



# FREEDOM OUTREACH INTERNATIONAL

(a ministry to the military)



ANNUAL PRAYER AND FASTING INITIATIVE

21-DAYS

JANUARY 6 – 26, 2020

(Worldwide Organizational Intercessory Prayer Call: Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup>)



## Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup> until Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>

Crossing the globe, we span multiple continents, time zones, languages and cultures. We serve diverse people, from many ethnicities and backgrounds, in every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, government civilians who support them, their spouses, children as well as local nationals, veterans and ex-pats. We are a movement like no other, so unusual that it's often difficult to find a "short answer" when civilians ask what kind of organization Freedom Outreach – Ministry to the Military is.

But, this one thing we do together, for ourselves and for one another: **we pray.**

Daily, thousands pick up the printed prayer guide or follow-along through the Ministry to the Military Prayer Facebook page for unique, daily prayers focused on our Directors, the people they serve and the needs of the military community they are in. We also pray together, each morning of our conferences, as we prepare to engage the Word of God and Holy Spirit in our sessions. However, each January, we have the honor and responsibility to join together in corporate fasting for the breakthrough that is so desperately needed in our lives and families, our centers, our organization, in each and every military community, and – yes – in our nation as well.

Please join with us on this 21-day adventure. The theme this year is, "Spirit and Truth." We know the phrase well, from Christ's encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:4-42). As a social and religious reject, she was attempting to learn how she could draw close to God. When she perceived that Jesus was, in her words, "a prophet," she inquired if she should worship on the mountain in Samaria or in Jerusalem. I believe it was her way, knowing she was in the presence of a holy man, of saying, "I want to get closer to God. Please show me how." Jesus responds by telling her, "*but the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*"

So often, our worship of God is facilitated by what we can see and experience externally. Is the building nice or run down? Is the temperature just right? Are the musicians and singers going to include any songs that I like today? Yet, again and again, Christ turns our eyes away from what can be seen, felt, and experienced outwardly in our natural being so that we can truly seek Him inwardly. Such is one of the great benefits of fasting: it is a time to purify our motives and realign ourselves heart to heart with our Savior. It's a time to clear the clutter of our own and others' expectations and sit, empty-handed and open-hearted before the Lord as the Holy Spirit does a work of purification. It's time for breakthrough, growth and to prepare ourselves individually and corporately for what He has in store for us in the coming year.

Many people opt to do the "Daniel Fast" during this time. Information about this kind of fasting can be found here:

<http://storage.cloversites.com/realitythechurch/documents/21%20Day%20Daniel%20Fast%20Instructions%20.pdf>.)



However, becoming overly fixated and concerned about what to eat or not to eat is counter-productive. The point of fasting is to commit first to increased prayer, listening to the Voice of the Lord, and devotional time and commit secondly to the discipline of self-denial (as Jesus taught us to embrace in Matthew 16:24-26) regarding food, entertainment, and any of the “pleasures” that our carnal nature craves. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what kind of fast He would call you to, which will surely be in keeping with the words of Isaiah 58. Consider keeping a journal to help you sort through your own thoughts, write down your prayers, capture the revelation that the Holy Spirit is bringing through the Word and to serve as an inspiration and reminder as you end the fast and begin to employ what was gained during this time of consecration.

Don't forget to join us on Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup> for the worldwide prayer call where all of our Directors around the world connect for a two-hour live prayer meeting. It is the only time that we are all together in the same room each year, even if it happens to be a “virtual room.” The prayer meeting will begin at 7 AM EST USA time and will be broadcast live on Facebook through the designated private prayer page and the official Freedom Outreach Facebook page.

Together, we WILL move mountains and advance the Kingdom of God in 2020!



# DAY ONE - MONDAY, JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup>

Read: Hebrews 12:1-3



With every goal, there is a Day One. It's the day that you've started doing — with your time, energy, will and resources — what you've only, beforehand, dreamed about. It's the day in which there are zero results and the finish line seems impossibly far away. It's a day riddled with self-doubt and insecurity and constantly wondering, "Can I really do this?"

It may be taking the first class to complete your education or starting on a track toward health and fitness or putting money away toward starting your own business. It could also be a day you've stopped doing something that you know is causing harm to yourself or someone else. Perhaps it's speaking with greater kindness to those around you, or stopping negative thought patterns, or maybe deciding to end

a habit that you know is not beneficial to your health and well-being.

This time of prayer and fasting may be your DAY ONE, the first instance that you've committed to a season of prayer with others or, maybe, the first time you've tackled the Biblical mandate to fast. Certainly, regardless of where you are in your spiritual journey, this is the time to write out your own goals for this period. Write down ways that your flesh might convince you to compromise. Find scriptures and words of self-encouragement that you're going to inspire yourself with in those moments. Write out what changes you want to see during this time. How can you set yourself up to meet those goals and how will you measure your growth and progress at the end of these 21 days?

With every DAY ONE, there's a sense of anticipation and resolve. It's a day that others may not even know what you're doing or why. There may be no one to celebrate with you that your feet are started on a new path with the smallest and most incremental shift in direction. But YOU know. You know that life isn't going to wait for a more convenient season. *You know you must start today.*

We can waste our lives waiting for someone else to push us in the direction that we need to go. Naturally, it would be easier if there were someone always present who believes in you and consistently calls you out toward excellence. It's easier when there's someone else to kick you out of bed in the morning and put in the time, the sweat, and the tears alongside you. However, the blunt truth is that there is no mortal person who can unfailingly guide and coach us the way that Jesus Christ can and will! We just have to learn to let Him do that and we have to be prepared to cooperate.

We can't blame our parents, our kids, our spouse, our pastor, our boss at work or anyone else for the areas of our lives that need change. We have to, each of us, take the ownership of our personal lives and discipleship journeys while allowing the Holy Scriptures and the Spirit of God



to be our Guide. It may take writing notes on the bathroom mirror or car steering wheel, or maybe leaving a post-it note on the television or computer screen that reminds us, "MY PERSONAL GROWTH IS MY PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY." Sometimes we have to wake ourselves up, give ourselves a good talking to and get motivated to start something great. Yes, God puts people in our lives to help us. That's what the Body of Christ is for! But, we cannot abdicate to another our own holy obligation to live our lives to the greatest, most purposeful measure of excellence, unto Christ. We must decide to address the areas that hinder our progress so that we can become more fruitful. We have to find ourselves, and the cause of Christ, worthy of the investment.

Take a quiet moment and force yourself to stop looking at the negatives in your life, all the things you feel you've failed at. Dust yourself off, encourage yourself in the Lord and find a new starting place. "...but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14.)

Let today be your Day One.

#### Our Prayer

Thank You, Jesus, for the Great Cloud of Witnesses we have in Heaven today! Thank You, Jesus, that we do not have to run this race alone, that You are ever by our sides keeping us on the path that You marked out for us before time began. Thank You for the way You lead this great movement of Freedom Outreach, Ministry to the Military, and how You individually lead each and every person. We praise You for your faithfulness, even through the times that we have not been faithful. Help us to each, individually and as a Body, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Touch each of our Directors and ministers. Touch our leadership and give them tremendous breakthrough and revelation during this time. Help those weary or weak in their faith today. Renew their zeal and give them clarity. You are the God of the Vision, and we want our vision to be Your Glory, Your Name and Your Renown in 2020 and beyond. In Jesus' Name, amen.

#### In Our Daily Prayer Guide

Doug Elliot, Stuttgart: Pray for God's help in reaching this milcom for Christ, for souls to be saved and for Christians to become disciple makers!



## DAY 2 - TUESDAY, JANUARY 7

### “Change the Locks”

**Read: Matthew 24:36-44 & John 10:10**

In January 2019, a family from Georgia returned home from an extended vacation. Upon their arrival, they found that their key

didn't fit in the front door lock and were shocked to find someone else was inside the house.

When they attempted to gain access to their home, they heard the voice of a man notifying them that it was his house now and they had to leave. After a five-hour stand-off, a SWAT team arrived, deployed a robot to break down the door, and located the intruder who was quickly arrested under charges of burglary, making terroristic threats, and obstruction. When the family was finally able to reenter the home, they found all of their food missing and bizarre notes that the trespasser had left behind.

“He also left us notes thanking us for the key and thanking us for letting him live here, and it was his house now,” the owner reported to the local television station. “He moved all the pictures, emptied drawers. He was making this house his.”

Jesus tells us plainly in John 10:10 that we have a very real adversary, the devil, who comes only to do at least one of three things: **steal, kill, and destroy**. What an amazing “tip off” we have! The All-Knowing One has informed us that: 1. we do, surely, have an enemy; 2. he will come to harass us; 3. when he does, he will attempt to do one of these three things. But, He also informs us that, “*He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*” (1 John 4:4.)

In Matthew 24:36-44, Jesus is again warning His Flock so that we must be ever vigilant and prepared for His imminent return. He is instructing us to keep watch, to be aware, to be ever waiting and prepared. When we are carefully watching for His return, we develop a “motion detector” to the enemy's devious ways and it changes the way we live out our daily lives.

We can be unwittingly careless in our spiritual self-care. Life gets busy. We get distracted. This family had left an “emergency key,” outside that they thought was well-hidden. In fact, it was the very key they'd left for themselves that gave the thief quick and sure access into their home. During this time of self-reflection, we must ask ourselves if we have, knowingly or unknowingly, left keys and access points open to the enemy of our souls. Have we been less than careful about what we've permitted into our minds, hearts, and attitudes? Have we allowed the thief to steal our time, our focus, our vision and energy? Have we taken a “vacation” from daily prayer and personal Bible study and reflection and left our spiritual house unattended?

These are hard questions, but every single one of us can likely identify at least one area in our lives that requires more personal vigilance. These aren't New Year's Resolutions, but the necessary stewardship of true Disciples of Christ. This is the process of identifying what the issues are, getting the thief out, and changing the locks for good. It's time to search the





premises and send in the Holy Ghost SWAT team. It's just like the devil to leave little taunting notes, but as we shut the door this time, we can leave one behind, "You are ***not welcome***."

### *Our Prayer*

Lord Jesus, You have commanded us to "watch and pray" and to be prepared for Your imminent return. Lord, we pray for forgiveness in the ways that we have neglected our spiritual houses. We ask You, Holy Spirit, to search us, as the Psalmist asks in Psalm 139. You can examine us in a way that we cannot examine ourselves, because our hearts are so deceitful that we often do not see things as they really are. Make us aware of areas that we have left keys out and have allowed ourselves to think, feel and act in ways that do not please You. We take back ground that has been stolen by our adversary. We serve notice to the enemy of our souls that we will not permit harassment, in Jesus' Name. As we consecrate this time unto the Lord, we consecrate ourselves anew, and we clean out the clutter of the world, the flesh and the devil. Jesus Christ, You alone are Lord of our emotions, our bodies, our minds and our families and we Thank You for making our hearts Your home, in Your Name, amen.

### *In Our Daily Prayer Guide*

Butch and Keiko Alston, Misawa, Japan: Pray for faithful, Spirit-filled laborers, for members' spiritual growth and sanctification, for God's presence and glory to be manifested in our gatherings.



## DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8

### “On the Mountaintop”

Read: All of Exodus 3

If you've been stationed in Europe anytime in the past 25 years and have been to the annual FOI-MTTM Fall Retreat, you have likely also been to the top of the Zugspitze. Since relocating this historic, annual retreat in Germany from Berchtesgaden to Garmisch, attendees have made the scenic cable car journey up the mountain regularly, almost as a rite of passage. You will hear it over and over. “If you go to Garmisch, you have to go to the Zugspitze.”

It's the highest peak of the Wetterstein Mountains and the highest mountain in Germany. The German-Austrian border runs over its western summit. The views are stunning beyond description, especially on the clear, fall days we pray we will encounter each year at the retreat. One cannot be fully prepared to experience the awe and majesty of the Alps or the sense of worship and admiration they evoke toward their Creator.



Josef Naus - 1824

Naturally, the convenient temperature-controlled and safety-checked cable car wasn't always available. Before August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1820, it is likely that no one had ever seen that exact view but God alone. Someone had to be the first. Mr. Josef Naus convinced his survey assistant, Maier, and a mountain guide, Tauschi, to trek to the summit with him. The son of immigrant parents, Naus joined the Bavarian army and fought against Napoleon before deciding to retire and become a surveyor.

There's one thing we can know for sure about the obscure Mr. Naus. There was a day that he first set eyes on the great mountain range of his adopted home and a time in which he said to himself,

***“I'm going to climb that mountain.”***

When Moses was a lad, raised in the comfort and security of Pharaoh's household, how often did he gaze out at the River Nile and remember the story of how he was drawn up out of the water? Did he wonder, “Why did God save me?” Later in his life, when he tried in his own strength to help the Israelites and ended up fleeing into Midian, did he wonder if it was all over, if he had blown what he believed was God's plan?

So often, we wait for our own, “burning bush,” before we step out and trust God by faith. Even though we have Moses' story to draw from in the Bible, we would like Him to tell us each, personally, just as clearly, what we are to do. The “I AM” is the same I AM in your life that spoke to Moses that day. He has not changed. He is not retired from the business of calling and appointing people for His purposes. We want the burning bush experience too, yes, but we don't



need it, because the All Consuming Fire that is Christ Jesus now indwells us as His people. The flames have moved from the external to the internal.

There are those reading this today who have been serving the Lord a very long time and know full well what they are called to do, but they too need to feel the fire of that first inspiration all over again. There are those who have been drawing closer to the Lord and have a sense of His calling, but are still unsure of what that entails. They haven't received the full message yet, but are warmed by the zeal of the Holy Spirit inside of them. Then, there are those who, much like Moses when he got up that fateful morning, are wondering if they've blown it or if God would ever want to use them at all. Like Moses, may they find that, even in the wilderness they can discover that they are standing on holy ground. Perhaps the opportunity you thought you'd lost has not even yet begun.

We all have our mountain. It stands before us, beautiful, daunting, beaconing us to believe that we are called to ascend to its heights. It coaxes us out of our ordinariness, our routine, and sparks the hope that we can do something greater with our lives. Moses approached the bush initially for one reason only – it called out his name, *his name*, and no one else's. He answered back instinctively, "Here I am!"

The fire of God, the Person of the Holy Spirit, *He knows your name* and He summons you from the passionate burning bush of His calling on your life. Moses' bush burned but was never consumed. That means, *the fire never has to go out*. If Christ Jesus indwells your heart, you have access to that all-consuming fire every moment of every day. Perhaps today is the first time you've acknowledged it, or even if you've served the Lord all of your life and just need to hear it again, open your ears and listen to Heaven declaring a name – yours. May we each answer, every time, "Lord, here I am."

### *Our Prayer*

Father God, we praise You for the diverse callings in the Body of Christ. We stand in awe of how these military centers have endured throughout the years in the midst of so much change, hardship and uncertainty. Surely, You have built the house! It remains today by Your grace! Yet, Lord, we pray for those who are weary and lukewarm. We ask for a holy visitation as you speak to them during this time of prayer and fasting. We pray for our Directors to be constantly consumed by the zeal and passion of what You've called them to. We lift up those who will step out in faith and start a new ministry at a center, or pick up where someone else left off. We pray for those who are seeking to "fan the flame" of their calling by training through the MPRL and MIP programs in 2020. Bless both the teachers and the learners of these essential programs. More than anything, we pray for new leaders to be raised up for every center that will have a change of leadership. We ask You to speak to ministers about serving on the field and planting new ministries where there is not yet a presence. Father, in 2020, we are asking for each and every center to have an effective, fired-up ministry team! Thank You for Your sweet calling in each life and for opening ears to hear You and obey as never before.

### *Today In Our Prayer Guide*

James and Pam Morris, Camp Humphries, Korea: Pray that we will reach the lost, and for God-sent and committed leaders.



## DAY 4 - THURSDAY, JANUARY 9

### “Wonders In The Deep”

Read: Psalm 107

June 8, 1708: A 62-gun, three-masted galleon known as the “San José” sunk somewhere off the coast of Columbia. The San José and its sister ship, the San Joaquin, were part of an imposing Spanish fleet with more than 60 guns apiece. The ships had been tasked to transport taxes and business profits owed to the Spanish crown from Portobelo, in present-day Panama, to Spain. However, in 1708, Spain and England were at war and found themselves engaged in battle around sundown that day. The San José was sunk in a spectacular explosion and was never seen again, that is, until November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015.



The San José  
shipwreck

A robotic submarine, called the REMUS 6000, first spotted the shipwreck. Through technology, the coins and jewels that have been discovered have provided a wide range of estimates of the ship's cargo present day value. The lowest estimate is a mere one billion dollars with others believing the total value to be closer to around \$22 billion. Yes, *billion*. Due to the immense and unprecedented wealth on board, the San José is known as the “Holy Grail” of shipwrecks. Yet, because of the vast fortune, the treasure has been stuck in litigation between nations and

organizations who all say they have a claim to it. Over four years later, the treasure of the San José, the most valuable shipwreck discovery of all time, still lies at the bottom of the ocean, undisturbed.

Psalm 107:23-24, *“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.”*

But, what of those wonders? Surely the vast fortunes hunted relentlessly by treasure seekers cannot compare with the wonders that our God has in store for His people! What a pity to unearth an incredible fortune but to sit, alone, on one's dying day, surrounded by earthly wealth untold and still have never heard the loving words of His Creator say, “You are forgiven.” Jesus Himself said to us, in Mark 8:36, *“What does it profit a man to gain the whole word yet forfeit his soul?”*

Psalm 107 is a song of deliverance. The Psalmist speaks of being delivered from the hand of the enemy, of the satisfaction the Lord brings to a longing soul, from the distress of bondage and the shadow of death. He extols the Lord for His healing, for bringing springs of water in a



dry land, for making His people fruitful and delivering the poor from affliction. The writer cries out, again and again, *"Oh that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness!"*

Perhaps the desire for adventure, for treasure, to seek that which no one has ever found before, is in each person. Perhaps it is meant to whet our appetite to seek for the treasures found only in seeking our God. *"You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all of your heart."* (Jeremiah 29:13). The problem is not in His willingness to be found, in all of His splendor, but in our willingness to fully engage our own hearts in the search.

If we only look on the surface, we will never see what's waiting below. The depths of His Word have no ending point. His Living Word is deeper and richer day after day, year after year, for those insatiable adventurers who will continue to seek.

### *Our Prayer*

O Lord, how careless we can be when we read Your word! How unaware of the treasures that You have hidden for the joy of our discovery! In a world that tries to distort and change Your word, and contest its infallibility, we stand firm in the truth of the Holy Scriptures. Forgive us for times that we did not seek You whole-heartedly. Forgive us for searching the scriptures for a quick answer or a lesson plan and failing to listen as You were still speaking. We choose to go adventuring to the depths of discovery, and rediscovery, of Your word! Teach us to be better learners, better hearers, better seekers of Your word and Your heart. May 2020 be a year of discovering the treasures in the depths of Your word!

### *Today In Our Prayer Guide*

Rich & Rhonda Hanssen- Spangdahlem, Germany - Pray for greater visibility and open doors for effective ministry; for fully committed leaders and that the church will catch on fire for Jesus and have a desire to reach the lost.



## DAY 5 – FRIDAY, JANUARY 10

### “A Clean Heart”

Read: Psalm 51

Have you ever asked a small child to clean their room the very BEST that they can? Surely none of us would ever be so cruel, but if you were to go in after and do the “white glove test” – expecting not a speck of dust, not a spot on the window, not a grain of sand in between the floorboards – would the child pass or fail?



Legalism says it's all up to you (righteousness that is performance-based). Hyper-grace says it's all up to God (you do whatever you want, He will take care of everything else.)

Those two erroneous extremes were addressed in two of Paul's epistles—Galatians and 1 Corinthians. The Church in Corinth was famous for fornication. They received a harsh rebuke from the Apostle Paul for their carnality. *“I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”* (1 Corinthians 4:14-15.)

The Church in Galatia had quite the opposite problem. They were legalists and Paul did not mince words when he sternly rebuked them, saying, *“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only would I learn of you: received you the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?”* (Galatians 3:1-3.)

They were both wrong and neither were healthy congregations.

Christianity is partnership — what the Bible calls COVENANT — between God and man. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ makes that partnership possible and His grace covers our deficiencies.

Let's use the example of cleaning the room. The legalist would believe that they earn parental love (or hate) based solely on their performance, therefore they must attain perfection. Even when they don't (or CAN'T, as is the case), they justify their deficiencies self-righteously: “at least my room is cleaner than *that person's*”. The legalist must justify himself because he believes the parent to be cruel and unforgiving, doling out approval and affection strictly based on the performance of the child. There is no resemblance of our gracious Lord in that!



The hyper-grace individual would *not even try* to clean the room. They believe in only one attribute of the parent: love. Surely, because of this great parental love, there wouldn't possibly be any expectation of effort from the child or willingness to exact any punishment for disobedience. They confuse permissive indifference with real love.

Neither of these feeble analogies correctly represent the love of the God of the Bible and His Son, Christ Jesus, or the work of His Holy Spirit.

In fact, true Christianity is this: the child loves and respects the parent and trusts that the parent knows best and has right intentions for the child. The child does his/her utmost best to obey and clean the room, not out of dread but motivated by wanting to please a loving parent. The parent enters to find a noble, yet imperfect, effort. Lovingly affirming the child's effort (works) the parent goes through and completes the job for the child (grace), vacuuming between the floorboards and meticulously scrubbing the corners of the baseboards until the room is spotless.

Perhaps this is why David, the Psalmist of Israel, says, "*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*" This clean heart that we so need and desire, we are unable to create it inside ourselves. It's not within our ability to achieve, regardless of how hard we try to work for it. The One who created the heart is the only One who can clean it.

Not one person is exempt from the Psalmist's ancient prayer. It's our job to strive toward living out God's will, as made evident through His word, and to repent when we fall short. But, it's Father God's job, made accessible through our covenant with Him in Christ Jesus, to do what we cannot in sanctifying us through the Person of the Holy Spirit.

When we know His goodness, we don't want to keep either faking perfection or apathetically falling short. It's His goodness that leads us to repent and His goodness that gives us the clean hands and pure hearts that we can't achieve ourselves.

### Our Prayer

Lord, in all of our getting, let us get understanding. Let us understand our part in sanctification and Your work to complete it within us. Like David, we long for clean hearts. We long to honor You with lives that reflect the beauty of holiness in a perverse and unholy culture. Through this time of consecration, do a deep work of sanctification in every life. Let our centers be beacons of truth and light, where the Word is taught and lived out daily without compromise. Search us, Holy Spirit, and refine each person. Show us our part in renouncing the things that are contrary to the truth as we accept Your work in purifying each heart. May we be holy as You are holy, in Jesus' Name.

### Today In Our Prayer Guide

Ansbach, Germany: Pray for open doors and favor to reach unsaved; for a stronger focus on discipleship & continued growth, & unity in our ministry transition



DAY 6

SATURDAY

JANUARY 11

δοῦλος

Read: Romans 1:1-7 & Romans 6

We had the honor of seeing the movie, “Harriet” the first week it was released. I cannot express the mood present and impact felt in the theater that night. People cheered and wept. The woman next to me could not raise herself up to leave at the end but sat shaking in her seat. There were shouts of, “hallelujah!” from the front few rows. I almost thought we should’ve had an altar call!

In our American history, we have studied slavery but there is no way we can fully comprehend its heinousness. We read about this sin and the atrocities afflicted upon people of color in the founding of this nation, then look at the headlines throughout the past few years and realize how far our country still must go in resolving bigotry and racial injustice. As we reflect upon these things, it becomes strange and difficult to read how the Apostle Paul identified himself as a slave.

Paul was writing to Rome, the very hub of power and oppression in his time. As many as one-third of the Roman population were bondservants. The ancients were unashamed of their detestable enslavement of human beings. In their society, this was normal practice, but there were several different kinds of slaves. The “dmōs” was considered a person taken as “booty” during a raid. An “oiketēs” was a household servant, and usually was endowed with more privileges. But a “doulos” was the lowest form of slave, one not even considered a human being but a piece of property or chattel that could never be freed and was considered the lowest rank of any slave or servant in the house. If a bondservant was freed but decided to return, he and his master could go before a judge and make the arrangement official. A ceremony would be performed where a peg was driven through the servant’s earlobe and into the door post of the house, signifying that the servant was eternally “attached” to the family. The once-free servant would be forever bound to the family, a doulos, marked for life.

As a very intelligent and highly educated man, Paul understood all of this. Yet, he begins his letter to the Romans, introducing himself as, “Paul, a bondservant (translated literally as, ‘doulos’) of Jesus Christ.”

We typically read through the introduction quickly, without realizing the impact this strange greeting must have had upon the recipients of his letter in Rome. The philosophers Aristotle and Socrates considered being called a “doulos” the worst



possible insult. Surely, the great Apostle should have begun his introduction touting his credentials or his achievements. One would think he should have tried to win them over by talking about his extensive education as both as a Roman and one who was taught at the, “feet of Gamaliel,” the highly esteemed Rabbi and the leading authority of the Sanhedrin. Instead, he opens his letter by identifying himself as the “Doulos of Christ.” Why?

He needed to crack open and expose their religious pride. The Romans and Greeks lauded their philosophers and religious teachers but what they were about to read concerning “this sect” of Christ-followers was unlike anything they had ever heard. When Paul called himself a doulos, he chose to humble himself in order to show them the Christ, Who had Himself taken on the role of a doulos and washed His own disciple’s feet. Paul wanted them to know what it meant to *really* be a Christian, to live sacrificially and take up the cross and follow Jesus – everything that was counter-cultural to the Roman mindset, and still is in our culture today. He wanted all men to see, like the pierced ear of the doulos, that true freedom means willingly belonging to Christ. And, through his beatings, his stoning, his imprisonment, Paul could say, “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” (Galatians 6:17.)

It was common knowledge that most Roman ships were powered by doulos slaves below deck, rowing with every ounce of energy they had, to get the vessel to its destination. Jesus told us that the greatest among us must be the servant of all (Matthew 23:11). What a picture of true servant-leadership, the one who will give up the lauded position of men, set aside the place of honor, and go below deck to work, to sweat in prayer, in service, in fasting, in seeking the word of God for the people, so that the vessel, the Body of Christ, will get to her destination.

In the true story of Harriot Tubman, she never served God and man more sacrificially than after she was freed. Oh Lord, give us servants like that – no -- *make us to be servants like that!* May we be worthy to be called the doulos’ of Christ, that our freedom will to prove to the world that there is no master worthy but You.

### Our Prayer

Christ Jesus, we lift up our Directors who have sacrificed so much to voluntarily live on foreign soil, away from their families in the States, to serve the men and women of our Armed Forces. Thank You for the Doulos-Spirit that You’ve placed in them and within the very fabric of Freedom Outreach, ministry to the military. We ask that this servant-lifestyle would extend to each and every person. Destroy the sin of pride among us. Purge us of self-righteousness and entitlement. Teach us to look and sound and act just like Jesus, that everyone would know we are Yours by this sacrificial love. You were pierced through in the most sacrificial service of all. Help us to live as those marked with that kind of pure love and devotion.

### In Our Daily Prayer Guide

Dan and Andreja Davis, Vilseck, Germany: Pray that God will send us people to help in the children’s ministry and fill every empty seat, in Jesus’ Name.



## DAY 7 – SUNDAY, JANUARY 12



Read: John 5:1-15

I'd never been to a surfing competition before last summer. Quite frankly, I don't know or care anything about the sport except that my niece and nephew in California had been to a surf camp and asked us to come watch their competition at the end.

Oliver is only 11 years old but he came in first place! He was so far ahead in the competition that he didn't even go out during the last round. I watched him throughout the whole competition and noticed one difference between him and the other kids: he never took his eyes off of the waves.

The crowds were loud. The kids were distracted. They were talking and laughing and waving to parents, friends and relatives. But, that little guy kept his eyes focused so that he would be able to recognize when the water began to swell and he was prepared when the "big one" came.

This isn't really a story about surfing. It's an analogy for revival. We've been praying for our nation, which is so undeniably desperate for a move of God, and reading about great awakenings of past times. Surely, God will do it again! He has promised to pour out His Spirit on all flesh! But, history is clear that the only people who "caught the wave" of revival were the ones who were diligently looking for it.

We must focus our eyes on what really matters. There's a promised wave of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the "last days," and we will only rise on that tide if we are prepared and poised to do so. The trophy that day didn't go to the ones standing on the beach, or those who were playing or busy chatting to each other, but to the one who tuned everything else out and kept watching for the movement under the water.



There was an unusual occurrence in Israel recorded in the Book of John, Chapter Five. An angel would come “stir the water” at the pool of Bethesda and healing would take place only in the first people to enter into the water afterward. This lame man was never able to get into the water, but, still, Jesus approached him to ask a simple question, “Do you want to be made well?”

That was a strange question. Why wouldn’t a lame man want to be made well? Yet, we can look at our sin-sick world and ask the same question, “Do we *want* revival? Do we *want* the healing of our nation?” Naturally, we would answer, emphatically, “Yes!” But, do our actions prove that out? Are we really watching for that movement? Are we poised to enter in when God begins to stir the waters?

How easy it is to get distracted away from our purpose! How easy it is to get so bogged down with everything else in our lives that we forget to keep watching and praying. There is a revival like no other coming. The Book of Joel promises it to us. We must focus and be diligent in our praying and seeking so when the water is stirred, we can catch the wave.

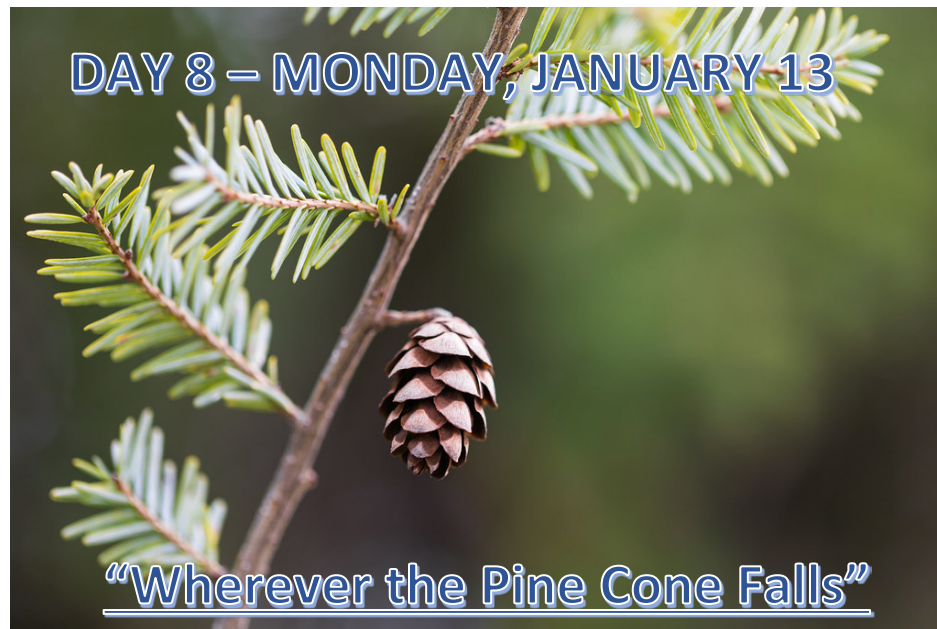
#### *Our Prayer*

O Lord God, how we need revival! How we want revival! We see that apostasy abounds and that “another gospel” is being welcomed in place of Your Holy Word. We say, trouble the waters, O Lord! Let the healing flow to our nation and our people! We repent of the spiritual state of our nation and, like Daniel, we pray for forgiveness for ourselves and our people. We want to be part of this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We long for our nation to be revived. We ask for Your clarity, urgency and focus to be able to participate with You in what You will do to bring revival in our time. Prepare us now for that season. In Jesus’ Name – amen.

#### *In Our Daily Prayer Guide*

Angeles City, Philippines - Bong and Sharon Tiru, Clarkview Center - Pray for a passion of members to win souls; more leaders in outreach; our ministry to Philippine Air Force. Aladin Ordillo, Humphrey Center - Pray for our teachers here to minister effectively and for God’s help for students to get degrees & break the cycle of prostitution and poverty in their families.





Read: Acts 11:19-26

Pine trees are an amazing design of our Creator. The trees do not bear edible fruit with a seed implanted inside (such as deciduous trees), but the trees produce inedible male and female pine cones on the same tree. The females with the seeds grow above and the males to pollinate the seeds grow on the lower branches of the trees. Typically, the same tree is unable to both disburse seeds and pollinate those same seeds. The pollen is amazingly shaped like “wings” which ensures that the cones are pollinated by other, nearby trees instead. This enhances genetic variation and survival. What an intricate and deliberate design!

In Freedom Outreach, Ministry to the Military, most of the people in our centers are only there for a very limited season. By the time the individual or family finds the center and becomes involved, there is probably two active years of involvement for most overseas stationed personnel. Certainly, there are a lot of seeds planted that the Center Director never gets to see fully germinate and take root!

However, like the falling cones of the pine tree, our people get scattered about. Our own zig-zag path in the Army led us from Germany to Missouri, Georgia, and then Belgium, back to Germany, back to Belgium, then Kansas and finally, Washington DC. We moved 12 times in 20 years, which would seem counter-productive to spiritual growth. But, like the pine tree, the seeds develop in one place are pollinated in another and take root in yet another. Paul discussed the mystery of how God uses the larger Body of Christ when he wrote to the Corinthians, *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.”* (1 Corinthians 3:6-7.)

We read in the Book of Acts that the Lord disrupted the comfort of the church in Jerusalem. Through persecution, they were disbursed throughout Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. At that time, they preached only to the Jews. Much like the military is to our ministry, they knew who their primary mission were. Later the Lord would open up



opportunities to win and disciple the Gentiles in those areas as well. The point is that the movement of the church in those early years was divinely purposeful. They would have never left the thriving church in Jerusalem unless they had no choice.

Right now, around the world, there are people who have been saved and discipled in Freedom Outreach centers at their former duty location. Usually, there is little choice, if any, about when and where the Department of Defense will take them next. Some now find themselves in a places where there is no Spirit-Filled movement or where there is a need for a new ministry center. Perhaps that is you today. It's easy to get discouraged and to question the wisdom of the Lord to take you from a fruitful place to a place that seems so barren. The reason is likely to be this: you're there because you are bearing a seed. It's the desolate places that need the planting. It's the hot, dry places that need the refreshing oasis of the Lord's garden. Could it be that He has placed you there to begin something? It doesn't need to take renting an expensive building and assembling a full worship band. It might be as simple as starting a Bible Study, a fellowship or prayer meeting in your home. If you are sensing the Holy Spirit's prompting but are not sure how to proceed, there are mentors throughout Freedom Outreach who can help you find the right fit for your personality, skill set, time availability and the community you are in. Don't be afraid to reach out to the Freedom Outreach office and start the conversation.

It may very well be that the Lord has directed your pinecone to fall in just the right place for such a time as this. If it's not you, please pray for those who are considering this leap of faith in 2020, and be prepared for the season that you may also find yourself rolling down a different hill and becoming the first seedling of a future great forest.

#### Our Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we thank You that, in Your wisdom, You have not allowed us to miss opportunities by remaining in the comfort of one Freedom Outreach center. You move us on to grow us and to reproduce disciples through us. What a privilege to get to represent you all around the world! We pray for those who find themselves in a less-than-comfortable season of transition. We know that You go before them and prepare the way, so we pray that they are overcome with Your peace and discern Your direction as they begin a new season in their military careers and spiritual growth. Thank You for new centers planted around the world in 2020. We pray especially for areas in Japan, in the Benelux, in Italy, in the USA and every place where there is not a thriving ministry. Send encouragement and confirmation in those You are sending forth. Give them Your strategies to start even a small planting or to water what is there. We trust You to bring the increase by the power of Your Own Name, Jesus – amen.

#### Today In Our Prayer Guide

MTTM, Hawaii - Pray for anointing, favor & open doors to reach Schofield Barracks, MCAS Kanoeha, Hickham AFB and the huge military/DOD population on Oahu.



## DAY 9 – TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

### “Ghost Pickpockets”

Read: Song of Solomon 2:15 & Ephesians 5:1-21

In May of last year, we had the honor of serving with our FOI missionaries in Northern Italy, Steve and Rebecca Colburn. Italy in early summer is not a horrible place to be. Fresh flower boxes were out on every balcony. The smell of espresso brewing and fresh baked goods was on every street corner. It was a slightly cool that weekend which made for comfortable days trekking miles by foot through Venice when we'd completed the ministry.

One afternoon, we had a strange encounter. We saw a group of American college students (they wore their university sweatshirts) coming out of a Pizzeria, one holding a large box of pizza. A woman dressed all in white, with her face painted a ghostly gray, walked dramatically up to the students and snatched the pizza box from a young man's hand. The students stared in shock but were in even more disbelief when the woman stood about 100 feet away, opened the box and ate a piece! She was obviously taunting them and trying to be as dramatic and antagonistic as possible. At this point, a crowd was gathering around the spectacle. We watched, fascinated, from the other side of the street. Out of all of the students, only a slight female brunette dared to confront the brazen woman. She marched over and demanded the box back. After a theatrical back-and-forth exchange, mostly in hand motions due to the language barrier, the girl finally won the match and retrieved the box. At this point, there was quite a multitude crowded in around the students. People were talking and laughing and applauded the bold little gal who triumphantly returned the pizza in question.



This was the second woman in white that I'd seen acting strangely on the street. We'd encountered another such woman at the marketplace in Florence. I was curious, wanting to do some research and see if there was a cultural reference for the women dressing in white and acting so oddly. What I found out is that those women were likely what's known as, "Ghost Pickpockets." Yes, they steal sometimes, but that isn't really their aim. Usually, they will look for a group of unsuspecting tourists (such as American college students) and create a scene. Most of them *do not steal*. They only *distract* so that the real pickpocket, usually a man in very ordinary street clothes, can join the crowd around the victims and pick their pockets while they are completely preoccupied by the bizarre behavior of the woman in white.

What a perfect analogy of how the adversary of our souls works. It's not the obvious, barefaced thievery that cons us, but the diversions that bait us away from what's really going on.

In Song of Solomon, the brothers of the Beloved sing to her, *"Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines."* Surely, it's the crafty, little things that spoil our



fruitfulness. It's what we didn't see coming and didn't suspect. It's the vermin of wastefulness that gnaws at our time, pulling us away from the stuff that matters. It's the little pebbles of complaining that pile up over our joy. It's taking our eyes off of the vineyard and onto the ruckus in the distance that allows the thief to sneak in.

Ephesians 5 is such an interesting study. First Paul encourages the church to walk in love, and then to walk in light, and finally to walk in wisdom. These three things preface his teaching on Christ and the Church. *"See then that you walk circumspectly (cautiously), not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,"* (vs. 15-17).

There's a thief out there who is counting on our propensity to get sidetracked. As the author of confusion, he'll cause a hullabaloo just to divert our eyes from the vineyard. The Lord teaches us, instead, how to be wise, how to make up precious time that we've lost (redeeming the time), and how all of this prudence and understanding flows out of matchless wellspring of all our fruitfulness: being filled with the Holy Spirit.

### Our Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank You for the Holy Spirit who is our school master, teaching us all things. We ask for wisdom and discernment, because you've told us to not be unaware of the devil's devices. Thank You for helping us to redeem the time and to walk circumspectly so that we can be fruitful in Your kingdom. Most of all, we pray for those who have not yet been filled with the Holy Spirit to receive the baptism during this season of fasting. We thank You for the gift of the indwelling Holy Ghost to lead and guide us into all truth. In Jesus' Name – amen.

### Today In Our Prayer Guide

Greg and Dana Smith - Velburg, Germany - Pray for a Holy Spirit illuminated plan to reach and minister to this military community and spiritual growth in every one attending.



## DAY 10 – WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

### “A Little Brown Box”

Read: Mark 6:30-44

In 1998, we had been part of overseas military fellowships through Freedom Outreach for several years already but had never been to one of the annual retreats. “You have to go! It’s awesome!” we would hear from well-intentioned friends over and over. But, when we calculated the cost of the drive, the food, the hotel, on top of the conference itself, we had never made a commitment to going. However, that year, we decided to step out in faith a little bit. In January, we took an old shoebox and began putting loose change and small bills inside. Every week or so, when we’d make a contribution of any size, I’d lay hands on the box and pronounce the one’s and five’s to be husbands and wives with hopes they’d produce baby 20’s and 50’s and 100’s!



When the spring came, and it was time to make a decision and officially register for the retreat and book our hotel, we opened the box and counted the contents for the first time in hopes that we could cover the cost. To our amazement, we had not only had enough for the European Spring Retreat but had about \$200 left over!

I told that story just a few weeks ago at a small church in Tennessee. The pastor, a former Center Director and Regional Director for Freedom Outreach, Ministry to the Military, got tears in his eyes. He knew exactly what I was talking about. After our first conference in the spring of 1999, we were so full of joy, faith, rich teaching and fellowship that we knew we could never afford to miss another one, so we kept up our little shoebox of faith. This pastor had been in many such retreats and had heard (and experienced) the miraculous stories of provision from so many young military members and families. He knows how desperately these times of corporate assembly are needed. In a hugely generous gesture, he asked who in the congregation would join with him in a “shoebox offering.” Over the next few months, members of that little, precious congregation are going to set cash aside whenever they can in a box and bring those boxes to the church in time to make a collective donation toward Freedom Outreach events in the spring.

It is amazing to see that, today, we are enjoying the fruits of someone’s sacrificial giving yesterday, and the year before that, and even that which was sown in decades gone by! How priceless it is to be part of sowing both large and small blessings into someone else’s spiritual journey.

As we seek, in Freedom Outreach, to do so very much with so very little, we are praying for a year of financial breakthroughs in every center and as an organization. We are



praying for those who can give large donations and charitable foundations that will give grants toward this fruitful work around the world. We pray for churches to adopt Freedom Outreach as their mission's project for 2020 and beyond. We pray that our people in our local centers will enter into the blessing of Biblical stewardship and sow into their local ministries and into missions. May the Lord bless each gift, the large and the small alike. We have seen His miraculous multiplication again and again, but it always starts with someone giving up their few loaves and fishes. For a ministry that has supernaturally survived and thrived during storms, transitions, drawdowns and hardships, even when it comes down to tiny shoe-string budgets, we are amazed to see what God can do with our little brown shoeboxes of faith.

### *Our Prayer*

Our God, You are FAITHFUL! We praise You, Lord Jesus, for your amazing blessings time and time again! We thank You for new doors of provision opening. We praise You for every center walking in abundance for every good work. We are grateful that every ministry is going to be fully provided for as You bless and bring the increase. Lord, today, touch and open the hearts of those You have determined to stand with FOI-MTTM. Put them in alignment with Your will concerning the funding for this mighty work. We thank You now for donations, grants, and support from around the world. Bless and multiply according to Your good work and pleasure. In Jesus' Name – so be it.

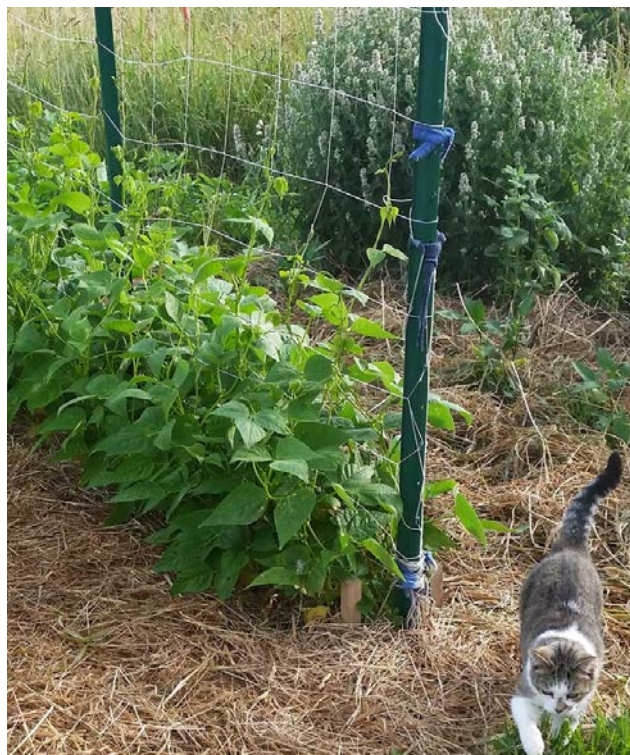
### *Today In Our Prayer Guide*

Pray for fundraising efforts and support to cover costs of worldwide military ministry and family, youth, kids retreat and camp programs to impact the kingdom of God.



## DAY 11 – THURSDAY, JANUARY 16

### “It All Started In A Garden”



Read: 2 Corinthians 8 (entire chapter)

Not quite midway through his Army career, Brian decided to change his job (MOS) from construction to communications. This required that he go back to school for 10 months to learn the new job. The kids and I were about 1,200 miles away in a little rented house. I was glad to find such a nice little home. Ironically, it was in a neighborhood that had boomed in the 1950's as little ranch houses were built to accommodate service members returning to their civilian lives after WWII.

The landlord wasn't keen on allowing me to tear up a patch of ground for a garden but he would concede to let me plant some vegetables by the fence. I knew that tomato plants needed structure and that beans and peas did well when planted in hills by something their vines could climb up on.

By the time Brian got leave in mid-summer, I had been able to harvest just a few handfuls of green beans. The kids and I had feasted on 3-4 beans each during dinner earlier in the week. Still, it was a victory for me. I'd bought all the seed packets for just a few dollars and had raised the plants from there. To see them actually producing and to get to enjoy our tiny harvest felt like quite an accomplishment.

Brian's first night home, he had driven to Central Nebraska all the way from Fort Gordon, Georgia. He was tired. But, since it was still light out, I asked him if he'd like to see my little garden.

"Oh, I just want to rest. Maybe later." I asked again as the sun was starting to set, but he said he'd rather wait until the next day.

It was Saturday when we woke up. I began cleaning the house and Brian went outside to see what needed to be done. I figured he'd walk through the door at any moment brimming with praise for my ingenious little makeshift veggie patch. We might even have another handful of my homegrown goodies to eat that evening!

Instead, I heard the sound of the lawnmower. It took a moment before I fully realized what had happened. The constant "whrrrr" of the motor had turned to, "whrrr – clunk, clunk, clunk – whrrr." And then I knew.



I stood on the edge of the lawn, my hands clasped over my mouth, looking at a row of brown craters by the fence where my garden had just been! Brian turned off the mower, looked at me and wiped his forehead, before motioning over his shoulder.

“You should have seen how big those weeds were!” he said, proudly.

I took a deep breath. I quickly prayed to God for guidance. I opened my mouth and said only this: “The next time I royally screw up, you’d better remember this day and give me a WHOLE LOT OF GRACE!”

Brian figured out what he did just then. He apologized over and over but I decided not to bring the matter up again. Yet, the next time I made a big mistake (Brian would like you to note that, ironically, I’m not telling those particular stories here), I reminded him that I had “grace points” saved up! That now-funny incident started a running joke between us that has turned out to be quite a significant spiritual principal and relationship skill. Naturally, we don’t really keep track, but we realize that we have each needed and received grace, from God and from one another.

There is so much bitterness in the world. Surely, it doesn’t belong in God’s holy church or in the lives of His followers. We need grace, ourselves, every day. We need to give grace every day. We need to live in the example of Christ, as we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to do so, and be examples of patience, longsuffering, kindness and grace to those around us.

In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul is commending Timothy to the church for their financial support of him, but Paul includes other kinds of “giving” when he speaks of grace. *“But as you, abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.”* (Vs. 7.)

This world is a very un-grace-filled place. Malice, revenge and animosity are the fruits of the jungle all around us. If we are going to show the world Jesus Christ, we must be cultivated by the Holy Spirit, full of grace in the way that we speak and act, even in the attitudes of our hearts.

When Brian and I listen to a sermon about the fall of Adam and Eve, often the preacher will start off by saying something like, “It all started in a garden,” and I have to smile to myself because it reminds me of this story. Thankfully, in the Garden of Eden, as well as my little makeshift garden, there was always grace waiting to be given and received.

### Our Prayer

Lord Jesus, this world desperately needs to see You through our lives, evidenced in the way we live, speak, act, love and forgive. Help us to cultivate the fruit of grace in our lives this year. Teach us how to be Spirit-controlled in the moments that our flesh wants to retaliate. We renew our covenant of Lordship, to allow You to manifest the Fruit of the Spirit in every situation. Make our centers and ministries places where kindness abounds, a refuge from the coldness of our current culture. Grow in us the capacity to love like Jesus so that all men will truly know that we are Your disciples. In Jesus’ Name – amen.

### Today In Our Prayer Guide

Andrew & Rhonda Provazek - Sigonella, Italy - Pray for new leaders in training and transition as we launch a new year.



## DAY 12 – FRIDAY, JANUARY 17

### “A Way That Seems Right”



Read: Judges 17:1-6

In May, 2019, Amanda Eller, a yoga instructor, took a jog down a familiar path in the woods in Makawao Forest Reserve on the island of Maui, Hawaii. She stopped to meditate and then began to head back toward where she'd parked her car. She'd become disoriented but kept pressing on down the path she thought was right. She trusted her own instincts to get her back on the correct

trail. Seventeen days later, nowhere near where she had started, she was found by a search and rescue team. She'd fractured her leg and had severe burns on her body from prolonged sun exposure.

When the rescuers showed her, later, where in the tropical Hawaiian forest she'd been found, she realized that every time she set out to get back to safety, sure in herself that she was going the right direction, she was actually traveling deeper and deeper into the wilderness, away from civilization and safety.

*“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”* Proverbs 14:12 says.

Our current culture is one in which everyone is urged to do what is right in their ‘own eyes’. Such was the case in Israel in Judges 17:6. Each person's idea of right and wrong became the baseline for morality and life. The end result was idolatry, false religion, immorality, war, famine and grave injustices.

We, as God's people upon this earth, disbursed to the shores of many foreign nations, are called to be sign posts in the wilderness, lovingly directing lost people off of the wide and easy path that “seems right” and into the narrow path that leads to abundant life on this earth and eternal life forevermore. Yet, has there ever been greater hostility in our culture to this message? “How dare you tell me how to live my life?!” It seems that the masses are content to plunge deeper and deeper into darkness, like the woman in the jungle of Hawaii.

It is our responsibility to witness, in deeds first and in words secondly, and to continue to speak about the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ! A hundred may reject the message, but there are those who will come to realize they are lost, as we all once were, and will listen and turn toward Christ!



Our mandate from the Lord never changes. We are the search and rescue team for this generation. Christ Jesus leaves the 99 to find the one that is lost, but he uses the lives of mere mortals like you and I to do the seeking. The lady who was lost in the wilderness in Hawaii held onto one singular hope, as the days turned into weeks, that not everyone had given up and that someone was still out there searching for her.

Let each of us be that one.

### *Our Prayer*

Oh God, forgive us for forgetting and neglecting Your mandate to “Go, and make disciples of every nation.” (Matthew 28:19). Renew our fire for evangelism and make us effective witnesses on every Army Post, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Base, on every ship and every deployment zone, for all active duty, reservists, veterans and their families. Give us Your discernment in how to reach those around us and the anointing, when we speak, that breaks every yoke. Let 2020 be the year of soul winning like no other, for the honor and glory of Your Name and the advancement of Your Kingdom. In Jesus’ powerful Name we pray, amen.

### *Today In Our Prayer Guide*

Steve and Rebecca Colburn- Aviano, Italy Pray for new committed Spirit-filled members hungry for God; anointing and wisdom in discipleship of those attending. Pray for divine favor and open doors.



## DAY 13 – SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

### “Bird Brain”

Read: Revelation 5 (entire chapter)

I literally watched a bird one morning last spring (and a different one the week before) hit our living room window over and over until he nearly knocked himself unconscious. In both cases, the birds only stopped when I got up and stood in front of the window. I looked up why this keeps happening (thank you, Audubon Society) and thought it was interesting.



Firstly, there's a reflection of the sky on the window and the birds don't understand that it isn't real. They are not smart enough to know what a reflection is. They stop when they see someone on the other side because, when we are standing there, they suddenly gain perspective.

The second reason is that the male birds can be very territorial, especially during mating season. They see their own reflection but perceive that it is a rival and will continually fight it, even to the death.

*“Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him,”* Proverbs 26:12 warns. It's the most common thing, for the fallen nature of man to trust in himself and what “self” can see, perceive and understand over the word of God. Like the bird trying to fly into the sky's reflection on the window, the deception leads to death.

Consider the bird who is fighting his own reflection. He's furiously battling against himself because he doesn't see the real enemy, only a mirage. I read a quote the other day that rather sums it up: “Anxiety is really just a conspiracy theory you have about yourself.” How many of our battles are within our own selves?

Finally, the birds only understood that they were deceived when they saw one of us standing in front of the window. All of the sudden, we have interrupted the false reflection and the little bird suddenly sees reality. True perspective comes with the presence of one who can break the mirage.

The Apostle James, who was protected from martyrdom (he was plunged into boiling oil and survived – some say, that is because he was a “friar”) and instead was banished to the island of Patmos where God Himself visited him and he wrote the final book of the Bible, “Revelation”. He saw the seals of God's judgement and was asked by, *“a strong angel proclaiming in a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and loose its seals?’*



*And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.' And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne."*

At that point, John experiences a full-blown worship service in Heaven as the four living creatures and the 24 elders fall down and begin singing a new song about the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, Who is WORTHY. Directly after, they are joined by angels, ten thousand times ten thousand, who begin to declare, *"saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"*

The point is that John wept and was in despair until he saw the Lamb. He couldn't see any hope until he saw the Lamb. His vision wasn't clear, that he was in the company of the Trinity Himself and an innumerable host of Heaven, until He saw the Lamb.

It's a poor and puny analogy by comparison, but the little bird that morning would have fought himself to the death if I hadn't come to break up the illusion.

It reminds me of something our youngest son once said, "One moment in the presence of God makes everything clear."

This world is full of illusion. In many ways, it IS the illusion. If we could only see what's really all around us, the Army of God and the Captain of the Hosts Himself Who is fighting for us, we would stop pursuing illusions and fighting against ourselves and would turn and join the worshipful, heavenly procession and live continually in that victory! Only a birdbrain would want to live any other way.

### Our Prayer

Father in Heaven, we repent of our pride and accept that we cannot see clearly apart from Your Truth! In a world where deception abounds, help us to see clearly and to be focused on You so that the mirage of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life will be destroyed. Lord, make the people of Freedom Outreach a people who see clearly, who uphold the truth of Your word above all else. May this be a year of deeper study, greater commitment to scripture and prayer, and drawing closer to You as individuals and as a movement. In Christ's Name, amen.

### Today In Our Prayer Guide

Rod & Steffi Nyman - Heilbronn, Germany - Pray for anointing to reach this area for Christ and spiritual growth in every member.



## DAY 14 – SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

### “Lookie-Lookie”

Read: Matthew 5:1-16

Our daughter spent a year in Spain at Bible College. One of her favorite out-of-school activities was to go to the markets in Palma de Mallorca. There, sitting on blankets on the ground, were thousands of different kinds of name brand merchandise. You could buy brands like Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Gucci, Nike, Fendi, and Balenciaga for just pennies on the Euro. Of course, the students didn't buy the goods. They knew that they were not authentic but cheap and illegal “knock-off's.” The nick-name coined for the con-artists on the street was the, “Lookie-Lookie's,” because the crooks would yell at the students as they passed, “Hey, Lookie, Lookie!” They were usually athletic young men who could, incredibly, grab all four corners of the blanket, scoop up the goods in a single motion, and sprint down the street to evade law enforcement within seconds.



There's a lot of counterfeit spirituality in our world. In fact, most of the unbelievers in our lives are probably thinking that we are, also, deceived. There are droves of Millennials reportedly leaving the church out of their perception of its inauthenticity. So, what makes a Christian authentic?

Ephesians 4:22-24, *“that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”*

Authenticity is the process of outwardly living, publically and privately, one's inward faith. It's the deliberate act of, “putting off the old man” and allowing the Holy Spirit to renew our minds. As a result, everything in the person's life begins to change: ways of thinking, speaking, and basically living everyday life. It's “putting on the new man,” and allowing the Person of Christ to express Himself authentically through us. We cannot make ourselves holy, but we can choose to submit to the process of sanctification, as led by scripture and the Holy Spirit. Religion alone focuses on external change. Knowing Christ begins with an internal change that, eventually, shows up in the person's life externally.

I remember being about four or five years old and my grandmother bought me a plastic play money tray, such as would go inside of a cash register. When I opened the wrapper, she heard me gasp in the backseat of her car. There were handfuls of dollar



bills and plastic coins in the drawer. “I’m rich!” I hollered out, and then commenced to tell her all the things I was going to buy for her. To my shock and dismay, she eventually let me know that it was “play money,” and that I couldn’t buy anything with it. Its true value was just about the full \$1.49 that she’d spent on the set at the Five-and-Dime. It took me awhile to get over this disappointment and outrage. I’d been hoodwinked!

No one wants to play the fool. There’s few emotions more reprehensible than betrayal. There should never be a time when someone looks at us and feels that they’ve been “duped” into thinking we aren’t as genuine in our faith as they thought.

So, how can we, as God’s people, be as authentic as possible in our faith?

Elite police who are trained to catch counterfeit currency do not spend time studying the counterfeits at all. They spend all their time studying and memorizing, in excruciating detail, real currency so that they can easily spot a fake. They can see, almost immediately, the micro-printing in real currency that looks just like shading to our untrained eyes. They can see the nuances of the miniscule red and blue lines woven into the cotton paper of American dollars. The lesson for us is that, the closer we get to the real thing – Jesus Christ – the more familiar we are with all that is authentic and fake spiritually/mere “religion” becomes more glaringly apparent.

One of the coolest ways to spot fake currency is the fact that U.S. dollars are printed in layers. There is an inside security thread that cannot be easily seen. If you take a \$20 bill and shine a flashlight behind it, you will see a sentence appear as that inner core is illuminated. It says, “USA TWENTY.” Basically, when the light shines, you can see it’s clearly authentic.



So, let your light shine! (Matthew 5:16.) Let the world see the Real Crucified, Resurrected, Soon-Returning Christ inside of each of us! When they see what is genuine, they’ll never be fooled by a fake again.

### *Our Prayer*

Lord, our military communities need the powerful witness of the authentic Body of Christ! We pray for a year of influence and soul winning like no other. We pray that You would help us to “put off the old man” daily and run toward You with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. We ask not only for conversions but radically transformed lives. Let the light of the gospel shine brilliantly in and through Your people so that everyone will know the truth of Who You are. In Jesus’ Name.

### *Today In Our Prayer Guide*

Laurence & Gwen Finley - Camp Casey, Korea - Pray for God to send someone gifted for media ministry & increased outreach to reach soldiers here at Camp Casey.



## DAY 15 – MONDAY, JANUARY 20

### “Damaged”

Read: Luke 7:36-50

I was teaching a class on writing grants at a large church about five years ago. They had me come at an unusual time, during the first of their two Sunday services. They asked the attendees to come to my class in the annex for the instruction and then attend the second service. When my class ended, I walked to my car to put my materials away, aware that the second service had begun about 10 minutes prior. I was glad that we would be able to make it for the end of the worship and for all of the message. As we walked in, an older woman came out of the church from the first service and nearly stopped in front of us, sneering. She said, unapologetically, “If you’re going to be *that* late, why even come at all?”

I smiled, said nothing, and went into the service, but it bothered me all day long. Finally, I had to stop and ask the Lord if He was trying to say something to me through that incident. Indeed, He was, and it wasn’t about punctuality.

You see, I didn’t hear the gospel clearly until I was a grown woman with two children. I spent the bulk of my life prior either trying to deny the existence of God or wondering why a perfect, holy God would want a piece of junk like me? If I had encountered this “church lady” during that time in my life, I probably would have left and never come back! I so clearly remember the days that I struggled to talk myself into going to church, longing on a cellular level for the love of God, but scared out of my mind that I would be unwelcome or judged. I wasn’t like the others at church, I reasoned. At least that was my perception of them.

I was damaged.

My daughter works for an upscale salon. They sell quite expensive products. I love all of their hair care line but don’t ever buy it because it is way out of my price range. Yet, if there is even the slightest defect, the product is placed in a bin and the workers get to take it home for free. Through the bar code they make a mark so that no one can try to return it for a refund. They write the word, “DAMAGED.” Once that seven-letter word is written, the product goes from being a \$54 bottle of shampoo to having no value at all.





I realized, that day after the incident in the parking lot, that we in the church can place labels on people. We can mark them with our own prejudices and tag them with an identity based on unbiblical condemnations and societal judgements. Do they walk in the door feeling as though they have no value, they are not wanted, or that they can never be worthy of the Heavenly Father's love?

**Damaged**. We all are. Let's face it. No one gets off this rolling ball of dirt called Earth unscathed. **Unworthy**. We all were. We came to Christ with nothing to barter with but our sickness of sin and filthy rags of self-righteousness. **Unholy**. I've never had any holiness of my own and I never will, and that is true for every single person. It's always been by Him, for Him and because of Him that any of us can have our sins washed away and be presented blameless before God. It was pure grace the day we first cried out for forgiveness and pure grace that keeps us abiding in Christ today.

The "sinful woman" who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried his feet with her hair had to endure the scorn, the embarrassment, the judgement, and the labels. She knew her worship was pitiful. She didn't even have a basin and towel, just her life savings invested in this now-broken alabaster box of perfume. She gave all she had to give and it was all He wanted of her. Perhaps, we need to relearn this kind of "spirit and truth" worship.

"Why even come at all?" the lady asked me that day. Why? If I'd had a few moments to collect myself, I may have answered, "Because I need Jesus just as much as you do, you Old Bat." (I think it's probably better that I was stunned into silence.) Thank God that we serve the Creator-Redeemer-Savior who takes us from the scrap heap of this world to the empty place waiting just next to Him where we will stand forever as the spotless Bride of Christ. We may have been marked, "Damaged," on the outside by the religious snobs of this world, but Jesus was always looking upon the inside anyway.

### *Our Prayer*

Lord Jesus, may our ministry centers be a hospital, a triage, for those bleeding out in the world. Give us Your compassion. You came to seek and save the lost! You are still seeking, still saving and still healing – may it ever be through us. Move our hearts to go out to the highways and byways and compel them to come in. Don't let us remain unburdened by their plight. No matter how it looks on the outside, give us the eyes of faith to see them as you do. Make this year a year of reaching those that seem unreachable. Fill our centers and ministries with newborn souls. In Jesus' Name, amen.

### *Today In Our Prayer Guide*

Steve & Rebecca Colburn - Vicenza, Italy - Pray for Holy Spirit anointing to break yokes; deliverance from spirit of sexual immorality, fear, anxiety, depression, suicide, alcoholism, drugs; financial blessings; growth; devoted Spirit-filled ministry leaders and volunteers.



## DAY 16 – TUESDAY, JANUARY 21

### “Just A Crumb”

Read Matthew 15:1-28



It would be easier for Christians to just skim past and gloss over parts of the Bible that may be difficult to understand or that bring up challenging questions. It's something we must be careful not to do: cherry-pick only the parts of scripture that we understand easily and enjoy more. We always tell our students, "God is not afraid of your hard questions." With that in mind, we look to a story in the New Testament that many believers find troubling.

We see Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite (Syrophoenician) woman. First, we must put the event in context. 1. Jesus has just come from a bold clash with the scribes and Pharisees. He had just rebuked them for transgressing the commandment of God for the sake of their tradition. He bluntly called them "Hypocrites!" 2. No sooner was that tense exchange over when His disciples came to seemingly *inform* Jesus that the Pharisees were offended by His words. They seem to be putting a great value on the opinion of the religious leaders and perhaps questioning whether Jesus should have spoken so severely. 3. Jesus explains to the disciples that it is not external dirt that defiles a person but the internal filth, because it proceeds out of the heart. 4. Then, they depart and come upon the Canaanite woman crying out for her daughter's deliverance.

The woman calls out to Jesus, interestingly, using a Messianic title, "Son of David!" Even though she's a Gentile, she isn't oblivious to the religious teachings of the Jews. Jesus doesn't say a word but, it seems, is waiting for the disciples to respond. They do, by coming and telling Him to, "send her away." We see, instead, that Jesus turns to the woman and tells her His mission was first to Israel. Then comes the difficult part. He says, "*It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.*" We know that she famously responds with great faith, saying, "*Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.*" Jesus then commends her for her faith, in front of the disciples who had just wanted to send her away, and lets her know that her daughter is healed.

It's difficult to read this passage because Jesus sounds so rude and cruel when he speaks to the woman. We never see Him speaking with harsh words to anyone except the unrepentant religious leaders, which is why this seems so offensive. There is quite a lot of dull commentary out on the internet about this passage along with some "elastic theology," but I didn't find an answer that seemed in keeping with the character of Christ as we know Him to be. There seems to be something much further below the surface.



Let's first look at a common Jewish prayer. It is called the, "Three Blessings," and is still in use today. It would've been prayed, naturally, back in Jesus' time on the earth, only by Jewish men, which all of His disciples happened to be. The prayer thanks God, <sup>1</sup>"that I am not a Gentile, a dog (some modern versions state, "slave,") or a woman."



The disciples would have been familiar with this man-made prayer and may have prayed it all of their lives. They may have taken a certain amount of pride that none of them were Gentiles, dogs, slaves, or women. Yet, here is this WOMAN following Jesus, and one who is a GENTILE daring to cry out a Messianic greeting! When Jesus failed to initially answer her, the disciples most likely felt gratified. They

definitely felt sure enough in how they thought Jesus would respond to ask Him to send her away, evidently having no expectation that He would do the miracle she asked. So, when He responds that the children's bread should not be thrown to the dogs, He has effectively referenced all three of the parts of this Jewish prayer (woman, Gentile, dog), which was part of the religious tradition that He had just been railing against. Could it be that He was trying to unearth some of that culturally learned religious hypocrisy within His disciples?

Of course, Jesus already knew what the woman's answer would be, and that it would not just be satisfactory to secure the healing of her daughter, but it would also be somewhat of a jolt to His disciples (whom He had just gently rebuked for being "without understanding," vs. 16, when it comes to what defiles a person.) The end result is this: the woman receives the miracle and an enormous accolade from Jesus Christ, in front of His disciples, as He commends her for her great faith.

It's a powerful end-note to remember that the disciples of Jesus had no idea, at this point, that this gospel would ever be for the Gentiles also, and that some of them would be the very carriers of that message! We know that Peter struggled with prejudices against the Gentiles, to the point that the Lord sent him a heavenly vision three times before he agreed to go to Cornelius' house and preach to the Gentiles in Acts 10. Later in the Book of Acts, we see that Paul had to rebuke Peter for backsliding in his bias against the Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-21). It could be that Jesus, speaking to a Gentile woman this way, was shaking loose the grip of the synthetic Jewish religious tradition that the disciples were still holding onto. It violated the heart of God for all people.

The discussion begs a deeper question from each of us. Who is my Syrophoenician woman? We would do well to ask ourselves who we'd rather exclude from our worship services or who we'd rather not have to witness to or pray for. Is there anything lodged deep inside of us that prevents us from taking the Good News to all men (and women)?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/three-blessings/>



Just as Jesus used this encounter to break the hold that cultural prejudice had on His disciples, may the reading and study of this story do the same for us.

### *Our Prayer*

Lord Jesus, unearth in us every prejudice, every cultural bias, so that we can freely love and serve all men as You do. Show us the things that lie deep within our hearts which cause us to turn away from the people that You have led us to. The disciples respected the Pharisees and disrespected the woman who needed healing strictly based on their roles in that society, and You called them out for it. Call us out, as well, Oh Lord, that we would never be hypocritical in how we represent You, Your Kingdom, or in the use of Your spiritual gifts. Holy Spirit, we allow Your purification of our motives and a re-alignment of the way we think and feel so that we are rightly positioned, in humility and gratitude, before the One Who has healed us all. Use us to minister to every man, woman and child in our military communities, from every race, every background, every rank, in Jesus' Name – amen.

### *Today In Our Prayer Guide*

Jackie & Senetra Harris - Kaiserslautern, Germany - Pray for Transition, a culture of discipleship making and connections with our local community, the chaplaincy, and local ministries has been our prayer.



## DAY 17 – WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22

### “A Friend In The Night”

Read: Luke 11:5-13

You're awakened in the middle of the night by a knock on the door. It's your friend and neighbor, Ralph. He lets you know that he's had some unexpected company. They've come a long way and are hungry and he's out of food. He wants to know if you can get up and give him some of yours. What's in your fridge?

It's bad enough that he's already awakened you, but you don't even know these people and it's not your problem. The only reason you let him in and let him rummage through your fridge is because he's not going to leave you alone until you give him what he's come for.

When Jesus is teaching this parable to His disciples, He's teaching them to pray. The bread represents the Bread of Life – salvation. You go to the Only One who can give it – the Heavenly Father. Those in your life who are possibly open to hearing this message won't go get it themselves. Why? It's simple. Because they do not know Him.

What a picture of intercession! You have a relationship with both parties. You know that the hearts of your friends, your co-workers, your family members are not yet open. They won't go to the Father's house themselves. So, you go instead, through intercession.

There is a work in the heart of unrepentant sinners that can only be accomplished by the touch of the Holy Spirit. In John 6:44, Jesus tells us that no one can come to Him unless the Father draws them. Through our intercession, the bread goes out from the Father's house and sits before them and they realize they were hungry after all.

The world needs our intercession! We need to be that friend in the night! We need to give the Holy Spirit permission to wake us up in the midnight hour to pray and “bother” us at inconvenient times because someone is on the way, and we didn't even know it!

#### Our Prayer

Lord Jesus, in Your Name we ask – teach us to pray! Make us to be that “friend in the night” who will intercede for those around us. We ask for a spirit of intercession to be poured out of every one of our centers around the world and on each of our ministers in this movement. We ask You now for the bread that comes down from Heaven, the manna in the wilderness of our military communities. Revive us to pray like never before and to prepare to receive those hungry souls You are sending. Amen.

#### Today In Our Prayer Guide

Harry & Cristy Rodriguez - Baumholder, Germany - Pray for Rodriguez's as they continue to listen to God and His plan for Baumholder and pray for revival.

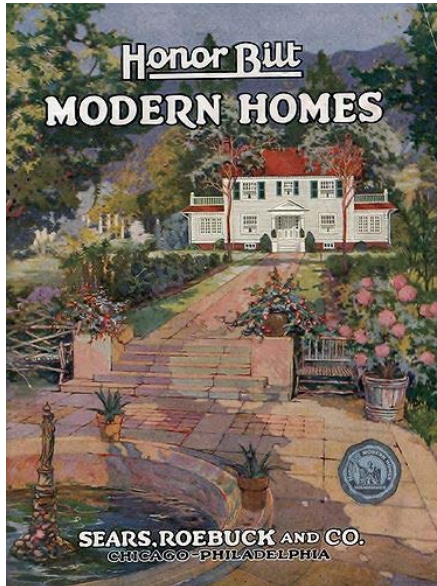




## DAY 18 – THURSDAY, JANUARY 23

### “Do Not Deviate From These Instructions”

Read: Isaiah 55 (entire chapter)



Between the years of 1908 and 1940, more than 70,000 Sears Modern Home Kit houses were sold across America. These comprehensive kits contained nearly everything to build the home, from the boards, nails, plumbing, electrical, even hardware such as the brass door knocker! Shipped primarily by box car, then trucked to the home site, some communities were almost entirely comprised of these cunning little houses. Elgin, Illinois has the largest number of these homes in America with over 210 Sears Kit houses still standing. Best of all, the house was designed to be put together entirely without professional assistance. The worst part, though, was that the house was designed to be put together entirely without professional assistance. A 75-page leather-bound book of instructions was sent with every Sears kit home,

telling the new owner, in striking detail, how to assemble the approximately 25-tons of materials with over 30,000 separate parts. The book also contained a stern warning:

“Do not take anyone’s advice as to how this building should be assembled. Do not deviate from these instructions.”

Well, golly, Wally, that sounds like a whole lot of work! Wouldn’t it be a good idea to hire a carpenter or contractor?

The reason for the warning was quite valid. Sears Homes were not pre-fabs. They were very accurately cut kits designed so that anyone who could drive a nail or turn a screwdriver could build the house. The only catch is that they had to follow the instructions...TO THE LETTER. There was no margin for error or guesswork left in the plans. Oftentimes, home owners would hire a professional who would bypass steps saying, “That’s not the right way to do it.” After, the rest of the kit would simply not work.

There were over 370 different home designs and each one was completely customizable. The odds were good that no two homes would be exactly alike. Each owner had to pour over the book himself and painstakingly assemble the home step by step. In the end, though, the houses came together with shocking precision and even the most unskilled individual could look up at a fully functional house and say, “I built this with my own two hands.” The pride and satisfaction in the end product, not to mention the relief, must have been incalculable.



In Isaiah 55, God is calling out to His people to come to Him with their needs, their hunger, their thirst. He is the only One who can satisfy! The first seven verses are so jubilant and reassuring. The God of All Creation is crying out to us, "I have everything you truly desire. I have everything you need. No matter how poor you are, I offer all I have freely! My hand is open to you and I say, 'Come!'"

In verses 8-9, He says, *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."*

Not so unlike the Sears kit, He's saying, "I have everything you need, right down to the smallest detail, BUT YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO DO IT MY WAY."

His way and only His way. That sounds like such a crafty catch until we remember that this is exactly what Lordship is. Your life and mine is unlike any other that has ever existed on the face of the earth. We can't follow someone else's formula based on how God used them or what He called them to do. We have to seek the Lord for our own journey and pour over scriptures to hear how He is directing each of us in the pursuit of what He's building in our lives.

I'll never forget the nice preacher who had known my husband for all of five minutes and decided that Brian ought to be "released" to be a fireball preacher. "Let me pray for you, my brother," he said. Brian stopped him and replied, "Not until I'm sure you're going to pray for God's will and not your own idea of what that is." Boom.

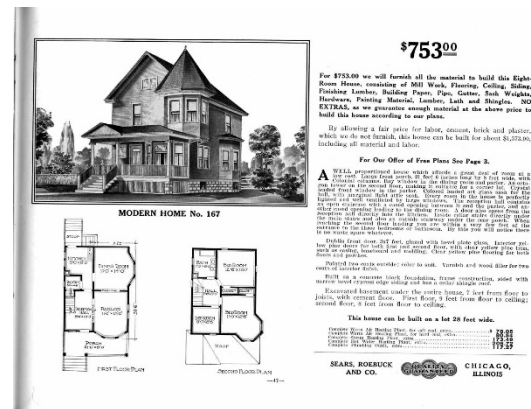
You are unique. Your life and your calling are unique. If you stop trying to fit into some religious cookie cutter and seek the Lord for what He has specifically created you for, you may find some pretty amazing plans. Just follow His word precisely and do not deviate from the instructions!

### Our Prayer

Abba Father, in Your wonderful wisdom and timing, You have called so many people and equipped them for Kingdom purposes within this ministry. We are asking for each of our centers to be a training ground, a place of preparation and discovery, where your people can step into their spiritual gifts and unique calling. Lord Jesus, we ask You to release spiritual gifts in our midst. Release creativity and a sensitivity to the leading of Your Spirit. We pray for powerful ministry to flow out of each individual life, each center, each unique ministry and program, in Jesus' Name.

### Today In Our Prayer Guide

SHAPE, Belgium - God's direction & help in the relocation & leadership transition process.





## DAY 19 – FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

### “The Hands and Feet”



Read: John 13:1-20

I'd been “saved” quite a few years before ever being invited to participate in what is known as a “Foot Washing Service.” I was assured that it would be deeply moving and impactful. It was. I was moved to leave early and impacted to try and make sure I'd never be in a service like that again!

Okay, that was an overreaction. It is true that it is a deeply spiritual and incredibly symbolic sacrament and it is grounded in scripture. As we read in our text for today, Jesus, in one of the most profound examples of humility, washed His disciple's feet on the night He was betrayed. The Twelve had just been arguing about who among them was, “the greatest,” and Jesus answered them by taking on the responsibility of the lowest household slave, a *doulos*, kneeling on the floor and washing their feet. The imagery is beyond powerful, which is why “Foot Washing Services” are still performed today. It still is a beautiful symbol of humility and servanthood.

Still, I have to wonder if following Christ's example could go even further by putting it into today's context. What does radical humility and profound servanthood look like to those around me? Could it be as simple as giving up my seat on the subway for someone else, visiting someone in the nursing home that doesn't have any family to come by, or taking my pastor's kids' home for the weekend so that he and his wife can spend some time together? I just read a story about a Christian boy who had a paper route and he would take the garbage can from the side of the house to the curb for one of his elderly customers every Tuesday afternoon when he delivered her paper. Then on Wednesday, he'd roll the empty can back to the side of the house. She was too feeble to manage it herself so he did it without being asked, simply to serve like Jesus.

I'm reminded about a story from the 1980's during a Dove Awards After-Party. The very concept of the Dove Awards seems very strange in light of scripture, and some Christian artists found it unsettling as well. During this party, there was a man in the serving line, scooping food and handing out utensils and napkins. Only toward the end of the night did anyone recognize that it was Rich Mullin's, one of the artists lauded at the awards ceremony earlier that night. If he had to be there, he'd rather be doing something he thought Jesus would probably do.



When Jesus was confronted by the religious leaders, they often tried to pigeon-hole Him in some manner, “Is it this way or that, Jesus?” In the instance of tithing, He said, “Do the former without leaving the latter undone.” So, we can apply that same principal in foot washing. Should it ever be part of our worship services or should we find more culturally relevant ways to exemplify the spirit of servanthood and humility? Why not both, especially if the action of foot washing reminds us that there are so many ways we can be the serving hands and feet of Jesus to our world every day.

### *Our Prayer*

Jesus, Our Lord, teach us to be like You in every way at all times. Help us to live in stark contrast to a self-serving culture through true humility and servanthood. Help us to look for the ways You give us daily to serve others. Let it be more than a story that we’ve read in the New Testament – let it be the testimony of our lives. Pour out, we pray, a spirit of humility and an eagerness to serve throughout this ministry. Let our centers be known for the way they serve one another and their communities. You said if we even give a glass of cold water to someone in Your name, we have done it unto You. Let us be about purposefully “doing unto You” every day, in Your Holy Name – amen.

### *Today In Our Prayer Guide*

Warren & Lisa Gaffney - Warrior Fellowship at Kessler AFB - Pray that God anoints them as they teach young men & women God’s Word & the gospel will be spread.

Pray also for Robb Miskowski as he begins serving the Lord on Kessler AFB this month through the chapel “FishBowl” as their new Director. Pray for his openings to minister there and for favor with the Command.



## DAY 20 – SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

### “The Pruning”

Read: Psalm 139

Be aware that your God will take you seriously in prayer, perhaps even more seriously than you take yourself.

A few years ago, I prayed a dangerous prayer. I had it in my heart to pray for some time but it took me many months of wrestling with the concept to bring myself to pray it. I said, “Lord, if there’s anything in my life that You didn’t put there and that obstructs Your work in my life, let it fall.”

“Let It Fall.” That’s a dangerous prayer.



I had hoped, in my prideful ignorance, that I was really okay and not in need of any pruning, or at least 98-99% good and could be faithful to the prompting of the Holy Spirit without enduring too much self-sacrifice.

Alas, sacrifice is what the Kingdom of God is all about, and yet, strangely, sacrifice always brings abundance. In essence, there isn’t going to be any new growth without pruning.

If you are new to gardening, pruning is one of the most difficult parts. It seems counter-intuitive. To save a sick plant, we must cut it. To make a healthy plant healthier, we must chop it down to what looks like a puny twig.

The first time you follow the instructions exactly, you stand back and look at the poor, miserable stump that is left and think, “That can’t possibly be right!” But it is.

Some things did fall in my life after I prayed that prayer. I closed my business. We left financial security and great paying jobs to sell our home to go into full-time ministry. Some people we had been close to simply walked out of our lives.

Even though the child of God says, “Take what You will. Cut it all away. I trust You,” the human nature wants to guide the process. “That’s far enough. Don’t go any deeper than that.” We want to choose what stays and what goes. It doesn’t work that way.



If there is a consolation during the pruning and refining process, it is the peace of knowing you are squarely in the center of His hands.

The Psalmist says, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”* (Psalm 139:23-24)

The point of that is, we are not talking about self-reflection. We’re talking about actively inviting the Holy Spirit to do the searching, the trying, the leading and the cutting, even if that means, for a season, that it looks like we’re losing something.

If we are the Lord’s choice Vineyard, we’d better be interested in growth. We should surely be concerned about fruitfulness. There’s always a springtime coming when the beautiful new foliage abounds, and in hindsight it always seems like this abundant, new fruitfulness didn’t require such a significant sacrifice at all.

### *Our Prayer*

Lord Jesus, we want to submit to Your work in our lives, in our families, in our centers, and in our ministries in a deeper way than we ever have before. We know there is more that You have in store for us. Help us to say, “yes,” to the process of being refined and trust that You have greater fruitfulness waiting. Amen.

### *In Our Prayer Guide Today*

Greg & Tamara Lunn - Osan, South Korea - Pray that this season of massive PCSing brings a harvest of new disciples and leaders that hunger for God.



## DAY 21 – SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

### “’Til Christ Be Formed In You”



Read: Galatians 4 (entire chapter)

I recently did one of those DNA tests, the kind that you order online then are mailed a kit to collect saliva in a little jar and send back in. I just received the results two days ago. It turns out that I am 100% a child a God! What a relief! Seriously, though, we are living in a strange age where one can spend \$50 or so and find lost relatives, hear out about genetic

links to possible diseases, and learn about incredible complexities of our own DNA.

Along with the ancestry composition, which maps out which part of the world your ancestors were likely to come from, there are “traits” such as eye color, hair texture, even novelty traits which include whether or not you are likely to sneeze when you look at the sun or are genetically predisposed to like chocolate rather than vanilla ice-cream.

DNA is a molecule that encodes our genetic blueprint, determining every single physical and biological characteristic of who we are. The discovery of DNA itself lends credibility to creationism as science cannot even account for the “existence of information” itself. How does intelligence even exist without a Divine Designer? Aside from all the fascinating complexities of what DNA is and what it tells us is one simple truth. It can only be passed down from biological parents and their biological ancestors, meaning you can only get it from those who “begot” you!

It’s likely that each of us can point to those who have begotten us in the faith, “spiritual fathers and mothers” who, without their input into our lives, we may have never come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. There are those who disciplined you, fed you, and held your hand, so to speak, as you took your first steps as a new Christian.

In Galatians 4, Paul is writing a hard letter to the church in Galatia. He had founded the church and was their “Spiritual Father,” but was having to undertake the unpleasant but necessary task of correcting their error and refute the heretical teachings that they had begun to follow. He speaks to them in the tone of an anguished dad, at times rebuking them harshly and at other times imploring them with the tone of desperate broken-heartedness in his words.

*“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,”* he says, as he states his longing to be present with them.



“Labor in birth again,” are hard words. For any of our ministers, and most of the people in our centers who have disciplined others, you understand that Paul was intending to convey that sense of pain and travail when he wrote this. It hurts like nothing else to give birth to a natural baby. Paul is speaking here as a father, afraid that his children have been led astray. He’s laboring again. The pain is right there with him, all over again. He is, no doubt, travailing in agonizing prayer as he sees them slipping away.

There’s no greater joy in the world than seeing your children love and serve Christ and there’s no greater pain than fearing that they’re falling away. Sometimes we have to go back to the birthing room of deep intercession. Like in the hospital, the door is shut and no one is next to you except those who have to be there. It’s going to get messy. There might be some screaming, and will definitely be some tears, but we’re not leaving here until that child is born (or born-again) healthy and out of danger.

Freedom Outreach, Ministry to the Military, has always been focused on evangelism and discipleship but we put a special emphasis on ministry to children and youth. We understand the challenges that parents face, especially with all the uncertainties of military duty. We strive to make sure that the DNA of Christ and His Word are imbued into their minds and spirits. There’s a spiritual genetic blueprint that Christ Himself has written for each of them. He is watching over His word in their lives to perform it so that they will develop all of His traits. We labor with the Directors and the parents, in late nights, in long talks, in heated discussions, and often in tears to make sure that they are going to survive and thrive in this harsh and unforgiving world.

*“Til Christ be formed in you.”* It’s not just a snippet of scripture. It’s a promise to stand together, to fight for one another, to intercede and work. Paul encouraged the Galatians that they themselves, by the Spirit of Jesus Christ in their hearts, in the end were going to cry out, “Abba Father.” Our prayer, our hope and our goal is exactly the same today.

#### *Our Prayer*

Our Abba Father, how we rely upon You for the souls of our children! We place them in Your hands for the correction and care that they need. Help us to pass down the spiritual DNA of Christ in us, the hope of glory! We stand against the enemy of their souls and we mark them for salvation. In the Name of Jesus, we come against every demonic stronghold in their minds, bodies and spirits. We pray the promise of Joel 2:28-29 upon them, until the Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon each of them. We claim our natural sons and daughters for the Kingdom of God and the spiritual sons and daughters that we have begotten in the faith. We pray for impactful ministry to children and youth in every military center worldwide and for powerful breakthrough’s for Jacob’s Generation camps and retreats in 2020.

In Jesus’ Name – amen.

#### *Today In Our Prayer Guide*

Alejandro & Dinorah Velazquez - New Life Christian Center, Puerto Rico – Pray for anointing in reaching our community for Christ; encouragement of the church members.