires for you to do well, but how you get ahead matters. We all have at least one area in which we wish we were better. For some it is an area of weakness, for others it's a temptation or an external attack. I want to encourage you that He fights for you; He will help you. That is what the grace of God is; God's grace is His strength in your area of weakness, His strength in your area of challenge, His strength in the area of your calling.

Today, as you step into your day, before you open the door, pick up the phone, or open your mouth, acknowledge this in your mind and spirit: God is fighting for me!

GOD IS FIGHTING FOR ME.

PSALM ELEVEN

Foundations are what buildings stand on. The deeper the foundation, the stronger and taller the building can be.

Psalm 11:3 (NIV): *When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

Imagine with me for a moment that your life is a building, and the building's foundation is your core values, convictions and faith. When storms come, the building may be shaken or damaged; your marriage, health, career etc. Money comes and goes. Contracts come and go. Health comes and goes. Buildings can, however, be rebuilt – but do not compromise your foundation. If your foundation is corrupted, it is only a matter of time before the whole building will come down.

Proverbs 22:28 (NIV) says: *Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your ancestors.* The bottom line of this verse is simply this: Have some things in your life that are immovable.

Today, let me encourage you with this thought: Choose when you are strong who you want to be when you are weak. Do not compromise your character; it's the foundation upon which you can build your life.

**THE WORDS OF THE LORD
ARE FLAWLESS.**

PSALM TWELVE

In a world of social media, it can be easy to view another person's lifestyle or job situation and compare it to yours. The truth is, however, that no one is perfect or has the perfect life. We often place people on pedestals. The reality is that when we try to get out of people what can only come from God, we kill relationships.

We can and should look for help and guidance from others, however, your true value, identity and purpose come from God. **Psalm 12:6 (NIV):** *And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.*

Your value, purpose and identity do not come from romantic relationships, work or things you own; these things can never fill that 'God-shaped hole'.

Today, know that only God can meet your needs and regardless of what you are going through, you can find true peace even in the midst of the storm.

**TURN YOUR PROBLEM
INTO PRAISE.**

PSALM THIRTEEN

It's easy to focus on ourselves and our current circumstances, and it can feel like God is distant. Especially if we are waiting for an answer to a prayer and there seems to be no end in sight. Our feelings can take over and we lose hope.

Psalm 13:5-6 (NIV) describes where we should place our focus – not on our feelings, but on a loving Father that has our situation in hand: *But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.*

David, the psalmist, despaired. He felt that God had left him. Slowly, he turned his problem into praise by taking the focus away from himself and onto God.

It's okay to have feelings and doubts, but today, move your gaze onto a loving God who is in control of your situation. You can trust Him in all circumstances.

PSALM FOURTEEN

Have you ever met someone who never listens to advice? They seem to make bad decisions and repeat mistakes. It is very hard to watch, and it is very hard to offer help in those situations.

Psalm 14:1 (NIV) describes that kind of person as a fool: *The fool says in his heart, "there is no God."*

The Hebrew word for "fool" used here, does not speak of intellectual ability, but rather, moral orientation. The fool believes that there are no consequences to his actions.

As Christians, we live under grace, but we must remember that we also live in the light of eternity!

Today, can I encourage you to view your decisions in light of eternity? Who are the people in your life from whom you can ask for advice and receive wisdom? Invest in those relationships.

PSALM FIFTEEN

We should always be committed to becoming a better version of ourselves, but as Christians, what does that look like?

Psalm 15: 3-5 (NIV) gives us a great description of how we should be: *whose tongue utters no slander; who does no wrong to a neighbor, and casts no slur on others; who despises a vile person but honors those who fear the Lord; who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind; who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.*

The truth is, we will never be the best version of ourselves this side of eternity, but we should still take responsibility for our own walk.

The psalmist describes someone whose walk is blameless as someone who shows grace to others, helps when needed, and promotes others' wellbeing.

Today, think how you can serve others and extend grace to someone. It can look like buying a coffee for someone in the queue or simply smiling at your neighbour. Remember, community is about serving for the betterment of others.

**WHAT YOU SOW,
WILL GROW!**

PSALM SIXTEEN

Yesterday's devotion was about becoming a better version of ourselves, but the reality is that bad things can still happen to good people! Once we discover that our true satisfaction comes from God alone, we can, however, handle the storms.

Psalm 16:5 (NIV) says: *Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.*

Psalm 16:7 (NIV) is a key verse for when we are walking through a difficult season and cannot sleep at night: *I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.*

No wonder **Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)** is an important verse to remember: *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*

The reality is that you can only take out what you put in. Let me encourage you with this thought today: Look after your heart – not just by staying healthy and exercising (a daily walk is a good start) – but by meditating on the Word of God so that when the storms come, you know where your help will come from.

“WHAT YOU SOW, WILL GROW!”

PSALM SEVENTEEN

Do you realise how much God loves you? That you are the apple of His eye?

Psalm 17:8 (NIV) says: *Keep me as the apple of your eye; Hide me in the shadow of your wings.*

What a beautiful description of how God sees us. Think about what lengths we will go to protect the apple of our eye! Whatever you might be feeling today, know that God loves you. God hides you, protects you, and cares for you.

A worship song I often declare over myself is Israel Houghton's song, *I Am Not Forgotten*. The lyrics are: "I am not forgotten, I am not forgotten, I am not forgotten, God knows my name, He knows my name."

Remember: You are the apple of God's eye, and so is everyone with whom you cross paths today. Let's treat each other accordingly.

PSALM EIGHTEEN

Sometimes in life God says no – not because He doesn't want to give you what you want, but because He is prioritising giving you what you need.

Psalm 18:1-2 (NIV) says: *I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

What a declaration! When writing this psalm, a king had attempted to kill David, but David was quick to acknowledge God in this situation. **Psalm 18:19 (NIV)**: *He brought me out into a spacious place.*

God doesn't want to limit you; He wants to enlarge you beyond what you can imagine.

The Apostle Paul puts it like this to the church in Corinth in **2 Corinthians 6:11-13 (MSG)**: *I can't tell you how much I long for you to enter this wide-open, spacious life. We didn't fence you in. The smallness you feel comes from within you. Your lives aren't small, but you're living them in a small way. I'm speaking as plainly as I can and with great affection. Open up your lives. Live openly and expansively!*

All that glitters is not gold. All that is permissible is not necessarily beneficial! God sometimes says no because you are not ready.

Today, if you are in a season of waiting and believing for a 'yes', be encouraged – God has your best interest at heart; He is still working in your life!

**OPEN UP YOUR LIVES.
LIVE OPENLY AND EXPANSIVELY!**

PSALM NINETEEN

This psalm speaks of the beauty of creation and pays tribute to our God, the beautiful Creator!

After speaking of the outward beauty of creation and the benefits of following God's Word, the Psalmist, King David, turns his attention inwardly. **Psalm 19:13 (NIV)** says: *Keep your servant also from wilful sins; may they not rule over me.*

To sin is "to miss the mark" or live below the best version of ourselves. When we give in to what we want now, that indulgence has the tendency to become addictive, and soon, it is no longer optional.

Genesis 4:7 (NIV) says: *"Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it".*

Sin should not rule over us; we should rule over it. Grace doesn't say you are not allowed to; grace says you don't have to.

Jesus was the first sinless human, and because of Jesus, we are no longer bound by the things that used to master us. While sin dehumanises us, Jesus restores our humanity and helps us become the best version of ourselves.

The end of this psalm is a prayer I often pray. **Psalm 19:14 (NIV)**: *May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

Today, let's make this our prayer. "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, God."

**MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH
AND THE MEDITATION OF MY
HEART BE PLEASING TO YOU, GOD.**

PSALM TWENTY

This psalm is what church is all about – a godly community in which we speak life and hope over each other. Let's be known for that. Let's be a place where everyone knows that they will receive a warm welcome! A place where we shout for joy over YOUR victory.

Psalm 20:4 (NIV) says: *May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.*

Sometimes, we can think of success and God's blessings as a pie – if you get a big piece, there will be less for me. But God's blessing is not like a pie; it's like a river! Your success does not take away from mine.

And as always, every promise has a key, all wisdom has a principle!

Psalm 20:7 (NIV): *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*

Today, let's be diligent with what's in our hand. Choose to speak life and put your trust in God.

**PUT YOUR TRUST IN HIM AND BE
THANKFUL FOR WHAT WILL COME.**

PSALM TWENTY-ONE

The psalmist, David, who was also one of the greatest kings in Israel's history, recognises and acknowledges God throughout this whole psalm. In this short psalm, he repeats 19 times something that God had done for the king or country.

Psalm 21:1 (NIV): *The king rejoices in your strength, Lord. How great is his joy in the victories you give!*

A miracle always makes sense in hindsight and it can be easy to explain God out of the story, but in doing so we lose our gratitude.

Remember today that the God of a PAST victory is the same God of our current battle! If God has done it before, He can do it again. Put your trust in Him and be thankful for what will come.

PSALM TWENTY-TWO

In a so-called “self-made” world, having faith in a supernatural God can often be seen as a sign of weakness.

In **Psalm 22:7-8a (NIV)**, Jesus’ crucifixion thousands of years later is accurately foreshadowed, and also the mockery from people in the midst of His suffering on the cross: *All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. “He trusts in the Lord,” they say, “let the Lord rescue him.”*

If you’ve ever felt the loneliness of people not being able to sympathise with you at your lowest, and even being mocked for your faith instead, Jesus has been there and He gets it. Also, billions of people share your faith so you can be bold!

Hebrews 4:15 (NIV) encourages us: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.*

The amazing thing about Jesus is that He doesn’t stand on the side of the accuser; He stands on the side of the accused. He is always near the broken-hearted.

Today, be encouraged that Jesus cares for you and He is carrying you through your lowest moments.

PSALM TWENTY-THREE

In life, it is easy to get distracted. The struggle is to “keep the main thing, the main thing.”

Psalm 23:6a (NIV) shows us the benefits of walking with God and letting Him shepherd us towards the main thing: *Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.*

When we follow the principle of letting God lead, we can also trust the promise that goodness and love will follow us.

The question is, is God your Shepherd?

Be encouraged to keep or make Jesus the Shepherd of your soul, and see goodness and love following you today.

IS GOD YOUR SHEPHERD?

PSALM TWENTY-FOUR

Most of us would agree that we would like to be a person of character. But how do we become such a person?

Psalm 24:3-4a (NIV) tells us: *Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart.*

In other words, we have integrity when our outer actions and inner motives go hand in hand.

It could be tempting to assume that we obtain clean hands by striving to do better. But that would be religion – trying to work out what God never worked in (See **Philippians 2:13 NIV**).

However, this psalm gives us another solution in verse 6. Clean hands come out of a pure heart, and a pure heart happens by seeking God.

As we commit to seeking God, we create space for God to change us from the inside out. His wisdom will enter our hearts and affect every aspect of us – our relationships, work, finances, choices, and so on.

Today, let it be our common pursuit to seek God and create space for God's grace.

**BECAUSE MY HOPE,
LORD, IS IN YOU.**

PSALM TWENTY-FIVE

If you currently have a lot on your plate, or a big project coming up in the future, this psalm is a great daily read.

Throughout the psalm, David shows his humility by being dependent upon God's guidance with prayers like “*show me*”, “*teach me*”, and “*guide me*”.

Psalm 25:9 (NIV) beautifully shows us how God replies with kindness and guidance when we come humbly to Him: *He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.*

When we have a teachable spirit and realise that we can't do it in our own strength, we will be guided, protected, and become more like Jesus. **Psalm 25:21 (NIV)** says: *May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope, Lord, is in you.*

Today, ask God for a teachable spirit that will transform you to reflect His nature and become a better version of yourself.

PSALM TWENTY-SIX

Too many remember what they should forget and forget what they should remember. For example, if you choose to remember your past mistakes and forget forgiveness, you will live in shame and not in freedom.

Psalm 26:3 (NIV), however, shows us how the psalmist remembers God's character and with that focus, expects deliverance to enter his life: *For I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness.* In verse 11 (NIV) he continues [...] *deliver me and be merciful to me.*

Real success in life comes down to what we choose to remember and what we choose to forget.

Today, let us reflect on:

- What should I forget?
- What should I remember?
- How will I do that?

PSALM TWENTY-SEVEN

When was the last time you felt God draw you aside? To church? To a quiet moment and place? To just meditate on the deeper things of life? Did you respond or ignore it?

In **Psalm 27:8 (NIV)** we see the psalmist responding to his heart's plea to seek God: *My heart says of you, "Seek his face! Your face, Lord, I will seek."*

It can be easy for us to ignore that plea from God because our desires are most often greater than our pursuits. We settle and stop being hungry for more.

We must have a purpose greater than our problems to push us through. For the pursuit to draw aside and wait on God is a worthy one. "Wait" is not a passive position where we just kill time. The literal translation of the word "wait" is to "wait with a sense of expectation", like when we wait for a bus – looking for it down the road.

Be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord (see **Psalm 27:13-14 NIV**).

Today, as you continue to draw aside, do not give up. As you wait and look for God, you will find Him.

**BE STRONG AND TAKE HEART
AND WAIT FOR THE LORD**

PSALM TWENTY-EIGHT

I remember as a kid walking to the bus stop on my way to school and some kids in the area started teasing me. Well, one day as I was walking towards them, they suddenly stopped. It turned out that my older brother was walking behind me. He didn't have to do anything. His presence set me apart.

God promises Moses in the desert that He would go with the people of Israel. Moses responded, "*Great, because if you don't, how will we be any different to every other nation?*" (see **Exodus 33:15 NIV**).

The psalmist, David, declares the same message to God: "*If you remain silent, we will be like everyone else!*" (see **Psalms 28:1-2 NIV**)

God's presence is what makes us different as **Psalms 28:8 (NIV)** tells us: *The Lord is the strength of His people.*

The question is not, "Is God with me?" The question is, "Am I with God?"

Wherever you are today, pray that God will go with you and you will go with God.

PSALM TWENTY-NINE

This psalm declares the absolute majesty of God. However, even though He sits with supreme power, He is not a dictator demanding worship and obedience.

Instead, He displays the ultimate servant leadership in **Psalm 29:11 (NIV)**: *The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.*

God chooses to use His power to bend low, give strength, and bless his people with peace!

No wonder the Apostle Paul says: *"I can do all this through him who gives me strength"* **Philippians 4:13 (NIV)**.

Today, whatever challenge you're in, pray for strength. Whatever battle or storm you're in, pray for peace!

PSALM THIRTY

Some people sadly portray God as an angry man in the sky ready to punish people who make mistakes. They do this because distance distorts reality.

The truth is, the heart of God is rightly upset when we, as His children, wander off the path that's best for us, best for our relationship with Him, and best for our relationship with others.

But God is far from an angry man in the sky. He is a gracious and involved Father.

Psalm 30:5 (NIV) says: *For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.*

*His heart is towards you. He is able to turn wailing into dancing (see **Psalm 30:11 NIV**).*

What is causing you to cry? What is breaking your heart? If it's important to you, it's important to God!

Today, let's believe that the things that were causing you pain and heartache will soon become a reason for celebration!

**HIS HEART IS TOWARDS YOU.
HE IS ABLE TO TURN WAILING
INTO DANCING.**

PSALM THIRTY-ONE

(PART ONE)

We can all relate to a pain so real that even our body aches from it. Pain can sadly affect our dreams, vision, and how we see ourselves.

Psalm 31:9 (NIV) describes this reality: *Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief.*

When we choose who we're going to be before challenges or crises arrive, it won't define us. However, we'll need to hold on to a promise that is greater than our problems.

God's promise from this specific psalm to you is that He wants to set your feet in a spacious place (see **Psalm 31:8 NIV**).

Remember today, that following Jesus will not limit you; it will enlarge you! He is with you throughout the challenges of life.

**HE IS WITH YOU THROUGHOUT
THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE.**

PSALM THIRTY-ONE

(PART TWO)

Yesterday, we looked at the first part of Psalm 31 that touches on the challenges of life. Today's part focuses on the goodness of God.

As people, we often tend to lean into one of those directions. But an extreme stance is unhelpful because life is not all bad nor is it all good.

The struggle is real and so is the goodness of God.

Psalm 31:19 (NIV) gives us a glimpse into God's goodness: *How abundant are the good things that you have stored up for those who fear you, that you bestow in the sight of all, on those who take refuge in you.*

It's easy to lose track of God's goodness in the midst of pain. But we must remember **Psalm 31:22 (NIV)**: *In my alarm I said, I am cut off from your sight! Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help.*

Whatever you're facing today, remember that God is for you, God loves you, and God has good things in store for you.

**Jabez cried out to the God of Israel,
“Oh that You would bless me and
enlarge my territory! Let your hand
be with me, and keep me from harm
so that I will be free from pain.”
And God granted his request.**

1 Chronicles 4:10

**Surely your goodness and
love will follow me all the
days of my life.**

Psalm 23:6a (NIV)