

Week 48 Daily Devotional

I. Prayer to enter the Lord's presence:

Be still for a moment. "Lord, I give the day that is now past to you. It is yours. I give the day that is to come to you; help me to see where you are working and to join you there. Speak to me during these moments. I commit them and myself to you."

II. Prayer of Confession:

"Lord, you are faithful to forgive me and cleanse me of my sin when I confess it to you. I confess my sin(s) of _____. Thank you for forgiveness." (1 John 1:9)

III. Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Choose to be thankful, speak out loud of what God has done.

"Thank you, Father, for _____. Fill my heart and my mouth with gratitude throughout this day."

IV. Scripture Reflection

Day 1

Read

Isaiah 7:14

14 Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.

Reflect

When we read Old Testament prophecy, the sign should always be read and understood on two levels - like looking at a mountain range of peaks. The first peak would have related directly to the situation in Isaiah's time and the peaks further out would relate to future events. Isaiah's prophecy would also be a foreshadowing a type of One who was yet to come, One who would be conceived by an actual virgin (Matthew 1:20), One who would truly fulfill the meaning of His name—"God with us." The name Immanuel is found again in 8:8, and in 8:10 it is translated "God is with us." The name is ultimately realized in Jesus, who as the incarnate Son of God was "God with us."

Think about the name Immanuel. It captures the awe and wonder of the incarnation, and the unimaginable fact that the God of the universe entered the stream of time to become one with us. Think about the miracle of Jesus' birth being foretold some 700 years before it was fulfilled. God was now "with us." He would become one of us.

Respond

Take some time to think about what it means for you personally, that God is with you. Thank Him for His presence.

Day 2

Read

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6-7

For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now on and forever. The zeal of the Lord of Armies will accomplish this.

Reflect

Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6-7 are meant to go together. They are familiar verses; you've probably heard them sung as part of Handel's Messiah. If you have, you know it is a powerful and moving part of the composition as the names of the Messiah are sung. Take some time and look at each name individually. This is the Messiah! His names describe His character to us.

Wonderful Counselor: He is exceptional, distinguished, and without peer, the One who gives the right advice.

Mighty God: He is God Himself.

Everlasting Father: He is timeless; He is God, our Father.

Prince of Peace: His government is one of justice and peace.

This is the One we've placed our hope in, Immanuel—God with us!

Respond

Think about God's character as described in the names above. Now think about your life, think about how God has made Himself known to you by these names. Then take some time and praise Him for revealing Himself to you.

Day 3

Matthew 1:23

See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated “God is with us.”

Reflect

Jesus would fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, for he would be Immanuel, “God is with us.” Jesus was God in the flesh; thus, God was literally among us—with us. Think about what that means. God didn’t just tell us what to do; He sent help. He was actively involved with His world. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ lives with each of His followers every day. He stands with us in every trial and every joy.

Jesus, the infinite, unlimited God took on the limitations of humanity so He could live and die for the salvation of all who would believe in Him. He came to earth to save us from the power and penalty of sin. And now, through the Holy Spirit, Christ is present in the life of every believer. He is our living hope!

Respond

God with us—How does that give you hope for today? Make it personal. How does he give Hope to the circumstances you find yourself in right now? Praise Him as the God of Hope. Know that He has revealed the path of life to you; in his presence is abundant joy; at His right hand is eternal pleasures. He is our Hope!

Day 4

Galatians 4:4-5

“When the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.”

Reflect

Sometimes as we go about our days we can wonder if there is any hope. We can look around at the brokenness in the world and wonder “what is going on?” I can feel that way at times. When I do, it’s always good for me to stop and think about this passage. There is something reassuring about God’s timing! Keep this thought in your mind as you read an excerpt from a commentary I like:

4 But when the time had fully come—that is, when we heirs had come of age—**God sent his Son**, Christ (see Romans 5:6). Christ was **born of a woman**, just as we were (see Matthew 1:18; Philippians 2:6–8). He experienced all man’s temptations and weaknesses (Hebrews 2:15, 18; 4:15). He was **born under law**. God, the lawgiver, came to earth as a man, and put Himself under His own law. In this way He was able to completely fulfill the law. Not only that, He also paid the price for our sins according to the law. That price was His own life—because the **wages of sin is death** (Romans 6:23). **5** Why did God send His Son? He sent Him **to redeem those under law**—that is, those under the **basic principles of the world**, both Jews and Gentiles. We were once like slaves, and our master was Satan, the **prince of this world** (John 12:31). Therefore, because we were Satan’s “property,” Christ had to pay a price to **redeem** us from Satan (Galatians 3:13). But when Christ “purchases” us, we are no longer slaves as before. We become Christ’s brothers and sisters, that is, adopted children and full heirs of God (Ephesians 1:5; 1 John 3:1).

Respond

Sometimes we can feel like our situation is hopeless. When you do, think back to this passage—think about the implications it has for you. Think about how hope is fulfilled in the birth of Jesus! He is our only hope. Preach that truth to yourself throughout the day. Determine, with His help, to stand firm in Him.

Day 5

Psalm 42:5

Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.

We all become discouraged from time to time, our hope can waver, and yet we know that this is not a state God wants us to remain in. **Sometimes we've just got to preach truth to ourselves.** We need to shake ourselves—even if we don't "feel" like it. It's okay to tell yourself, "What's the matter with you? Have you forgotten God—forgotten His promises, His faithfulness, His love and mercy?" Tell yourself to, "Put your hope in God and praise Him despite what is going on."

Reflect

Through faith in Christ, we are connected to the ultimate source of hope—Christ, the living Hope! He is always with us—moment by moment—working to conform us to His image. Know that as a follower of Christ, we have hope—a living Hope—a hope that is bedrock to thriving in Christ. Trust in His wisdom and character!

Respond

If you're struggling to hold on to hope, let God know, be honest with Him, then ask Him to strengthen and pour courage into you. He is faithful.

V. Prayer for others:

Pray specifically for the concerns of your life and the lives of others.

VI. Prayer of commitment:

“Lord God, I commit to love you with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength and with all my mind and to love my neighbor as myself. Empower me today to love you and others with everything that I am.” (Luke 10:27)

This Month's Scripture Memory:

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid him the iniquity of us all.