

The Biggest Idea Ever

How you can
trade anxiety,
fear, & burnout



for lasting
peace, purpose,
& significance

Denis Beauséjour

Former VP Advertising, Procter & Gamble

Daily Spiritual Adventure Guide

Form the key habit needed for spiritual growth.

Take 10 minutes a day for 40 days.

Experience peace, purpose, and significance.

“My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.”

Jesus of Nazareth, John 10:10, NLT

We are only made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. We all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely made us right with him when we believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood to pay the penalty of our sin.

The Apostle Paul, Romans 3:22-24 (NLT, abridged)

This daily dive is designed to help you build the key habits for spiritual growth. You will learn to experience the life only Jesus can give, a life of peace, purpose, and significance. Find a quiet comfortable place and follow this simple process every day.

1. Submit the day to your heavenly Father. Invite his presence. Give him your praise and thanks.
2. Ask Jesus to search your heart. Confess your sins. Thank Jesus for his grace and forgiveness.
3. Invite Jesus to speak to you. Read the passage. Read it a second time, underlining the key ideas.
4. What is the passage saying to you? Note any promises, commands, or wisdom that stand out.
5. Ask for the filling of the Spirit. Ask Jesus to change you any way he wants to.
6. Preview your day. How can you apply today’s passage? Who can you serve or share this with?
7. Listen and journal what you sense him saying to you! Enter the day ready to obey!

Day 1

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

Romans 5:1-2

When Paul says we are justified, it’s a legal term meaning “declared not guilty”. When we place our faith in Jesus, the Father declares us not guilty of our sin! We are at peace with God, and we can stand before him thanks to the grace of Jesus’ substitution for us.

Do you have peace with God? I mean deep down in your soul. If you have any doubt about that, stop now and ask God why. It may be that you never received his forgiveness for your sins. Maybe you never realized how truly needy you are for God. Maybe you have a past sin that you believe is too much for God to forgive.

What about abortion – could God forgive that? Yes! What about rage towards a spouse or child? Yes! What about years of hatred for someone who hurt you? Yes! Cheating on a college exam and graduating without truly earning that degree? Yes! Abusing someone sexually? Yes! Whatever we earnestly confess, God forgives completely. That is the vastness of the Cross – our sin is nailed to the cross, not in part but the whole! Will you humbly seek and receive the forgiveness of Jesus?

Now, by faith, receive God’s pardon. Take it for yourself – it is not selfishness; it is the will of God. By faith, you now stand in his grace. You are no longer opposed to God; you are his beloved child. You now have a future that will span into a glorious eternity with God.

Finish this time in prayer, asking God to help you happily celebrate in this glorious hope.

Day 2

“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

Romans 5:3-5

Not only do we rejoice in the magnificent grace of God, we also rejoice in our sufferings. What? Yes, in our sufferings! Maybe you lost a job, or a loved one passed away. Maybe you did not finish college. Someone may have deceived or betrayed you. Perhaps you are battling cancer, or in declining health as you age. It may be that you have poor social skills and are not connecting with others as well as you would like. Maybe you constantly struggle to make ends meet, or you never made the cut athletically.

This is the reality of life in a fallen world. We sin and others sin against us. Jesus rises above that, and overcomes opposition, even death. He invites us to learn from him. In the trials you face today, ask Jesus what he wants you to learn. Listen to him and journal what he says.

As we persevere, we learn that God always gives us a way out. Slowly, even imperceptibly, we are more patient, more prayerful, more willing to serve. Gradually our insides shift, and our complaining whines give way to a new resiliency, and then joy!

That is character transformation! Inch by inch, cell by cell, event by event, we “put on” the character qualities of Jesus. He is making us holy. As our character shifts, we see why we can trust him, and why we can hope. Because he never disappoints us, and his word never comes back without effect. Our hope is based on his past performance, not wishful thinking about the future.

Ask Jesus to experience the pouring of his love into your heart by the Holy Spirit. Now close your eyes, and imagine you are an urn being filled with water as God pours his love into your heart. Ask Jesus to enter your trials and fill them with his life-giving presence.

Day 3

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:6-8

The Bible tells us that before we trusted Jesus, we were dead in our sins and transgressions. That means we were dead spiritually and didn't know it! Powerless! Unable to please God no matter how “good” we thought we were. Think about that state of total helplessness: like a baby left on an orphanage doorstep!

That was our condition when Jesus died for us: we were ungodly – opposed to him. Just then, at the right time, because God's timing is always perfect, he demonstrated his great love for us. Do you remember the first time you realized that Jesus died for you? Perhaps you were stealing, or lying. Perhaps you were an absent parent. Maybe you were a “good person” who finally saw your pride and self-righteousness. Maybe you were religious without a clue of your need for Jesus.

But one day, you realized your need. You really were a sinner. You were separated from God, and headed for an eternity without hope. You began to see that religion, morality, ethics, church work, education and even charitable activities were worthless. You finally saw that deep down your trust was in yourself. Your work ethic. Your intelligence. Your social skills. Your connections.

Then the moment came. You saw Jesus in a new light. He was not just a nice teacher and role model. He did not belong in the same category as Gandhi, Mohammed, Siddhartha, or Moses. He was in a class by himself – the ultimate example of love. He is the Creator God who holds the universe together, and yet he loved you at your worst. He made the first move. He left heaven to become one of us, and to die for us. That is love. Let that love set your soul on fire. Let that love fuel your worship. Pray now that God would help you see how much you are loved, how much you are understood, how much you've been given. Thank God and ask him to help you give him the worship he truly deserves.

Day 4

“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

Romans 5:9-11

Fellow sinners, we are justified by the blood of Jesus – by faith, we are declared “not guilty” by God! Related to that, we are also saved from God’s wrath - past, present, and future! This “saving from wrath” occurs because of Jesus’ indestructible life. In Christ, we are never condemned. In fact, we have received the reconciliation that means we are no longer enemies with God.

Have you ever experienced reconciliation with someone who was formerly an enemy to you? Maybe there was a bully in school, a rival for a promotion at work, someone who committed a crime against you? Someone you trusted who betrayed you? Perhaps someone who used to ridicule you or attack you, or maybe just ignore you? Maybe it was your father or your mother. Can you remember the feeling of finally getting right with that person?

How much more relief we experience when we get right with our Creator! How much higher the stakes, how much more important this is for us. If you have relief getting right with a boss or parent, translate that to being right with the judge of the universe. This is the reality of freedom, a paid debt, and a cancelled sentence. Animosity is exchanged for a shared eternity with Jesus that starts now.

Ask God to show you the fullness of the forgiveness he has given you – list specific things he has forgiven. List the things or people that remain unforgiven in your heart. Make a commitment to forgive and reconcile with anyone you are not “at peace” with. Set a timetable. Thank God for this amazing privilege of “getting right” with him and every person he points out!

Day 5

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned – for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.”

Romans 5:12-14

Sin entered the world through one man, and then death spread to all men. Because God had not yet given Moses the Ten Commandments, no one between Adam and Moses broke a specific command like Adam and Eve did, eating from the forbidden tree. Yet, death ruled our planet, because we are all marked with Adam’s signature sin – we are born into a genetic distrust of God.

Have you ever thought of what you would have done in the Garden of Eden? I start out believing I would have obeyed God. But looking at my own life of sin and self-centeredness, I quickly realize I would have done exactly what Adam and Eve did, and probably sooner than they did! As an aside, notice the last phrase: “a pattern of the one to come.” The coming Messiah would be human.

Sin spread through us before we were born. Young children do not have to be taught to disobey, it’s innate! Ask God to show you the sin that still infects you, such as pride and self-centeredness, fear and worry, addictions, lack of intimacy with God and people, greed and stinginess, prayerlessness, lust, lack of joy. Thank him for the opportunity to get real and to be forgiven!

Day 6

“But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:15-17

The contrast between Adam and Jesus is now fully expressed by Paul. The gift of Jesus is a complete opposite of Adam’s trespass. One trespass condemned the entire human race. The loving life and action of Jesus Christ was God’s gracious “overflow to the many,” opening the possibility of eternal life for all who receive it. Death can be traded for an endless “reign in life” through Jesus.

The idea of ruling for eternity with Jesus is such a far cry from what we really deserve. God’s plan of forgiveness and blessing in Jesus (the gift) is so unlike the response we would give our enemies!

The Father loved you and he wanted you back for himself – to worship him. He sent his only Son to die in your place, to bear his justice and wrath instead of you, and to reign eternally with him. Give thanks and praise for what the Father has done for you through Jesus.

Day 7

“Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”

Romans 5:18-19

The righteous justification offered by Jesus is massive, good news for the whole world. Here, Paul alludes to the writings of the prophet Isaiah. Almost eight centuries before Jesus, Isaiah predicted the Cross and the substitution by Jesus that would make many righteous in God’s eyes. But many Jews failed to see how Jesus fulfilled this text. Similarly, today, many do not understand the stunning obedience of Jesus.

Yet in these words of the prophet Isaiah, we see Paul’s message of justification: “Yet it was God’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer ... by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.” By faith in Jesus, Isaiah knew many would “be made righteous.”

The Dead Sea Scrolls discovery of 1947 included very old copies of the prophecy of Isaiah. These manuscripts were dated to 125 B.C. Prior to that time the oldest copy available was dated to 900 A.D. so this was a huge find. The manuscripts – a thousand years apart – were virtually identical!

That proved two huge things. First, that the Bible we have has been carefully preserved over time, so we can trust that what we have is what God intended. Second, it proved that the many prophecies about Jesus in Isaiah were not fabricated by the followers of Jesus.

Give thanks that God revealed himself and his plans for us so clearly through the Old Testament prophets and the eyewitnesses that wrote the New Testament. Ask Jesus to give you a thirst for his Word, greater faith, and a more obedient life.

Day 8

“The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 5:20-21

Have you ever had a child make a beeline to the one thing you told them they could not do? The giving of the Law to Moses predictably led to more sin. The purpose of the Law was to point people to Christ, by revealing our disobedient hearts and our need for God.

No one can consider the Ten Commandments very long without realizing that they are impossible to keep! As Paul said in another letter, the Law of Moses was like a Greco-Roman “tutor-bodyguard” waiting for the time of greater maturity. The Law leads us to Jesus by pointing out our spiritual poverty.

While the Law pointed out the abundance of sin, God’s provision of grace in Jesus was even more abundant. Grace “increased all the more” could be translated “hyper-overflowed.” No matter how much sin we have committed, the grace of Jesus totally overwhelms it.

Summing up Chapter 5, Paul has made it clear that our forgiveness and justification is just the beginning of God’s overflowing grace. He has made it clear that there is so much more beyond for us, because God’s grace is so plentiful and unlimited. In other words, it is way better than you think!

Ask God to help you understand his grace. Praise his abundant generosity toward you. Ask God for an extra measure of faith, so you can “see” more of what he’s done for you. May his grace “hyper-overflow” into all dimensions of your life.

Day 9

“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Romans 6:1-4

Paul begins Chapter 6 with the obvious question – if God’s grace overflows as sin increases then should we sin more to get more grace? He immediately and vehemently says “no way”! Then he gives the reason: we died to sin when we trusted Jesus. When we first believed, we were “baptized into Christ Jesus.” This means we were immersed into the nature, character, and agenda of Jesus. We were also “baptized into his death” so we could rise with him into new life. The power of sin was broken.

This spiritual truth is what we re-enact when we are baptized – a celebration of our public identification as followers of Christ. We go under the water to symbolize our death, and we come out of the water to symbolize our unity with Jesus in his resurrection. The term “new life” at the end of verse 4 speaks of a life with a new, fresh, eternal quality that begins now, not when we die.

This truth is huge! Dwell on it for a few minutes. When you trusted Jesus, you joined into his death and resurrection. And remember, God has poured his love into your heart by the Holy Spirit. Have you been baptized in water in obedience to Jesus? If not, make plans to share your faith and have another believer baptize you!

Conclude your time today by asking Jesus to help you identify with him more fully. Ask him to help you imagine your death with him on the Cross and your participation with him in his resurrection. Recognize your “old self” is dead and your “new self” lives in Jesus. Ask him to come and live his life through yours today. Let his power over death be the abundant power that you depend on today. Praise him for this amazing gift!

Day 10

“If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”

Romans 6:5-7

The beauty of our identification with Jesus is now spelled out in greater detail. To be united with Jesus in resurrection requires that we were first united with him in death. So “dying to self” is part of “carrying our cross daily” – a central part of the Christian life. But the next two verses make this identification with Jesus even more spectacular. Because our old selves were crucified with Jesus, we are no longer slaves to sin! We have been freed from the power of sin! It is even better than you may have thought: Jesus’ blood covered your sins, yes, but also his Cross put your sin nature to death, so sin’s power over you was broken.

That means that you now have the power to overcome any sin that has enslaved you. That includes greed, pornography, bad language, a negative attitude, quitting, or lying. And addiction to alcohol, drugs, or smoking cigarettes. And failure to pray, read the Bible, or worship with your whole heart. Even failure to forgive people who have wronged you, and failure to work to your full potential.

Ask God to help you apprehend the truth that no sin has power over you. Confess specific sins and ask him to grant you freedom. Ask a friend to pray for you and to keep you accountable. Praise God for his path to freedom!

Day 11

“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 6:8-11

Our identity in Jesus is powerful. The fact that the old self died with Christ is right, and a mandatory thing to grasp before we can go any further. However, when we do grasp and believe that it is still not the whole story.

Death only gets us partway into the fullness of what God did for us. You see, we need to go to the other side of the Cross, where we find the empty tomb. Not only did our “old self” die with Jesus, but our “new self” lives because the resurrected Jesus lives!

This “life from death exchange” is forever. Our death to sin is in the past tense, and we are free to “count ourselves dead to sin.” But even better, we are “alive to God in Christ Jesus” which is in the present tense! God has broken the power of sin and given us the indestructible life of Jesus.

Paul will show us more about these things in chapters 7 and 8, but for now, let’s absorb the foundation of our identity in Jesus! Ask God to deeply understand and experience what it means to “count yourself dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Day 12

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”

Romans 6:12-14

Paul commands us to offer ourselves to God. This is a call to “whole life worship” where we offer our minds, souls, spirits, and bodies to God – at work, at play, at rest, in every waking moment of thought or action, and in every relationship. In times of trouble, trial, joy, and blessing, we offer it all to God.

This “worship as a way of life” brings every activity into the realm of the holy: every aspect of our lives is given to God in gratitude – every minute of every day is a holy moment. By offering ourselves to God, we do not let sin have a foothold, we no longer obey our evil desires.

Sin is no longer our master. We are no longer living under the Law. We are now living by grace. God’s will won’t be fulfilled in us by legalistic adherence to rules. Instead, it will be achieved by the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts and leading our daily choices.

Through the spiritual disciplines we are practicing every day, we allow this “new life” to grow in us as we put the “old life” to death. It is a process whereby we learn to apply the unchangeable salvation we have in eternity into the practical holiness of our daily lives. Rinse and repeat!

Day 13

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?”

Romans 6:15-16

Paul addresses those who may be thinking that God’s grace can be counted on to allow disobedience. This kind of flagrant sin would be license, the opposite of legalism. Both religious legalism and heathen license are forms of slavery! Paul wants us to know the liberty of obedience to God!

Paul argues that we are either going to be slaves of sin, or slaves of obedience – we will not be able to serve both masters. Sin cannot be managed – by its nature it is explosive and all-consuming. There is no middle ground: a person is either growing in obedience to Jesus, which leads to righteousness, or they are growing in sin and obedience to Satan, which leads to death.

This battle is so well expressed by C.S. Lewis: “There is no neutral ground in the universe; every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counter-claimed by Satan.”

Why would anyone want to play this game? Have you been managing sin? Have you noticed the increasing intensity of a bad habit in your life? Have you been making deals with God, like serving him Sunday to compensate for your sin the rest of the week?

Ask God to reveal the reality of your heart. Confess all sin to Jesus. If you are playing with fire, confess that now. Tell someone – bringing sin into the light weakens its power over you. Shed all slavery and ask God to bring you to complete repentance and to heal you. Worship Jesus and ask to be a faithful slave to obedience. Experience the joy of the righteousness this produces.

Day 14

“But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”

Romans 6:17-19

The founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, Dr. Bill Bright, gave a remarkable personal testimony of obedience to this Scripture. He was persuaded to write down, with his wife Vonette, a declaration of slavery to Jesus Christ. They signed over their lives, their possessions, everything they would ever have or become, into slavery to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This contract was enacted in 1951, and they lived this faithfully, turning everything over to the ministry. They lived in a condo given to them, used a car given to them, and owned nothing. When Bill won the Templeton Prize - \$1 Million - he donated it to the ministry.

Dr. Bright reasoned that he would either be a slave to sin or a slave to Jesus. Since Jesus had become a slave all the way to death for him, he believed that the response of true love would be to reciprocate!

Make your prayer today in conformity to the last verse of our passage. Offer your body and your life today in slavery to righteousness and holiness. Offer him your heart, your life, and your day.

Day 15

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 6:20-23

To help seal his argument and eliminate any possible wiggle room or uncertainty, Paul asks us to review the things we did as slaves to sin. The things I did before I knew Christ led to regret, loss, and shame. In fact, every time I tell my God story, I relive the pain to some extent. I think that pain is God’s way of reminding us to stay grateful for the beautiful new life he’s given us.

Make a list of the things that you did as a slave to sin. What benefit did you reap from these things? There may have been temporary fun, pleasure, or even selfish freedom. But what came of these things in the fullness of time? Hurt, betrayal, physical illness, weight gain, things that would have been better left unsaid? Take stock. Be honest with yourself.

Now, as you pray over these things, can you agree with God that the wages of sin, the payment for sin, is death? Can you see how these things are cheap imitations of the unspeakable joy we have in Christ? This is a time to renounce every sin: idolatry (anything or anyone in your life that has become more important than Jesus – and that includes co-dependence), unbelief (any aspect of God’s Word that you do not trust and act on), and pride (all trust in self and any comparison of self to others).

Pray that God would allow you to hate sin like he does. Remember that he has already broken the power of sin in your life. Give thanks that by the Cross, Jesus has moved you from sure death to permanent life. Ask Jesus to show you any barriers to a deeper life with him.

Day 16

“Do you not know, brothers – for I am speaking to men who know the law – that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.”

Romans 7:1-3

Paul is writing to both Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus in Rome. He has already established that both these groups know the Law. The Jews know it explicitly. Some Gentiles were “God-fearers,” and attended the synagogue regularly. Even Gentiles who did not know about the Jewish Law would know it because it was written on their consciences by their Creator. We all inherently know that swearing, idolatry, lying, stealing, murdering, adultery, and coveting what is not ours is wrong.

Here, Paul gives an important truth about the Law. It only applies while someone is alive! Using the example of marriage, Paul says that the Law on adultery does not apply to a woman whose husband dies. She is not an adulteress if she remarries.

Likewise, when we die with Christ, we die to the Law (more on that tomorrow!) Think of the ways you experience failure, guilt, or shame. Ask God to show you when and why this happens. Thank him for the Law that allowed you to know your need for Jesus in the first place!

Day 17

“So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”

Romans 7:4-6

Since the Law does not apply to the dead, Paul now tells his readers that the Law’s hold on them ended when they died with Jesus. The “built-in” dominance of law, guilt, legalism, has been killed along with our “old self.” We are now alive in Jesus – so that “we might bear fruit to God.” We were controlled by the sinful nature, leading to sin and death. But now we are free, released from the power of the Law so that we serve in “the new way of the Spirit,” and not the “old way of the written code.”

This is big! Not only does the Cross of Jesus free us from the power of the “old self,” it frees us from the power of the Law. As we saw earlier, the Law makes sin increase. So, being free from the Law is a must for a life that experiences growing freedom from sin. Said another way, in Christ, we no longer need to gain God’s approval through “rules.” We have his total loving approval through Jesus!

Take a moment to thank Jesus for bringing you freedom from your “old self” and the Law! You have been freed from shame, guilt, failure, unforgiveness, fear, worry, and every other prison you may have experienced. You have been freed from every religious tradition that kept you from experiencing God’s love, forgiveness, joy, and victory over sin. You have been totally set free to “bear fruit to God” no longer bearing “fruit for death.” Give Jesus your heart in praise for this freedom!

Day 18

“What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.”

Romans 7:7-8

Paul anticipates the reader’s obvious questions again, but this time he responds in the first-person singular, sharing his own experience. What is the relationship of the Law with sin? He denies that the Law is sin – in 7:12-14 he will say it is holy and spiritual. Rather, he says that it is the sin nature within him that seizes “the opportunity afforded by the commandment” to produce the evil desire in him. Likewise, in Eden, it was the forbidden tree that Satan used to stir the evil desire in Eve and Adam.

When he says “apart from law, sin is dead” Paul means that the sinful passions are less active when the command is not present. This again is a testimony to the power of the new covenant, which moves our focus from obeying rules to a relationship based on attraction. In livestock farming, it is like the difference between Ohio and Australia. In Ohio, farmers use fences to keep animals “contained.” In Australia, the outback is so vast and dry, that farmers find it cheaper to sink wells that build fences. The animals stay close because they are “drawn” to the water. Likewise, Jesus transformed the “fences of the Law” into the “wells of the Spirit” so we would follow him out of love and admiration.

Think about how your parents raised you. If you have kids, think how you parent them. Do you tend to build fences or sink wells? What might you do differently because of the understanding you have gained from this passage? Give thanks for any insights and ask Jesus to lead you in your next steps. Think about doing this daily dive with your kids or another family.

Day 19

“Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.”

Romans 7:9-13

Like Israel in the time between Adam and Moses, each of us was once alive apart from the Law. It is probable that Paul is referring to that time before we were able to understand. But when we realized that our lives were governed by the Ten Commandments, our sin nature deceived us and through sin, we were “killed” spiritually. The Law, being good, was not the culprit. Our sin nature is to blame, it is what produced death. The Law just helps sin to “be recognized as sin.”

Today, we see many people identifying wrong behaviour as “issues” or “mistakes.” Worse, we have many groups attempting to redefine the boundaries of sin.

The reality of God’s will has not changed. Whenever people allow their consciences to be blunted, God gives them over to their evil desires. This happened repeatedly to Israel, and it happens to us when we ignore our spiritual life. We get disconnected from God and progressively die inside.

This is why a regular diet of the Word of God, prayer, fellowship, and filling of the Spirit are necessary for a growing, fruitful, and fulfilled life. Pray now for God to give you the appetite for these things. Set your phone alarm to worship Jesus for a minute every hour today.

Day 20

“We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.”

Romans 7:14-20

This testimony from Paul is written in the present tense, so it refers to the current struggle between his “old self” and his “new self” – inner conflict he is experiencing as a believer. It is very encouraging to know that even this powerful apostle experienced the struggle of becoming holy. Note that he struggles with failure in two categories: not doing the good he wants to do, and doing the evil he does not want to do. Paul testifies that it is the “sin living in me” that does evil – his “old self” at work – at work in a way that defies understanding. Paul helps us realize there is no such thing as the “perfect Christian.” We live with a real battle going on within us – a battle that produces the things we despise.

It is key to realize this and to have an accountability partner we can trust to share our struggles. Why? Because when we confess our sin with another, it loses its power over us, and we can often move to complete victory and healing. But if we do not confess it, it can eat away at us and grow in power.

Take a time with a friend to confess your sins to each other. There may be things you have never confessed that God is bringing to the surface. Maybe a parent abused you verbally or sexually. Maybe you are a victim of rape. Perhaps your spouse has been abusive. You may have resentment over a sibling or fellow worker. Whatever the injustice, the Word teaches us that envy, malice, bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness are all sins. Let go of those hurts! Pray that Jesus would free your soul from these prisons and allow him to dispense the justice!

Day 21

“So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.”

Romans 7:21-25

Paul now expresses the full challenge of the believer’s life: the war between the “old self” enslaved to sin and the “new self” enslaved to Jesus. He refers to the “old self” as “the flesh” in many of his letters, meaning not the physical body, but the self-centred ungodly desires within each of our sinful human natures. The “new self” is the power of the Spirit given when we believe – Paul often refers to that as the “inner man” that delights in God. Dostoevsky agreed with Paul when he wrote that the line between good and evil does not run between countries, but through every human heart!

Paul tells us how to win this war: only the risen Jesus can rescue us! This is what he has been telling us all along! His letter is written in just the order we need to follow to apprehend all that Jesus has done. Chapter 5 helped us to see our complete acceptance by God through Jesus. Chapter 6 told us that Jesus’ Cross set us free from the power of the “old self,” from the power of sin. In Jesus, we can defeat the things we are enslaved by! In Chapter 7, we learned we have been set free from the power of the Law – from all legalisms, rituals and rules that enslave us. We are now ready for the heights of Chapter 8, so close by asking Jesus to teach you how to live the Spirit-filled life.

Day 22

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”

Romans 8:1-2

The reality of our status before God is that He will never condemn or punish those of us who have trusted our lives to Jesus. He has pronounced us “not guilty” remember? Paul indicates that the reason for this legal standing is that we have been “set free” from the law that leads to sin and death by the law of the Spirit which leads to life. By this, Paul means the Holy Spirit, who has only been mentioned twice so far (5:5 and 7:6) but who will be mentioned 19 times in this chapter!

The Holy Spirit is also God, equal in that regard to the Father and Jesus. He is given as a deposit and guarantee to every person that trusts Jesus. God “moves in” and lives inside us. He is our internal comforter, guide, and teacher. He enables us to become like Jesus and obey the Father. He works “inside out” - the “new life” of Jesus will overflow our “old life” that died on the Cross with him.

Life in the Spirit is a breakthrough spiritual principle. Let me illustrate with an example from Physics. The law of gravity says that heavy things like steel would never be able to fly. But the higher-order law of aerodynamics was discovered. It set us free from the tyranny of gravity, and planes weighing thousands of tons now fly! In a similar way, the law of the Spirit sets us free from the law of sin and death. Ask Jesus to make the liberating ways of the Spirit clear to you.

Day 23

“For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.”

Romans 8:3-4

The Law could not produce the kind of life that was obedient to God because the commands bring out our sinful nature and cause our sin to increase. So, God had to provide what we could not do ourselves. He sent Jesus “in the likeness of sinful man” meaning he became human to bear our sin. On the Cross, he condemned sin and fully met the requirements of the Law for us. He was the first “true person” in that he lived without sin, totally obedient to God and constantly filled with the Spirit.

When Jesus rose from the dead, he sent the Holy Spirit to enable us to “live according to the Spirit” and no longer live according to the sinful nature. So, to live in harmony with God, we not only trade our lives for Jesus’ life, our sin for his Cross. Yes, God “saves” us this way, but he goes one step better. He puts his life into ours. His heart, power, will, mind, passion, and truth come into our lives through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This is critical for us to grasp. God provides every resource we need to become like Jesus. We co-operate with God and we are responsible for our choices, but the power to make the right choices is supplied by Jesus. It is like the difference between rowing a boat (power comes from our effort) and windsurfing (we have a role but the power comes from outside of us). Living with the “live-in God” means that the life we live in Jesus is abundant NOW – we do not have to wait until we die! Praise God today for the gift of his Spirit. Ask Jesus to fill you with his Spirit today.

Day 24

“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”

Romans 8:5-8

We learn in these verses that a non-believer cannot please God, no matter how good their deeds may seem. The reason is that they do not have the Spirit and are still powered by self and therefore ultimately selfish motives, not by faith. Their plans lead to death because they cannot obey God’s Law.

They cannot please God until they have faith. There is also a warning for the Christ-follower. If we live according to our “old self” and not by the Spirit, we will not please God. This is a reminder to constantly ask to be filled with the Spirit. Only the Spirit can provide the guidance system, motive, and power source of our life. Only the Spirit can lead us to life and peace.

That means a life under-girded by prayer, asking and listening for God’s directive voice. It means a constant communication with the Spirit – like a SEAL team receiving satellite direction on the way through a building in enemy territory. It means a constant dependence on the Spirit, like a sailor looking for the wind. Pray that the Lord would purify your motives and help you know his voice and his direction for today’s activities and decisions.

Day 25

“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”

Romans 8:9-11

I have found an analogy helpful to understand “the Spirit of God lives in you.” It is like a water heater. Before we knew Jesus, we were dead water heaters – no burners on, no noises, and no hot water. When we trusted Jesus, we had our pilot lights turned on. That pilot light never goes out, but the pilot light alone will not produce hot water, will it? But when we depend on God and ask him to fill us with his Spirit, then the gas valve is opened and there is a roar of fire and heat.

The resultant hot water represents the spiritual power in our lives – power to defeat sin, power to understand the Scriptures, power for prayer, power for sharing our faith. The hot water represents power to discern motives and choose the best priorities and actions. When we sin, this powerful burst of gas and heat is turned off. The Spirit’s fire has been quenched. In this case, we must simply confess our sin, and ask the Spirit to fill us again. The only choice we have is how fast we confess our sin – if we are sensitive and obedient, our water tank may never be cold again!

Ask God to bring all sin to mind. Confess and ask the Lord to restore the fullness of the Spirit’s power. Be alert to the promptings of the Spirit as you go through your day. Be available to see people or do things that you sense the Lord asking you to do.

Day 26

“Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

Romans 8:12-14

One of the main responsibilities of the Christ-follower is to understand and live the Spirit-filled life. This is the “new life” in Jesus that allows us to put the “old self” to death. As we live in the Spirit, we borrow or appropriate the power we need to live the life Jesus called us to live.

Spiritually, we need to learn how to windsurf by setting our sail into the flow of the Spirit. It’s so much easier than rowing upstream in our own power, which is a recipe for frustration, failure, and burnout. This is why so many are discouraged with their spiritual life – they rely on their performance rather than tagging along in the strength of God’s power.

When we get to the end of our rope and look back over the constant repetitious failures in our Christian walk, we learn that self-effort and self-help is just self. Lasting spiritual growth is based on God’s provision and power. Windsurfing sure beats rowing!

The Spirit-filled life feels less like a religious effort to please a distant master, and more like a relationship between a Father and child, where wisdom, training, and discipline are being given in the context of love and acceptance. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Wow. Give God praise for bringing you into the family inheritance.

Day 27

“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

Romans 8:15-17

The Spirit-filled life sets us free from slavery to fear, anxiety, and worry. Instead of all that, we gain the wonderfully secure confidence that we have been adopted. So, we can approach our heavenly Father and call him “Abba” which means “daddy.” Paul is talking about experiencing God as your father. We are no longer orphans competing for scarce resources. We’re adopted into his family.

Imagine crawling up on your heavenly Father’s lap and telling him how much you love him. Do you not love it when your kids do this to you? God loves this intimate connection! Pray today as if you are in your Father’s lap. Tell him how you feel about him.

One of the great joys of the Spirit-filled life is to hear him in the quiet moments when we need direction and counsel. He speaks to our spirits, reminding us that we are God’s children, his prized possession. Nothing can change that. Ask him to speak to you today and journal what you hear!

Day 28

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”

Romans 8:18-21

The suffering we experience in this life will not compare to the glory that will be revealed in us when Jesus returns. The whole creation “waits in eager expectation” for the children of God to be revealed. When Jesus returns in glory, we will be with him, and the freedom we have in our newly resurrected bodies will be powerful enough to set the whole creation free. Imagine what that will be like!

The universe was subjected to frustration by God because of our disobedience – so supernovas earthquakes, landslides, hurricanes, tsunamis, and global warming are all consequences brought by God in response to man’s disobedience in carrying out the assignment he was given in the Garden of Eden. But God has a plan to redeem it all.

The Bible describes the eternal state as the new heavens and the new earth. The whole universe will be recreated, and we will live on a new planet in resurrected bodies. Heaven and earth will be joined together, and we will live forever with God. No more tears. No evil. The beauty of God’s eternal city will vastly exceed anything any of us have ever imagined. Place your suffering in that hopeful context and pray for those you know who are experiencing suffering.

Day 29

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

Romans 8:22-23

Not only does the creation groan for the situation to be addressed, but so do we. Why? As believers living between Jesus’ advent and return, we are seeing and experiencing the first manifestations of the Spirit, the new life Jesus promised. We have a taste of God’s love and the amazing things to come, and we want more! We were never made for the fallen world; we were made for eternity!

One specific thing that makes us “groan inwardly” is our physical body. We experience aging, disease, and all kinds of injuries. Perhaps you or a loved one has experienced a spinal cord injury or a debilitating illness that has left you a prisoner of your body. One man I know of cannot move a thing except his eyelids, and it takes him a very long time to communicate. This is what makes us groan.

What we eagerly await is the completion of our adoption. The spiritual aspect is done, but we await the physical resurrection. It is the final step of our adoption, when we get our redeemed, indestructible body that never ages, never has disease, and is forever perfect. In another letter, Paul describes the resurrection body. It will never wear out or be diseased. It is always strong, full of glory, full of power, and completely in the guidance and control of the Spirit. Perfect sight, never hungry or tired, no aches, and perfectly able to love God and enjoy his creation.

By now, you should be getting excited about the life you have in Christ – the life made possible by the Holy Spirit...now, and forever in eternity. Take the time to imagine what God has done for you in Christ. Thank Jesus for redeeming you at such great expense, and for taking you into his indestructible life by the Holy Spirit. Thank him for defeating the power of sin in your life, and for removing the power of the law. Be filled with his Spirit!

Day 30

“For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”

Romans 8:24-25

This is the hope of your salvation: that everything will be reconciled to God through Christ Jesus. Paul reminds us that as we wait for the return of Jesus, the remaking of the heavens and the earth, and our resurrection bodies, we have hope. We hope for what we do not yet have – that is faith. But make no mistake: our faith is not blind.

We have the works of God in world history as recorded throughout the Scriptures. We have his works in our lives, and the evidence of our changed hearts! We have the experience of the Holy Spirit, and the testimony of the Spirit that we are God’s children. There is plenty of data to support God’s past faithfulness, and that is why we can place our confidence in him.

Patience has never been my strong suit. Thankfully, the Spirit fills us with patience because we know with confidence what is coming. It’s like watching the Olympics in a country in Europe. By the time we watch in the evening, the events are already over, and the results are known online. We watch with interest but not suspense. As believers, we know from the Bible that God wins! In the Spirit, we live with confidence! Thank God for giving you assurance of your future.

Day 31

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”

Romans 8:26-27

In addition to helping us with faith and patience for the wait, the Spirit also helps us when we are really struggling in weaknesses. The verb “helps” here is rich – it pictures someone helping another with a very heavy load or burden. Weakness can include physical, emotional, and spiritual disabilities that are affecting us. The Spirit makes up for our ineffective prayers by interceding directly for us in groans that words cannot express.

During grief or fervent prayer, you may have a sense that the Spirit is directing you and filling you with unusual power, words, and ideas. You may receive a known or unknown language that you do not understand. We sense that God, who searches our hearts, is revealing truth, helping us know the mind of the Spirit. We may begin uttering things directly from our spirit and connect in an intimate way with God that is new and surprising.

This all adds to the picture of a balanced prayer life, which hopefully is continuous and always started by getting filled with the Spirit. We may be disciplined, and have lists for each day. We may have some prayers that are macro, some micro. We may pray God’s best promises back to him (always powerful!) We may labor over prayer letters that come from people in other countries. We may memorize Scripture to pray over people. We may ask God to give us wisdom.

We may listen for an extended time to hear God’s answer to a question of decision or direction. And some days, we are too weak to do anything but to have the Spirit pray for us. May your prayer life blossom as you experience the joy of talking and communing with our loving Creator and Father! Praise him for the joys of deep intimacy and the privilege of knowing his will as we pray!

Day 32

“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.”

Romans 8:28

This may be one of the most heavily used verses in the Bible, and rightly so. It gives fabulous assurance and freedom for those who love him, true Christ-followers. Whatever happens to you has been through the Father’s filter. He has allowed it and in every single case it will be for your good. This may take more time than you want, but the good will be revealed!

This is a huge promise for every one of us in Christ. It says that nothing can separate us from the good intentions of God – no one can foil his plans for those called according to his purpose. Think about that – it means we can trust God that even disaster will be used for our good.

This is a hard truth in the middle of tragedy, loss, failure, and opposition. We are not God, and we can’t always know or understand what the good is, and even when it might become apparent. This takes us back to trust in God and to faith. When a spouse has cancer, it is not obvious. When a child dies, it is not obvious. When falsely imprisoned, it is not obvious.

But we live by faith, not by sight. We look back at a God who can always be trusted. We see the truth of the Word of God, and the hope of his past action and trustworthiness becomes the hope for the future. And that hope does not disappoint! Look at the hard circumstances in your life. Realize God has allowed them or brought them for your good. Ask him to show you what he wants you to learn. Surrender the trial to him and just worship, thanking him for his wisdom.

Day 33

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”

Romans 8:29

The fact that God can work all things for the good of his people requires him to know everything, to have unlimited power, to be everywhere, to only be capable of goodness and truth, and to understand everyone perfectly. As Creator of the Universe and author of the Bible, he has claimed all these qualities for himself. This verse tells us more about our great God: that He foreknew us.

“Foreknew” means far more than knowing how we will react to him. It means he knew us personally before the creation of the world. So vast is God’s sovereignty over time, space, and matter, we can’t comprehend it. This deserves our worship and awe.

In this long-ago plan, God destined us to be conformed to the image of his Son. God made this possible at the beginning of creation when Jesus – who is called “The Word” – made everything. This allowed us to be made in his image in eternity past. When Jesus lived as one of us, he became the only perfect human being. When he rose from the grave, he became the firstborn from the dead – the firstborn of many brothers and sisters in Christ. That word “firstborn” in Greek is where we get the English word “prototype.”

Jesus is the prototype of a new humanity, and we are destined to become like him. It’s a process that will not be completed until we receive our resurrection bodies, which of course, he also prototyped 2000 years ago! Thank him for this incredible plan! No matter when and why you recognized Jesus as your Lord and Savior, he was waiting for you to “come home”. Thank him for his patience with you and pray for the many others who have not yet come home to see Jesus for who he is!

Day 34

“And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”

Romans 8:30

This verse outlines three follow-up steps God will take to bring his plans to fruition in each believer’s life. First, he calls us, then he justifies us, and finally he glorifies us. Notice that Paul writes in the past tense, because God ordained this plan for his people in eternity past. Since he lives outside of time, what is ahead of us is already done in eternity.

God calls us through the Scriptures, the people of God who interact with us, and by the Spirit. He is relentless – some call him “The Hound of Heaven.” Many have experienced this wooing of God as a tractor beam, a sense that we are being drawn by a deep love.

When we respond to his call and receive his forgiveness for our sin by faith in the substitutionary work of Jesus, we are justified. God the judge declares that we are not guilty! We move from death to life, we are adopted into his family, and we receive the Holy Spirit.

Then we begin the process of growing in holiness, learning to obey, forgiving others, and learning to love. This goes on until our death, when we enter eternity, and receive our resurrection bodies. This last step is called glorification – because our bodies will radiate God’s glorious light. God also prototyped this step when he briefly glorified Jesus in his transfiguration. (See Matthew 17:1-9)

That is God’s perfect plan. Every step is prototyped in Jesus. It is done! We are secure in his care and these plans cannot be foiled. In the Spirit, we learn to walk on earth as it will be in heaven. This is not life by will power, by license, or by legalism. This is life in the Spirit! Praise God for this gift!

Day 35

“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

Romans 8:31-32

The rest of the letter deals with seven questions related to our response to the awesome plan of God in Jesus Christ. The first question asks for our response to God’s unending grace. Jesus demands an answer, there is no fence to sit on. He has given everything for us, so he rightfully asks that we go “all in” pledging our allegiance with all we are and all we have. He is worthy of that isn’t he?

The second question relates to the enemies of God. Since even Satan is a created being, God has authority and power over all our enemies. We have access to everything Jesus won for us on the cross. Since God is for us, no one can ever prevail against us. That again is an item for praise because it allows us to follow God with confidence. Our identity as his kids is secure. Forever!

The third question is asked in the context of a loving Father who did not withhold his own Son from us. Paul reasons that since God did not withhold what was most precious to him to redeem you and me, then he will not withhold anything else we will need. We have an outrageously generous God!

Thank God for his generosity in Christ. List the many ways he has blessed you and your family. Lift your praise to him for all these blessings: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Day 36

“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.”

Romans 8:33

The fourth question raises the possibility that someone might “press charges” against those of us whom God has chosen. Elsewhere in Scripture, Satan is called the “accuser of the brethren,” and “the father of lies.” This question probably refers to attacks from the spiritual realm.

We know that our real enemy is not other people. Paul, in another letter tells us who it is: For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

These enemies are defeated. But they continue to deceive. Regular prayer and the filling of the Spirit is a critical step to enjoy the power and protection that God has given us in Jesus. Paul taught us to pray for spiritual protection. Pray this prayer daily:

Heavenly Father, I put on your armor – the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the readiness of the Gospel of peace, the helmet of salvation. I take up the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and I wield these weapons against the evil one in the power of God. The enemy has no authority or power over me. I belong to Jesus. I choose to pray in the Spirit, and to be strong in you Jesus. I call forth your kingdom today throughout my life, my home, my family, my church and all my domains. I ask in Jesus, with all glory and praise to him.

Day 37

“Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”

Romans 8:34

The fifth question is also a legal matter. Who can condemn? Not Satan – he can accuse, but the only One who can condemn is Jesus, because he sits at God’s right hand. He is the Judge. More than that, he is the only One who left the grave and defeated death. Since believers have placed their trust in the final Judge of the universe, they are safe and secure. Now, Jesus is at the right hand of God, and he prays constantly for us. How good is that?

It is unimaginably good! Take a moment to picture a covering over you made by the prayers of Jesus. Then picture something else: you can pray with him! As you pray according to his will revealed in the Scriptures, you grow in intimacy with him. You also grow in power as your prayers are used to bring the blessings of heaven to earth. This is the way that God’s will is done.

What an immeasurable blessing to pray God’s blessings onto the earth. To lift people worldwide and ask God to touch them, bless them, heal them, save them. That is an incomprehensible privilege that is given because our God chose us and made us alive in the resurrection of Jesus. Our life is now folded into his life. Our prayers are folded into his prayers. We can converse with him all day!

Ask God to draw you into this life of intimate conversation and prayer. As you grow in prayer and in the confidence of the power of the Spirit, you will experience the joy of being intimate with God!

Day 38

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’”

Romans 8:35-36

The last two questions are linked together as Paul asks who or what might be able to separate us from the love of Jesus. By this he means the love that Jesus pours out on us, not our love for him. His love is never exhausted!

Church history indicates that many were martyred for the cause of Christ. Danger and persecution are still common in many places, and though not typical in the U.S., believers experience ridicule for being followers of Jesus in many parts of our country today. Paul is pre-empting the question that many believers wonder about. Will a painful divorce break Christ’s love for me? Will losing my job? Will bankruptcy? Will outbursts of anger? Will an abortion?

Think of anything that could be going wrong in your life right now. It could be your sin, or the sin of others. Paul is asking if anything can ever get in the way of the love that Christ has for you! No matter what you are experiencing, God’s love never changes. Give your doubts and fears to Jesus.

Day 39

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

Romans 8:37

The questions are all asked and contemplated. The full list of enemies, doubts, hardships, and traumas are on the table. Paul has lived them. He answers with the authority of the Scriptures and experience. NO! In all these things, we are more than conquerors through Jesus who loved us. The Greek literally means “we keep on being conquerors to a greater degree.”

Jesus always wins. We can count on that, and since he loves us, would give anything for us, lives to pray for us, and saves perfectly – we always win. You always win long term in Christ. Nothing can stop you. David understood this idea of victory. As a young shepherd boy without the apparent size, reputation, armor, or weaponry to win, David trusted God and defeated the giant.

List the opposing giants in your life. Fear of failure. Lack of intimacy. Addiction. Marriage problems. Financial problems. Ability to find or keep the right job. Anger. Family dysfunction. Pride. Avoidance of conflict. Not being a bold witness for Jesus.

After listing these giants, list your motives. What are you most afraid of? Why? What is the worst thing that could happen? Then list all the assets you have: the Father’s love, the grace of Jesus, the Spirit’s power, the Word of God, godly friends, your gifts, talents, treasure, and time. Pray that Jesus would activate your assets to overcome your giants. Let him show his power in your life and all those you love and pray for.

Day 40

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 8:38-39

Paul finishes on the high note of total confidence in the love of Jesus. In a list of ten items that begin with death, Paul stands convinced that nothing can separate us from God’s love. The list includes the extremes of existence (death and life), the extremes of the spiritual realm (angels and demons), the extremes of time (present or future), the extreme of powers, space (height and depth) and nothing else in all creation. That is a comprehensive list!

Nothing we can do can make Christ love us any less, or any more – his love is total and perfect. Our role is to receive it, not earn it! That is the full, unimpeachable certainty of our salvation in Christ. No sin can separate us. No failure. Nothing can cause Jesus to let go of you and stop loving you. Rest in that!

Continue to abide and converse with Jesus – this is the habit that will transform your life. This forty-day adventure is just a taste of the unending blessing Jesus has for you and me. Seek him. Work through the Bible in little chunks. Be filled with his Spirit. Worship the Father throughout the day. Live in prayer. Ask him to make you more like Jesus.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Congratulations! If you followed this guide for 40 days, I am betting you want more than 10 minutes a day with Father, Jesus, and the Spirit. You have developed the key habit of intimacy with God!

From here, I have two suggestions.

Keep going with this approach as you explore other Bible books. Read a few verses, meditate, worship, listen to what God is saying, journal, and obey! Try the Psalms and the Gospel of John.

Invite others into this 40-day adventure with you. It is thrilling to help others discover God and hear him speak.

A Great Resource: The Prayer Covenant

THE PRAYER COVENANT is a simple prayer developed by my spiritual mentor, Jerry Kirk, THE PRAYER COVENANT prayer is now prayed by millions of believers of all ages around the world.

The prayer's 10 points are anchored in God's Word and encompass all the key areas of Kingdom life. It is designed to invite others into 40-day prayer covenants based on 2 Chronicles 15:12.

The prayer is powerful for those seeking spiritual renewal and desiring to engage others in following Jesus together. It's a great way to develop our prayer lives and bless others.

Dear Father, thank you for your grace that has made me one of your dearly loved children. By your grace, make being with you, loving you and obeying you my highest priority. Empower me to love others the way you love me. Wash me clean from every sin. Enable me to praise you, O Lord, with all my heart. Jesus, be Lord of my life today in new ways, and change me any way you want! Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Make me an instrument of your grace, truth, forgiveness, righteousness, and justice. Use me today for your glory, as a witness to your kingdom, and to invite others to follow Jesus Christ as Lord. Gracious Father, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Pray about inviting someone to enter a 40-day prayer covenant with you and watch God work!

To learn more, please visit www.theprayercovenant.org