



BREAKING THROUGH
transforming lives through prayer

21 DAILY DEVOTIONALS

During the 21 days of 'Jesus All about life' we have put together a series of daily devotionals that you can do privately. The focus of the devotionals is on what the Bible says about prayer and evangelism and they are designed for your private meditation on these topics so that you might hear what God is saying to you about this very important topic.

We suggest you spend 10-15minutes on each devotional by reading the Bible passage first then looking at and reflecting on the focus questions. After this spend some time in prayer to God. You may also like to jot down the thoughts God gives you in the space provided.


crossover

Helping Australian
Baptists Share Jesus

1) APATHY OR ACTION? (Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-15)

'And even if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God' (v3-4)

How do you read verse 4? Is it a declaration for you of an unchangeable fact or does it inspire you to prayer? Does it cause you grief or apathy? Often we read proclamations like this in God's word and we accept it as the status quo. We throw our hands up in the air and say 'Well if the Bible says that these unbelievers are perishing. There's nothing I can do.' But what if something like this is meant to inspire us, move us and make us get up and fight in our prayers against the status quo?

ACTION:

Who are the people around you who are 'unbelievers'? Pray that God would soften your heart towards them and that in the name of Jesus veils will be lifted off. Pray that they would see the light of Christ and the truth of the gospel 'so that grace as it extends to more and more people' (v15) will bring people into a living relationship with Jesus.

2) GET SERIOUS! (Read 1 Peter 4:7-11)

'The end of all things is near, therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers.' (v7)

We hear the expressions 'Get serious' or 'Seriously!' often today. It's an expression said with the intent to encourage the hearer to take the speakers words as being significant. Here Peter is telling us to get serious because the time for Jesus' return is getting nearer. If the end of all things is near what sort of people should Christians be? Serious! In other words we are to be aware of current affairs and events around us to be able to pray in a more informed manner about our world. The time is short. Get serious! Pray!

ACTION:

How can you get more serious about your prayers? Today try opening your eyes to the events and people around you as you watch the news, as you talk with workmates, as you buy your coffee from that café you always go to. The time is short so pray for change in the events you come across today and in the lives of those people who don't know Jesus.

3) DEVASTATED FOR THE LOST (Read Jeremiah 8:18-9:1)

'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved'. For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me' (Jeremiah 8:20-21)

Ancient saints used to speak of 'The gift of tears' that God could sometimes give us. It is a gift that identifies our hearts with the suffering heart of God. When God looks at people who have turned away from him he is not only angry he is also devastated. In this passage we hear the chant of a lost Israel moaning that there will be no salvation, no relief from their plight. And we feel the heart of the prophet for God's recalcitrant people who refuse to turn to God. God's heart is devastated for the lost.

ACTION:

Are you devastated for those who don't know Jesus and will therefore go to hell? If not why not bravely ask that God will soften your heart and give you the 'gift of tears' so that you might identify with his heart for those who have turned away from him?

4) BRINGING HEAVEN TO EARTH (Read Matthew 6:5-15)

'Pray then in this way Our father in heaven hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' (v9-10)

God's will is always done in heaven. Heaven is perfect. Earth is not. But through prayer Jesus inspires us that we can bring a bit of heaven onto earth. Through prayer we bring heaven's life, love, truth and victory onto earth! In all things as we pray we are to bring heaven onto this earth. Do you know someone who isn't a follower of Jesus yet? God's desire is that they turn towards him. So pray God's will into your friend's life. Pray that God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven for your friend.

ACTION:

How can you pray heaven into earth in your day today? Today ask yourself what is God's will for that person in front of you? God's will is that the person comes into a relationship with him. So pray the power of heaven into that person's life. Pray into people you know and even those who you interact with only briefly every day. See if any changes begin to happen!

5) KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR (Read Luke 11:5-13)

'I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.' (v8)

Friends are wonderful but let's face it they can sometimes be annoying! Ever had a friend borrow something and not return it? Ever had a friend turn up at your doorstep at the worst time? Ever had a friend overstay their visit? In this parable the friend is annoying. His persistence is annoying, so much so that the person who has been woken from their sleep gives him what he wants just to get rid of him! But for God persistence is not annoying. Persistence is a virtue. Persistence is a way to receive what you are asking for. If you, a persistent friend of God knock on heaven's door, this passage guarantees an entry.

ACTION:

What are you praying for at the moment that you are feeling no breakthrough in? According to this passage what should you do? Your heavenly Father wants to give you good things so keep praying. Pray for that friend, that acquaintance, that family member to turn to God.

6) THE FAITH OF THE UNBELIEVER (Read Daniel 6)

'The King said to Daniel "May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!"' (v16)

This passage in the Bible is incredible because we hear a prayer coming from the mouth of an 'unbeliever'. Daniel has built such a good friendship with his boss the king, and his faithfulness to God has been such a strong witness to him, that the King intercedes on behalf of Daniel! In the end, this 'heathen' King proclaims that the God of Daniel 'Delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, for he has saved Daniel for the power of the lions.' (v27)

ACTION:

How can you be more 'faithful' to God in your workplace, in your family, in your social circles so that when you move in non Christian circles they might be driven to give praise to your God? Pray for your protection, your witness and the influence of God in the circles that you move in.

7) ALL KINDS OF PRAYERS (Read 1 Timothy 2:1-10)

'First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions. . .' (v1-2)

Paul's urging here is that all kinds of prayers be made for all kinds of unbelievers because God wants all kinds of people saved (v4)! Our prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings are to be made through the powerful name of Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all (v6). If Jesus is given to ALL then we are to pray that ALL come into a relationship with him. Our employers, our nation's leaders, our community leaders, our world leaders, influential people in our country. We are to pray that they turn to Jesus.

ACTION:

Who are the people of influence and authority around you that you could be praying for? Who are those who you see or interact with that are of 'high positions' who could be amazing influencers for the kingdom of God if they entered a relationship with Jesus? God wants to bring everyone into his kingdom. . . even the powerful!

8) HOW LONG LORD? (Read Habakkuk 1-2:1)

'O Lord, How long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?' (v2)

'I will stand at my watchpost...I will keep watch to see what he will say to me and what he will answer concerning my complaint.' (v 2:1)

There are all kinds of prayers, including the ones where we can only moan to the Lord 'How long God?' Sometimes we see injustice, violence and evil triumph and we are discouraged that nothing is changing in our world. We pray for our loved ones and we see little breakthrough. Habakkuk shows us that we can also pray to God by pouring out our complaints to him. But the prophet also shows us that in faith we are to wait for, watch for and expect change to occur. He is God and he will bring justice, 'Will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?' (Luke 18:7)

ACTION:

In all honesty what do you want to complain to God about right now? Pour out your complaints to him but then lift up your face and turn to God in hope and expectancy telling him that you will wait for a word of comfort from him.

9) STANDING IN THE GAP FOR GOD (Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

'So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. . .' (v20)

Jesus stood in the gap on our behalf. The gap that separated us from God and built a bridge so that we might get connected back to a holy God. The incredible thing about this passage is that it says that God makes his appeal through us as people who represent Christ on this earth. Christ is our great reconciler and now he has give to us the ministry of reconciliation. Everywhere you go you are an ambassador for Christ and God is making an appeal to every non Christian he puts before you. God pleads, urges and prays through you that the people you interact with will turn to him.

ACTION:

How can you work with God (6:1) so that you don't block the appeals he makes to people through you? How can you open yourself up to be an intercessor standing in the gap between your friend who does not know Jesus and God? What do you need to do to let God's Spirit move through you to bring Christ's salvation to the people around you?

10) A FRIEND OF GOD (Read Genesis 18:16-33)

'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?' (v17)

Abraham was called 'A friend of God' (James 2:23) and God tells his friends his secrets. Jesus said to his disciples 'I do not call you servants any longer because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my father (John 15:15). Through Jesus Christ we are called friends of God. Being an intercessor as Abraham was in this passage means that as a friend of God you listen to the secrets of God and then pray the heartbeat of God into a situation.

ACTION:

Is God calling you to be an intercessor? God wants to share with you his secrets. Spend some time in his presence listening and praying about what you have heard. Call out to God that situations would change as Abraham did for his family in Sodom.

11) THE WELFARE OF YOUR CITY (Read Jeremiah 29:1-14) (week 6)

'But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf. . .' (v7)

Do you ever feel like you are in exile? Like this place is not your home? The Bible says that as Christians we are exiles waiting for the return of Jesus (1 Peter 2:11). The Israelites were also in exile in Babylon in the time of their captivity. But instead of isolating themselves from the culture, God told them to get involved, build houses, get married but most of all to pray for their city. In our time of exile as we wait for the return of Jesus we must be praying for our city, getting involved in our culture that we might be 'salt' and 'light' in our community.

ACTION:

What institutions in your community can you be praying for? How is your local police station doing? What about the council? How about local businesses? What about the local high school? How can we more regularly pray for 'the welfare of our city' as we gather at church or in our meetings during the week?

12) WHAT STOPS US FROM PRAYING (1): WE ARE CONQUERORS (Read 1 John 5:1-5)

'... for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith' (v4)

Have you ever examined your position as you pray? Is your position one of open arms extended ready to receive or is it with arms folded not expecting to get very much from your Heavenly Father? This passage tells us that our position is one of a conqueror over the world. Through faith in what Jesus has already done when we pray our position is one of victory. If we are born of God then we are children of God and if we are children of God then we stand in God's presence expectantly waiting to hear from God and in a position of victory over the world.

ACTION:

Examine your position before God. Do you stand in his presence as you pray ready to receive, ready to conquer, in an attitude of victory? What is it in your life that you are feeling defeated about... something you keep praying about yet your faith seems lacking? Rediscover and affirm that your position is that you are a conqueror. Then pray in that attitude!

13) WHAT STOPS US FROM PRAYING (2): THE EYES OF YOUR HEART

(Read Ephesians 1:15-23)

'So that with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know... the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe..' (v18-19)

This passage shows us that there is such a thing as spiritual perception. We may know with our minds the truth about something but seeing it spiritually is another thing. Paul here prays that our hearts would be enlightened, that we would be given spiritual perception so that we might truly perceive and grasp God's awesome power. That power is not only a theoretical, abstract truth but it is an active power ready to accomplish the purposes of God (v20).

ACTION:

What does the power of God mean to you? Is it an abstract truth? Is it a power only reserved for the super spiritual? We hear about the power of God but do you believe that you can pray the power of God into circumstances? Pray that the eyes of your heart would be enlightened with a spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you might truly know, receive and pray the power of God into your circumstances.

14) DESTROYING ARGUMENTS AGAINST GOD (Read 2 Corinthians 10:1-6)

'We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God' (v4-5)

A lady came into my office recently with a lot of confusion in her mind about God. She was a strong Christian yet had been watching programmes on TV and reading books that subtly questioned the truth that Jesus Christ was the only way to salvation. The programmes and books were teaching 'tolerance' but that tolerance meant that Christians needed to abandon the statement that Jesus was the only way to God. Some arguments in our world stand against God and bring confusion and doubt about the truth into peoples minds.

ACTION:

What arguments and 'proud obstacles' against God can you discern in our world just by watching TV and reading books? Take those arguments captive and put them under submission to Christ so that they are destroyed and people's minds can hear the truth about the knowledge of God.

15) PRAY IN THE SPIRIT (Read Ephesians 6:10-20)

'Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication' (v18)

Prayer lists are great! I love it when I can sit down with a group of believers and pray through various requests and supplications to God. And this passage assures us that the Spirit is with us to give us power to pray in this way. But have you ever sat down and asked the Spirit what you should be praying for? It's true that the Spirit is with us to give us power to pray but He is also with us to give us guidance as we pray.

ACTION:

Ask the Holy Spirit what he would have you pray today. Who would he want you to be praying for who does not know Jesus? What would he have you do for that person today? Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in your prayer times and help you to discern the voice of God more clearly in your prayer times.

16) WRESTLING IN PRAYER (Read Colossians 4:7-17)

'Epaphras who is one of you a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf..' (v12)

What does it mean to 'wrestle' in prayer? It seems like Epaphras was a prayer warrior who loved people enough to spend not only time but energy and emotion as he prayed for them. Maybe he wrestled in his attitude towards those who he was praying for? Maybe he wrestled in his own mind with doubts about his prayers towards the people he prayed for? Maybe he battled with the forces of darkness that would try to stop him from praying for those people? Whatever the wrestling was about, he was a man who prayed with conviction for the people that he loved.

ACTION:

Have you ever experienced a 'wrestling' when you pray? When we pray we are entering into a battle zone in the spiritual. We are battling to win people into the kingdom of God. As you 'wrestle' today ask God to give you strength and protection as you fight to bring that person on your heart into the salvation of Jesus Christ.

17) OUR INTERCESSOR (Read Romans 8:26-30)

'Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes.' (v 26)

What an encouraging thought that when we don't know how or what to pray we have the Holy Spirit as our intercessor who helps us! Sometimes we come to God in our prayer times lacking in faith, lacking in vision, not knowing what to say. Sometimes we are not even informed enough about a situation, sometimes we are too tired with many distraction going on in our minds so we loose focus. Even in these times if we take some time to pray God assures us that the Holy Spirit will help us to pray. God honours even the little that we can sometimes muster up to give him. What a God of grace!

ACTION:

Are you feeling like you don't really have the energy to pray today? Are you not even sure about the direction that you need to pray? Come to God today anyway in faith that the Holy Spirit is there waiting for you ready to hear from you, ready to guide you to pray the very heartbeat of God into a situation.

18) THE PRAYER OF FAITH (Read James 5:13-20)

'The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.' (v 15)

Sickness comes in many forms. It can be physical sickness, it can be emotional sickness or it can mean spiritual sickness in the form of oppression. The guarantee here is that whoever is sick needs prayer coming from a righteous person (v 16) in faith and that sick person will be 'raised up'. All of us in Christ are righteous through his perfect blood therefore our prayers are effective to deliver people from their 'sickness'.

ACTION:

Who do you know who is not a Christian who is 'sick'? Is it an emotional, physical or spiritual sickness? Do they struggle with unforgiveness, wounds or hurts from the past? Why not ask the Spirit to guide you to pray for them that they would be raised up. Maybe you could even tell them that you are praying for them?

19) THE SECRET LIFE OF US (Read Matthew 6:1-8)

'...pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.' (v6)

This passage warns us that it's possible to have a very public prayer life filled with long, wordy and strategically placed prayers yet avoid God in the 'secret' place. The secret place is where we truly encounter God. When no one is watching or listening we stand before God with no where to hide and we pour out our true words to him. Our passage says that if we come to this secret place we will find a reward from our heavenly Father.

ACTION:

Where is the balance of your prayer life? Do you mostly pray in public or in private? God wants to meet you today in secret. Spend some extra time today in the knowledge that while you are alone with God he is the only one present and longs to meet you in the secret place ready to reward you. Lift up to him your concerns about those who you know who are not yet Christ followers.

20) WAITING ON GOD (Read Hosea 6:1-3)

'Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord, his appearance is as sure as the dawn' (v3)

How confident are you that the sun will rise again tomorrow? I think most people would say they are certain of that. I love the certainty of Hosea in this verse as he declares that God will appear, he will come, he will answer, he will revive, he will heal! As certain as the dawn appears he will do it! This passage promises revival, refreshment and renewal if we press on to know the Lord and wait on him to appear in our lives and situations.

ACTION:

How confident are you that God will appear in your life as he answers the prayers you are praying? Are you expectant? Are you watching to see how he will appear? As we head towards the end of Jesus all about life commit yourself to keep watching and waiting for God to answer your prayers as you 'press on' to know him.

21) THANKSGIVING IN PRAYER (Read Colossians 4:2-6)

'Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving' (v 2)

Sometimes I think Thanksgiving must be the most neglected part of prayer. Try asking a prayer group to spend a while in thanksgiving initially and see how soon the prayers go towards supplication! Thanksgiving is an important part of our prayer life because we are reminded that God faithfully comes through for us in our prayers. When we thank God we are reminded that he has answered us in the past therefore he will answer us again in our present prayers that we lift up towards him.

ACTION:

Spend some time right now thanking God for the way that he has answered your prayers over the last 21 days. Thank him for the little things. Thank him for his faithfulness. Thank him in faith for his plans to come through for you again in the future!