

Loving to Talk to God

2022

14
DAY

BIBLE MEMORY CHALLENGE

14 Devotions by Julia Bettencourt
from the
2022 Bible Memory Challenge
February 1-14, 2022
Julia Bettencourt Blog

<https://www.juliabettencourt.com/blog/>

Loving to Talk to God
2022 Bible Memory Challenge
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Any Bible verses quoted are in the King James Version.



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Introduction

Our theme for the 2022 Bible Memory Challenge was **Loving to Talk to God**. Each day we considered a different aspect of prayer. These are the devotions I wrote for the Memory Challenge and shared on my blog. I trust they will encourage you to talk to God through prayer in a deeper and more meaningful way.

If you missed the Memory Challenge, I encourage you to take the first 14 days of any month, memorize a verse a day, and read the devotions to go along with each of them. I've included the list of memory verses on a page before the devotions.

We discussed 14 different things about prayer by either what it is or what it does through these memory verses during this year's Bible Memory Challenge.

Loving to Talk to God

14
DAY

BIBLE MEMORY CHALLENGE

Verse List

DAY #1	EPHESIANS 6:18
DAY #2	MATTHEW 21:22
DAY #3	PSALM 145:18
DAY #4	MATTHEW 26:41
DAY #5	HEBREWS 4:16
DAY #6	MARK 1:35
DAY #7	JEREMIAH 33:3
DAY #8	JAMES 5:16
DAY #9	PHILIPPIANS 4:6
DAY #10	PSALM 62:8
DAY #11	MATTHEW 17:20
DAY #12	MATTHEW 18:20
DAY #13	JAMES 5:13
DAY #14	1 THESSALONIANS 5:17



Prayer & Priorities

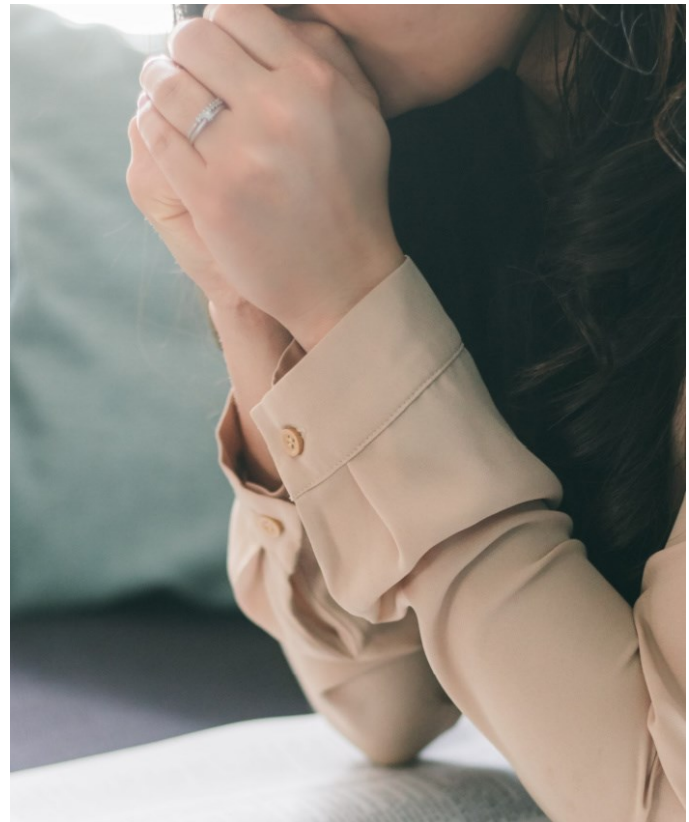
February 1, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Today's thought is,

Prayer is important.

We must learn to make it a priority.



DAY # 1 MEMORY VERSE

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)

PRAYER IS IMPORTANT

Ephesians, chapter 6, is where our memory verse comes from today and also where we find the *Armor of God*. I'm not going to list the pieces of

that armor here, but if you have time today, I encourage you to read through the entire chapter of Ephesians 6.

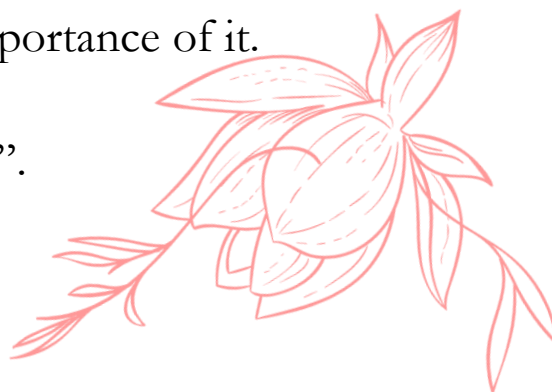
THE ARMOR OF GOD

I'm sure you are familiar with the *Armor of God*. It's all those pieces we need to pick up and put on so that we are protected from sin and the world. It's all those pieces that help us become a better warrior for Christ as the foes of the world come at us.

And where is our memory verse in all this? Well, it's right at the end of all those items we are to put on as our armor. Our memory verse, Ephesians 6:18, is a continuing thought from verse 17. Our memory verse doesn't stand alone. We need all the preceding verses to really grasp the whole meaning.

We are to take those items of the *Armor of God*, put them on, AND we are to pray as we do it. Prayer plays a key part in our daily wardrobe as a Christian. We must learn to see the importance of it.

Our memory verse says, "Praying always".



THE HOLY SPIRIT

This verse today tells us *how* to pray. We pray always and we do it through the Holy Spirit. We don't have to go this prayer thing

alone. The Holy Spirit will help us. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! And thank you, Jesus! I need all the help in learning to pray as I can get, and what better way than by allowing the Holy Spirit entrance into my prayer life.

The Holy Spirit will be the one making those “groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26), when I just don’t know how to pray.

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

And I want us to notice another thing about this *praying* we are to do as we daily pick up that armor. We are to pray for other people and not just ourselves. Look at the last part of our memory verse. Look what it mentions.

“supplication for all saints”

There are other Christians out there in this world with us. We have to get in the mindset that their obstacles are our obstacles. Their burdens are our burdens. Their goals are our goals. Their interests are our interests. Their blessings are our blessings. We are in this thing called the Christian life together! We have to take an interest in what is on our fellow believer’s hearts. We are in wartime together against flesh and sin. We *must* pray for each other.

THE WORD OF GOD

And what does it mention in the preceding verse? It talks about the

Word of God.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Ephesians_6:17 (KJV)

So, prayer and the Word of God go together. I think of all of those things that go together so well.

- ✓ Peanut butter and jelly
- ✓ Spaghetti and meatballs
- ✓ Cookies and milk

- ✓ Pencil and paper
- ✓ Toast and jam
- ✓ Love and marriage



You get the idea! God's Word and prayer are a great partner. They are *sweethearts*, so to speak.

CONCLUSION

I hope you will grab hold of that as we learn these verses together this week. I want you to learn to love to pray by memorizing God's Word. **Loving to Talk to God** is what we are aiming for during this year's Bible Memory Challenge.

EXTRA CHALLENGE:

Choose 3 people and their needs to pray for today.



Prayer & Faith

February 2, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Today our thought to go along with our memory verse is,

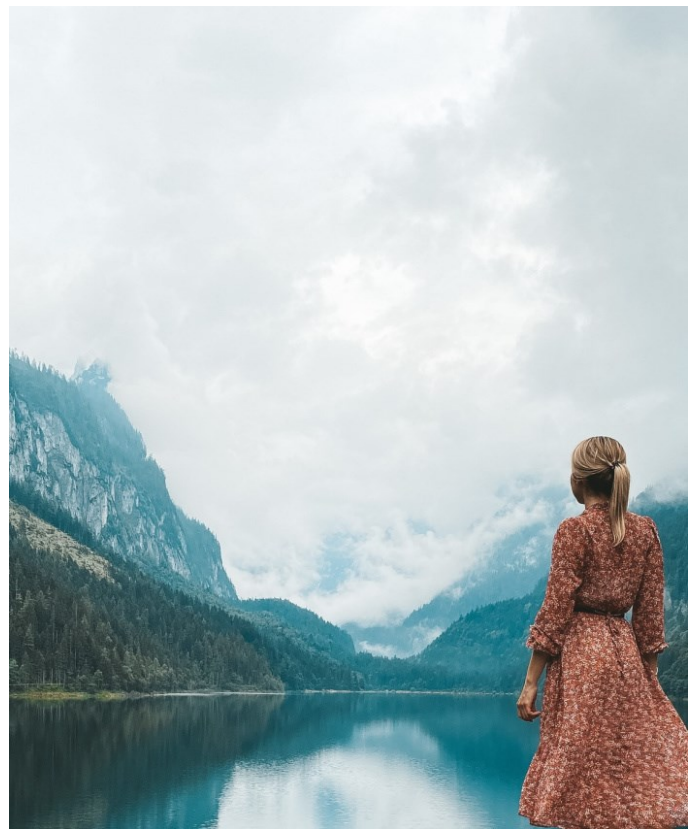
Prayer relies on faith.

Our faith is an important part of our prayer life.

DAY # 2 MEMORY VERSE

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Matthew 21:22 (KJV)



PRAYER RELIES ON FAITH

This is where Jesus talks to a fig tree. If you don't know the story. Jesus was hungry and came to a fig tree that didn't have any fruit on it, so He

said, “Let no fruit grow on thee”. Oh, and then Jesus said, “for ever”. The fig tree immediately withered away.

I can relate when I’m hungry and go to the fridge and nothing is there to sustain me. Yeah! I stand there with the door open for a long time like something is magically going to appear. I’m like, “where’s your fruit, fridge? I’m hungry and you have nothing for me!”.

Jesus had a lesson in all this for His disciples. The disciples were astonished at how fast the fig tree died. This happened right before their eyes. They were all talking about how they were amazed, when Jesus answers them in verse 21.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. Matthew 21:21 (KJV)

FAITH GETS RESULTS

Jesus is telling them that, look, you are my disciples, and you can do amazing things too. But also, He is telling them that faith is the key. Faith does things like making fig trees obey and moving mountains from land to the sea. Now that’s results!

That’s what faith gets us. *Results.*

And how do we get those results? By prayer of course. Prayer and faith

are another one of those things that go together so well. It's a peanut butter and jelly kind of thing.

Look in our memory verse for today.

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Matthew 21:22 (KJV)

BEYOND THE MUNDANE

Results from prayer aren't just mundane things, although those things are answered in prayer for us, and Jesus wants to know all about our mundane things. But Jesus wants us to have the faith to do anything. He wants us to ask whatever we want. He wants us to abound in our faith so we can abound in our prayer life.

Look what happened with all those faith heroes in Hebrews, chapter 11, which we think of as *The Hall of Faith* chapter of the Bible. All those amazing things that happened in the lives of those biblical characters were because of their faith.

CONCLUSION

One of the great ways to build our faith is by God's Word. That's why memorizing the Bible like we are doing this challenge is so important. Remember what it says in Romans?

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17

Our prayer life relies on faith. That's how we get results and when our faith starts growing and maturing in us, we will begin **Loving to Talk to God** on a deeper basis.

EXTRA CHALLENGE:

Read Hebrews chapter 11 today.



Prayer & Access

February 3, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

I am sharing thoughts each day of what prayer is or what prayer does, today's thought is,

Prayer is always available.

As Christians, we can pray anytime and anywhere, and God is going to be there for us. We have access to the Lord.

DAY # 3 MEMORY VERSE

The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

Psalms 145:18



PRAYER IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE

I really could have used a few other verses to memorize using this thought, but I decided since this one comes from a Psalm credited to David that is a *Psalm of Praise*, I thought I'd go with memorizing this verse. It's right in the middle of a bunch of things we can tell the Lord and praise Him for when we talk to Him.

We all should have a part of our prayer life that concentrates on praise. That's what is being done in our memory verse. David is praising God that God is near and will listen.

Here are some other things we can take from this passage and use in the praise part our prayer life as we talk to God.

- ✓ Lord, I will praise your name. (Psalm 145:2)
- ✓ Lord, you are great. (Psalm 145:3)
- ✓ Lord, you have done mighty acts. (Psalm 145:4)
- ✓ Lord, you do wondrous works. (Psalm 145:5)
- ✓ Lord, you are righteous. (Psalm 145:7)
- ✓ Lord, you are gracious. (Psalm 145:8)
- ✓ Lord, you are compassionate. (Psalm 145:8)
- ✓ Lord, you are slow to anger. (Psalm 145:8)
- ✓ Lord, you are merciful. (Psalm 145:8)
- ✓ Lord, you are so good. (Psalm 145:9)



These are just some things to praise God for that I grabbed from verses 1 through 9 of Psalm 145. There are more all throughout the chapter.

One thing that I think sums up this verse is easy access to God. God's always available. And David is praising God in this verse for that.

GIVE ME EASY ACCESS

I like things that are available and have easy access. Don't you?

I don't like online shopping where you go to put something in your cart and it isn't in the size you want or is totally out of stock. I don't like it when you see something online and they say it's "free to download", but yet you have to stop and sign up on a mailing list in order to give you access to it. In the first place, that's not free. They want you to be subjected to emails and advertising. They want something from you. Giving up something is never free, even if it is just an email address.

Frankly, just give me easy access. Don't make me run through hoops for something.

I'm so glad prayer is easy access. By having a personal relationship with Jesus, I know that I can contact the Lord anytime and anywhere. As a child of God, I can run to Him anytime I want.

Look what it says in Ephesians.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16

SINCERITY

And the last part of our memory verse today from Psalm 145, mentions to call upon God in “truth”. Our prayers have to be done in sincerity, so that too is something we need to think about as we talk to God.

CONCLUSION

As I was mulling over this thought that prayer is always available, I got to thinking about those who don't know Christ as Savior. They don't have that daily one on one communication with God.

Frankly, I couldn't live without knowing prayer was available for me. How sad it would be not to have a daily prayer life. I rely on it so much. It gives me strength. It alleviates my worries. Talking to God on a daily basis helps me so much in so many ways.

Easy access to the Lord in prayer excites me. I hope just this thought will encourage all of us in our quest of **Loving to Talk to God.**

EXTRA CHALLENGE:

Read Hebrews chapter 11 today.

Prayer & Temptation

February 4, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Today we are going to talk a little bit about the relation of prayer to temptation.

Our thought for today is,

Prayer keeps us from temptation.

Prayer has the ability to keep us from straying from the right path.



DAY # 4 MEMORY VERSE

*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:
The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Matthew 26:41

PRAYER KEEPS US FROM TEMPTATION

I chose this verse about prayer and temptation because it shows us how weak our flesh is, even in a thing as mundane as sleep.

This verse comes from a passage in the Bible where Jesus is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. This was right after Jesus had shared a meal with his disciples. We have come to refer to that as, *The Last Supper*. This was the time that Jesus was praying for God's will. Jesus knew His death was imminent. His disciple, Judas, already had plans to betray Jesus with a kiss.

Jesus had taken a few of his disciples with him where He prayed. It was Peter, James and John (Matthew 26:37, Mark 14:33)

Jesus told them to “watch with me” (Matthew 26:38) and “watch and pray” (Matthew 26:41).

Jesus had just shared with these men how sorrowful He was before He went a little further to pray. Jesus shared what a troubled state He was in at that very moment. He wanted those disciples to be there for Him, but the flesh got the better of them and they fell asleep. And if you read the whole passage, they fell asleep more than once.

POWERLESS WITHOUT PRAYER

That's how powerless we are when it comes to our bodies and to the flesh. It wins when we aren't vigilant.

So, it stands to reason if we have trouble with something like being drawn to sleep, then how hard will it be to avoid real sin and the temptation of it?

Doing right or wrong seems like it would be easy. Right? Well, it's not always! Sometimes it's a big struggle. We need prayer to help us. When we come face to face with a real battle of the mind and flesh and are teetering on which path we shall choose, prayer can be a such powerful tool.

TEMPTATION IS A BATTLE

Temptation is a battle, and we must prepare for it. You can put rules for yourself and safeguards in your life to keep you from sinning, but prayer is a powerful way to avoid temptation.

Even *The Lord's Prayer*, which Jesus gave as a model of prayer for us, includes praying for avoiding temptation.

*And lead us not into temptation, but
deliver us from evil...Matthew 6:13*

Do you remember the first verse we learned in this Memory Challenge? "Praying always..." Ephesians 6:18. It was right there with the *Armor of God*.

Prayer can ground us and shield us from a lot of things if we would just rely on it more.

CONCLUSION

We need the power of prayer to help us avoid temptation. There are so many things we can bring into our prayer life. We can ask for physical and spiritual things. We can pray for other people. We can praise God. Lots of things. But praying to avoid temptation should be a part of our daily prayer life and the first thing we engage in when temptation comes knocking.

Prayer can help us avoid hurting other people or even ourselves. It can help us avoid making so many mistakes. It can help us stay out of a whole heap of trouble.



Prayer & Boldness

February 5, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Each day I have a thought for us to mull over to go along with each verse. Today it is,

**Prayer can be done
with boldness.**

To me, that's so exciting that our prayer life can be done in such a strong and fearless way!



DAY # 5 MEMORY VERSE

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

PRAYER CAN BE DONE WITH BOLDNESS

Today we are going to talk just a bit about boldness in prayer. I'm not sure if you noticed, but I mentioned this verse on DAY #3, of our Memory Challenge when we were discussing easy access to prayer.

As Christians, we have the right to walk right in and communicate with our Lord. We are His children.

MEMBER OF THE FAMILY OF GOD

Don't you hate it when you get that awful error when you go to sign in to an app or a webpage and it says, "incorrect passcode"? It will tell you that you may need to "sign up for a new account" or "you must be a member to access". If you can't figure it out, you may eventually have to have them send a new password link.

I'm so glad that doesn't happen with prayer. If we have accepted Christ, we are a "member"! We are a member of the family of God. God's children will always have the right access code to prayer. Just one thought and we are with our Lord in prayer. No sign-ins required. Hallelujah!

We are the V.I.P. We are part of a Royal Priesthood. We have privileges when it comes to prayer.

*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit,
that we are the children of God: Romans 8:16*

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 1 Peter 2:9

We don't have to worry about "incorrect passcode" errors or not being permitted when we go to the Lord in prayer. The door is always open! We have the right to enter, and we can do it boldly.

EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO PRAYER

Think of it as being in an exclusive club. You get all the benefits and all of the privileges!

We can have boldness to ask for forgiveness. We can have boldness to pray for others. We can have boldness to pray for ourselves. We can have boldness to even ask for things that may seem outrageous or what others may consider "not likely". Remember, our prayers can make fig trees obey and mountains move as we talked about in DAY #2 of our Memory Challenge regarding our faith.

And above anything we ask in prayer, we can have boldness to just drop our burdens at the feet of Jesus and leave them there. And we can just walk away from those burdens in boldness.

UNFLINCHING WALK-AWAYS

I mean, it's great that we can have boldness as we enter prayer, but oh how powerful walking away in boldness after talking to the Lord can be.

You know! We can walk away like the hero at the end of a movie with the fire or explosions behind him. He's got that unflinching face and just walks away with confidence that the bad guys are taken care of, and the chaos is behind him.

Those scenes should be a part of our daily life as children of God. We can walk away from our burdens after leaving them at the feet of Jesus, knowing they are taken care of by the King of Kings.

Bold, cool, confident, powerful, strong, resolved, and unflinching *walk-aways* are what we Christians do best when we leave our burdens at the feet of Jesus in prayer.

IMPLICIT TRUST

And do you know one of the reasons why we can have all the boldness to come before the Lord in prayer? It's because we can trust Him implicitly with our cares and concerns. We have confidence in Him, so that bolsters our boldness.

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 1 John 5:14

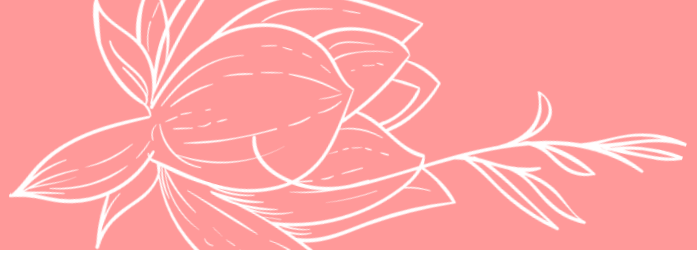
CONCLUSION

I am so glad I can talk to the Lord and tell Him all about my worries, cares, and share my feelings with Him.

I can share my wants and desires because I know He will listen and take any requests I have and do the best for me with them that He can.

I can go to the Lord boldly because I have the right to pray to Him, but also because I have confidence in Him. And I can breathe more easily when I have given my burdens over to the Lord.

Knowing I can go to prayer in boldness definitely makes **Loving to Talk to God** something I want to work at more.



Prayer & Dedication

February 6, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

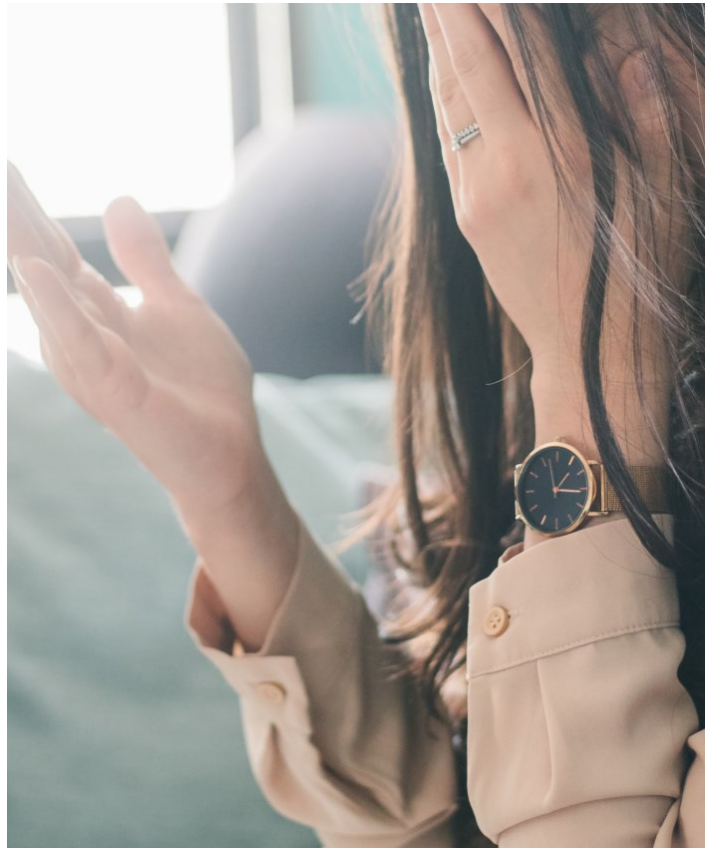
Today our thought to think about in relation to our memory verse is, Prayer takes dedication.

Prayer takes dedication.

DAY # 6 MEMORY VERSE

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

Mark 1:35



PRAYER TAKES DEDICATION

In this verse, the “he” it is referring to is Jesus. This is another one of those passages where Jesus is traveling with His disciples. On this day, our verse says Jesus rose early to pray.

Sometimes that is what it takes to get something done. It takes dedication. It takes a few extra steps. It takes a little planning. It takes a little forethought.

MUCH IS REQUIRED

That is what our prayer life requires. Sure, we can pray in quick moments. We can pray when in serious situations. We can pray in those times of need. But we have to learn to have a constant and continual prayer life. We have to make it an integral part of our daily lives. We have to work at it!

There are so many things we add to our daily calendars. Prayer should be on our list somewhere or we may forget about it.

Think about all the apps we open on our phones just in one day. It may be things like our bank app, the weather app, or social media apps. It may be shopping apps. It could be texting and messaging apps. It could be anything, but the point is, we take the time to place our fingers on it, click and see what’s going on, shop, scroll, text, and other things. We have to place our hands on prayer during our daily routine as well.

A BIG PAYOFF

A dedicated prayer life will help us so much. It will draw us closer to God. It will help us to be able to express our wants and desires. It will help us plead for the souls of family and friends. It will help us with our anxieties. So many benefits of having a dedication to prayer!

Just setting a daily time for prayer helps me. I usually get up early when my husband goes to work and when he leaves is when I have my Bible reading and prayer time. I may pray at other times of the day, but knowing that regular chat time with the Lord is waiting for me in the mornings is something that is really special to me.

A SOLITARY PLACE

We all need that alone time with the Lord. Part of our memory verse says Jesus went to a “solitary place” when He prayed. So, at times, even Jesus needed His alone time to pray.

And I think about how my morning prayer time probably helps anybody around me too, because when I grab that time early it helps adjust my attitude for the day. Yep! I tend to be nicer once I’ve had my prayer time. Chatting with the Lord has a tendency to calm me and also lift me up as I head into my day.

Things that have helped me be more dedicated to prayer are just using simple things. I change them up here and there when I feel like I need a boost to my prayer life. Here are several to try.

CHANGING UP YOUR PRAYER TIME

- ✓ Choose a specific time (or try a new time if your usual time isn't working).
- ✓ Choose a specific quiet place (or try someplace new if you are in a rut).
- ✓ Make a prayer journal.
- ✓ Make a prayer list.
- ✓ Record prayer request dates and answered dates.
- ✓ Intermingle prayer with Bible reading.
- ✓ Study verses on prayer in the Bible.
- ✓ Find and study the prayers of biblical characters.
- ✓ Pray aloud from time to time.
- ✓ Pray in different positions from time to time (sitting, standing, on your knees).
- ✓ Use your hands differently during prayer (lift them, clasp them, cover your face).
- ✓ Sing a song of praise during your prayer time.
- ✓ Find specific people with specific needs for which to pray for a limited time.



CONCLUSION

Sometimes giving just a little bit more thought to anything can make a big difference. I encourage you to try a few little changes and see what a huge difference it can make in your prayer life.

We all know that in relationships alone it is the little things that make the difference. Big, grand, but rare gestures, don't usually accomplish so much. Our prayer lives are a part of our relationship to the Lord. We have to hone in on little changes to our prayer life in order to make it a dedicated part of our lives. We have to take those extra little steps

to make sure prayer happens throughout our week. We have to show some dedication to our communication with the Lord.

That dedication is going to help us on our journey to **Loving to Talk to God** on a continual basis.





Prayer & Conversation

February 7, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Today's thought to go along with our memory verse is,

Prayer is a two-way conversation.

The totality of prayer isn't just us talking to God, but allowing God to talk to us through His Word and the working of the Holy Spirit.



DAY # 7 MEMORY VERSE

*Call unto me, and I will answer thee,
and shew thee great and mighty things,
which thou knowest not.*

Jeremiah 33:3



PRAYER IS A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION

Yep! At least two parties are involved when it comes to real conversations. One-way conversations aren't really conversations at all. They fall more into the speech, monologue, discourse, or even a diatribe realm. They aren't conversations. Conversations are sharing between two people or more.

Ever looked up the meaning of “conversation”?

: an informal talk involving two people or a small group of people: the act of talking in an informal way.

“Conversation.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conversation>. Accessed 6 Feb. 2022

I love the thought that prayer can be an informal conversation with my Lord. Sure, He is a great and mighty God, but He is also a Friend.

A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION

I was thinking about how we keep conversations with friends going and our conversations meaningful. Here are four things that came to my mind.

- ✓ Respect the other person(s).
- ✓ Call them by name.
- ✓ Make time to talk to them.
- ✓ Share your feelings.



I think that I should remember to do these things in my conversations with the Lord as well.

RESPECT THE OTHER PERSON(S)

Respect in any relationship is a good start to good communication.

God shows us respect. He makes us His children. He takes time for us. He leaves us His Word for guidance. He gave us the Holy Spirit for guidance. He even gives us freewill.

When friends chatter, you must have respect for each other, or your conversations sometimes don't end up so nice. Especially when you are hurt or upset about something. You must have respect for the other person, or you may say something you will regret.

I think just taking that moment to remember *Who* God is and what He has done for us brings that respect for Him into focus as we go to Him in prayer.

CALL THEM BY NAME

I love it when people call me by name. I try to call people by name when I can. Sometimes it puts them at ease or makes them feel you remember them, or even makes them feel you know who they are. I have found, especially working in women's ministry groups so long, that we have some women that look at calling them by name as something special because they just don't have many or any people in their lives that pay any attention to them. So, I try to do some name calling (and not the bad kind).

I think about how well God knows me. He knows the very number of hairs on my head (Matthew 10:30). He says I'm more value than sparrows (Luke 12:7).

Jesus mentions "Our Father" when He teaches how to pray in Matthew 6:9-13.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Matthew 6:9

God has so many names. Try using them in your prayer conversations. Wonderful, Counselor, The Almighty God, Prince of Peace, Jesus, Friend, and so on. Get personal! Maybe even take the time to do a study on the names of God and what they mean. It will bless your heart.

MAKE TIME TO TALK TO THEM

When we love and care for people, we want to spend time with them. Talking to them becomes a desire that we have.

Like I mentioned yesterday in DAY #6, of our Bible Challenge, prayer takes dedication. Prayer isn't always convenient. We may have to get up early, stay up late, miss a tv program, or perhaps stop scrolling our phone for a little bit. We plan what we will wear, where we will eat lunch, what we will have for dinner, and many other things. Making time for prayer must get more priority in our lives.

God takes the time to listen to us. God took the time to have His Word recorded for us. God took the time to send His Son to die for our sins. We surely can take time out of our day to talk to Him. We make time for so many other things. If prayer is important to us, we will find the time for it.

SHARE YOUR FEELINGS

When we are having conversations with friends, it is all about sharing. If they are close friends, we feel that freedom to share our feelings and what is on our hearts. Our close friends want to know our joys, our sorrows, our desires, and even our dislikes.

God is the same way. He wants to know what is on our heart. He wants to know what we really think. He wants us to share that with Him in prayer.

God shares His feelings for us all throughout the Bible. He shares His love and His concerns for us. He even shares likes and dislikes in His Word. We will never truly understand and know God, but when we read the Bible, we begin to understand God and His ways a little more. We begin to know His thoughts a little more. That helps to have more intimate conversations with the Lord through prayer.

If you look at our memory verse, we know God wants us to share with Him. He says to “call” and He will “answer”. And He doesn’t just *answer*, but does it in *great and mighty* ways.

CONCLUSION

Personal Bible study and prayer should go hand in hand. It would be nice if God spoke to us each audibly like Moses or some of our Bible heroes, but we can't rely on that to happen. We must hear God through reading His Word. We must hear God through the preaching of His Word. We must hear God through other Christians. We must listen intently and allow the Holy Spirit room to move in our lives.

I hope I can remember these four things I mentioned to *keep conversations alive* when I talk to the Lord. (Respect, call by name, take time, and share my feelings). I think those things put me in a state of opening up my heart to the Lord and help me in **Loving to Talk to God** in a deeper conversational way. I just have to remember that prayer is a two-way conversation in the first place.



Prayer & Power

February 8, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Today our thought about prayer is,

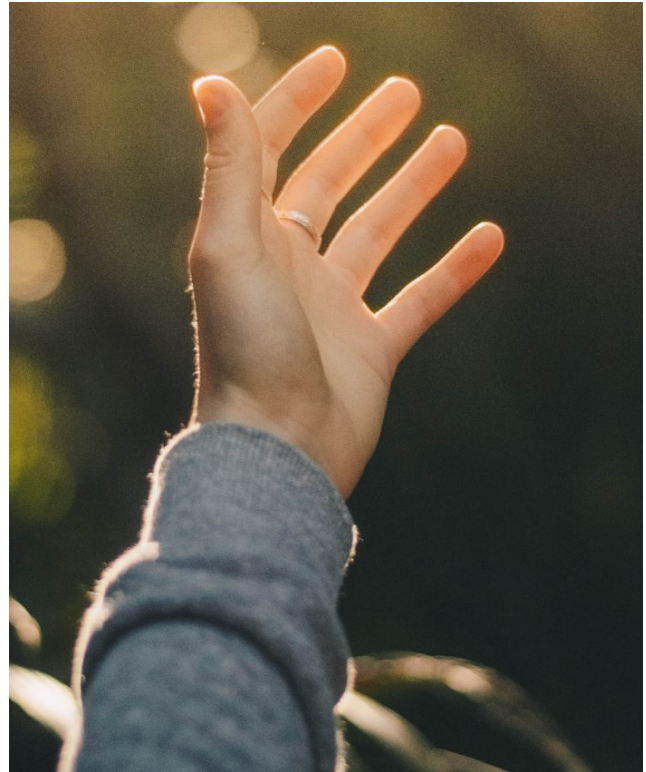
Prayer is powerful.

It can do so much!

DAY # 8 MEMORY VERSE

*Confess your faults one to another,
and pray one for another, that ye may
be healed. The effectual fervent prayer
of a righteous man availeth much.*

James 5:16



PRAYER IS POWERFUL

Our memory verse for today comes from James 5. This is another one of those practical help books in the Bible. James is giving us some great

things to hold on to while we go about the Christian life. We will be learning another verse from this chapter before the end of our Memory Challenge.

This verse in James is just packed full of so many good things. I'm mostly going to concentrate on that last part, "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much". *Availeth*. Prayer is powerful! Prayer is effective!

WHOSE PRAYER?

Whose prayer does this verse say is going to avail or benefit us? The prayer of a righteous man. A righteous man is one that is right with God. He is one that continually confesses his sins to God. He is one that abides by God's Word.

Did you ever tell your kids, "Just be good till I get back"? When I think about a righteous man, that's what I think he is doing. He is being good till Jesus comes back. He is a good Christian. He is obedient to the Lord.

WHAT KIND OF PRAYER?

And what kind of prayer does it say avails much, or in other words, gets results? The "effectual fervent prayer" of that righteous man.

This is not the "Lord, bless this grub" or "Now I lay me down to sleep" kind of prayer.

No. This is a prayer that is heartfelt. This is a prayer that is earnest. This is a prayer that is sincere. This is a prayer that is persistent. This is a prayer that is passionate.

A fervent prayer is from the heart.



WHAT KIND OF RESULT FROM PRAYER?

Well, that's just it. This kind of prayer gets RESULTS. "Much" results. The kind of prayers our memory verse is talking about gets powerful things done.

One of the first examples of this that comes to my mind is Hannah's prayer in the Bible found in 1 Samuel 1:10-11. Wow! Now that's a heartfelt prayer and it got powerful results. This woman had not been able to bear children, but God blessed her with a son after her prayer. Her whole story is in 1 Samuel chapters 1 and 2, if you really want to see what God did there.

Next, I'll mention David, because if you know me, He's my favorite. Look at some of those prayers he prayed when he went through his struggles. They were indeed from the heart. And God heard David. There are so many passages in Psalms where David is thanking God for hearing him when he was in some precarious places. I always remember that verse in Psalm 120.

*In my distress I cried unto the LORD,
and he heard me. Psalm 120:1*

That verse always reminds me that God heard David and He will hear me too.

CONCLUSION

God can do some amazing things through the prayers of His people. Fig trees can obey, and mountains can be moved as we saw on DAY #2 of our Challenge. Temptation can be avoided as we talked about on DAY #4. Hearts can become more attentive to the Gospel. Loved ones can be saved. People can be healed physically and emotionally. The evil of the world can get pushed back a notch. Satan's plans can be foiled.

There is no limit to the power of God and the prayers of His people.

But this only happens because we have such a powerful God in the first place. God is strong. God is mighty. We can rely on Him for strength and to answer our prayers.

I hope this memory verse encourages you on our **Loving to Talk to God** journey we are taking through this Memory Challenge.



Prayer & Relief

February 9, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Our thought today to go with our memory verse is,

Prayer relieves our worries.

DAY # 9 MEMORY VERSE

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Philippians 4:6



PRAYER RELIEVES OUR WORRIES

When our verse says, “be careful for nothing”, it means not to be anxious about those worries. “For nothing” points to not worrying about any of those worries we may have.

EVERYTHING

Friends, we aren't to worry over things. We have a God who takes care of those worries for us. I'm not talking about never having any cares. We are going to have things weigh on our hearts, like the planning of our futures, the Salvation of loved ones, the safety of our children, and the things that are important to us, and even those big troubles that we may face. We will have concerns. God knows that.

God wants us to love people and care for them, and their welfare will register deep within us. He wants us to love life and be passionate about what's important to us. But when we begin to fret, lose sleep, become unwell physically, and things like that because of worrying over those things and those people, then that is when we really need to think about what we are doing to ourselves. We need to make sure we leave those things that trouble us at Jesus' feet.

We need to leave everything there.

And I have found that taking things to the Lord daily is the key. It keeps our worries from growing so big that they pound us down and make our hearts so heavy that we just can't breathe.

PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION

Our verse says, "...by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving". I'm sure you all know what "prayer" is. It's talking to God, whether worshipping Him, praising Him, or sharing our heart with Him. Prayer

covers a lot of things, but “supplication” usually implies a humble petition to God.

THANKSGIVING

Next “Thanksgiving” should go along with our prayer and supplication to the Lord. It’s another one of those peanut butter and jelly things. Thanksgiving and prayer go together!

Having a grateful heart for what God has done will do wonders to your attitude when you approach your prayer time. There is always so much to be thankful for, and we should make a habit of making thankfulness a part of our prayer life.

MAKE YOUR REQUESTS KNOWN

The last part of our verse says, “...*let your requests be made known unto God.*” Those other things that I mentioned is what leads up to that. Taking everything to the Lord and making thanksgiving a part of prayer and supplication is like a recipe for giving our requests over to the Lord.

The Lord wants to hear our requests and this verse tells us how.

THE RESULT

When we take EVERYTHING to our Lord in prayer, it stands to reason that it will relieve our worries, but just take a look at the verse that follows our memory verse today.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7

Look at the peace that God can give when we turn everything over to Him. I have dealt with anxiety issues, so I know the importance of clinging to that peace that only the Lord can give.

The peace of leaving our burdens at the feet of Jesus gives relief. It lessens our burdens. It takes that weight off of our shoulders. It soothes our temples. It relaxes our muscles. It helps us breathe easier. It helps us hear the birds sing. It helps us smell the flowers. It helps us see a little more clearly. It helps us have a song in our hearts. It gives us reassurance. It gives us comfort.

CONCLUSION

Relief is sweet.

I'm so glad that this verse gives me the instruction of how to get to that peace when I pray. We don't have to carry our burdens and worries around ourselves. God's got us! We can give those worries over in prayer.



Prayer & Intimacy

February 10, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

We have been going over daily thoughts for each verse.

Today it is,

Prayer can be intimate.

DAY # 10 MEMORY VERSE

*Trust in him at all times; ye people,
pour out your heart before him: God
is a refuge for us. Selah.*

Psalm 62:8



PRAYER CAN BE INTIMATE

Today I want to talk just a little bit about how prayer can be an intimate thing between God and us.

HEART CRIES

Our verse today comes from one of the Psalms of King David. He is telling the people to pour out their heart to God. That was good advice then and it is good advice for us as well.

We can engage in prayer in public places. We can engage in prayer around the table before we eat. But there are times that we need to pray those intimate prayers with God. For those type of prayers, we need to get away from everybody and everything and just pour our heart out to God. We need those close, private, and deep conversations with our Lord.

Intimacy is all about feelings. And feelings are what we feel deep inside of us.

Sometimes we have to go to that prayer closet. We have to go be alone with God and pray those *heart prayers*, as I call them. I've prayed many a *heart prayer*. They always make me feel better.

EXPOSING OUR HEART

We may think letting our guard down with other people and allowing our feelings to show makes us vulnerable and is a weakness, but it is okay to be vulnerable with the Lord. That's a strength when it comes to our prayer life.

We *can* let our guard down with that one-on-one intimate prayer to the Lord. We can expose our heart to Him. We can tell God our truths.

The Lord isn't going to harm us. He isn't going to hurt us like other relationships may have hurt us. God is going to take whatever we share with Him in prayer as precious. He doesn't even mind when we cry our eyeballs out when we pray. And aren't you glad He keeps confidences? That's a given when we pray those intimate prayers.

SHARING EMOTIONS

We have to tell God what's in our head and on our heart. We have to let Him know what we are feeling. Are you angry about something? Tell God. Are you sad about something? Tell God. Are you happy about something? Tell God. Are you jealous about something? Tell God.

You get the idea! The Lord wants to hear everything we are thinking and feeling. He doesn't want to know just when we are happy, or just when we are worried and concerned about something. But God wants to know when we are having trouble with our feelings and emotions too. He wants us to ask for help when we feel jealousy, anger, hatred, and all those things.

God made us human. He knows we are going to have emotional rollercoasters to ride throughout life. He is there for us to bounce our thoughts and feelings off of like the Good Friend that He is.

God is such a good Listener. And in the end, we can give those things over to Him to keep like we talked about in yesterday's post, on DAY #9 of our Memory Challenge.

UPS & DOWNS

I think about David and those prayers he prayed in the Bible. He sure wasn't shy about telling God how he felt and what was on his mind.

If you have read through the Psalms and read some of those psalms attributed to David, you can see how he shared his heart with God. One minute David is singing praises to God and he is on a high point. Then go a little further and he is doing the *woe is me* prayer! Look in Psalm 109. There's a great example there.

*For I am poor and needy, and my heart
is wounded within me. Psalm 109:22*

You don't have to wonder how David is feeling in this prayer to God. It's pretty descriptive of how deeply David is hurt, and He isn't keeping it to himself. He is telling God about it.

This verse works as a great prayer many a time for me, because sometimes it just sums up how I feel on certain days. I'm sure you have those wounded heart days as well.

I'm sure that I don't have to tell you that life is comprised of highs and lows. That's how life works! So, it stands to reason that we will be up or down emotionally.

It would be nice if we stayed up all the time or even if we were balanced emotionally all the time, but that just isn't reality.

FINDING A REFUGE

It fills me with such joy to know that the Lord is there to ask guidance of when we need it to navigate the heartbreaks, the highs and the lows in life, and the things that just break our hearts in two. Our memory verse today says that God is a *refuge*, and what a blessing that is. The Lord is always there to catch our tears, to let us lean our head on His shoulders, to lift us up, to brush us off, and to help us pick up the broken pieces of our heart.

CONCLUSION

The first part of our memory verse says to *trust* God. I'm so thankful that I can trust God with my innermost feelings. I'm so grateful that I can have those intimate conversations with Him. He's never too busy. The Lord always has time for me.



Prayer & Possibilities

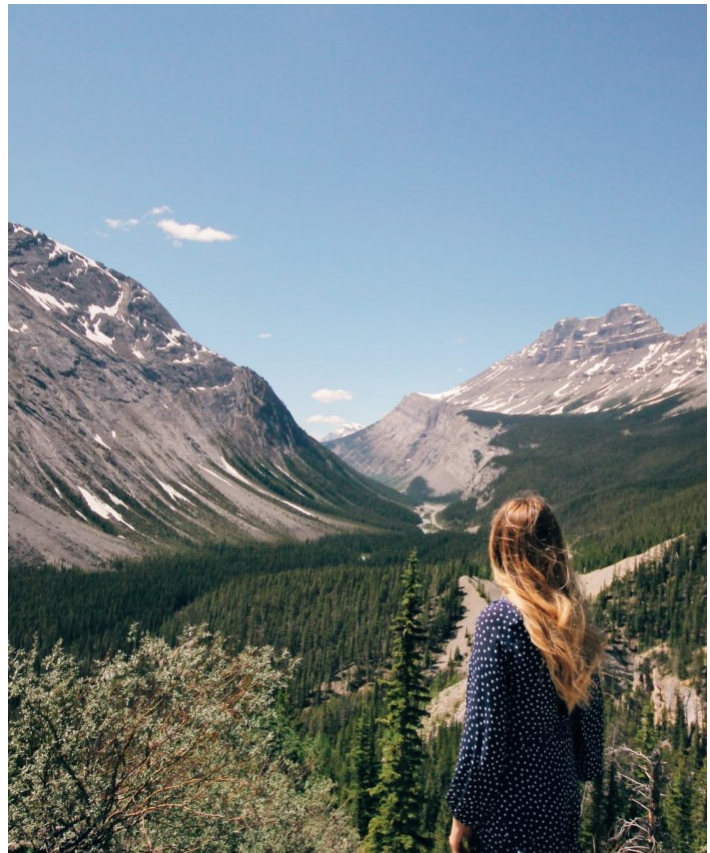
February 11, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The thought I want us to think about today is,

Prayer helps us see possibilities.

It helps us see beyond the ordinary.



DAY # 11 MEMORY VERSE

And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Matthew 17:20



PRAYER HELPS US SEE POSSIBILITIES

Please don't let the length of this verse scare you. I think this is the longest verse we have had during our Memory Challenge, and if it is giving you trouble, please just memorize that last line, "...and nothing shall be impossible unto you". Just grab hold of that thought and keep it with you. I think just that tidbit will stay with you and remind you that you can move mountains and see the possibilities that are out there for you.

We talked a little bit about moving mountains and the amazing things that prayer can do on DAY #2 of our Memory Challenge in relation to our faith. Today I want to go a little further than that and focus more on those amazing possibilities that are the result of prayer. And not just the possibilities in general, but specifically the possibilities of prayer to us as individuals and how we can reach for those wants and desires that we have personally.

Today I want us to think in relation to how we can do those amazing things through prayer that affects us individually in a big way.

We all have dreams and goals in life. We all have those bucket lists even if we don't write out an actual list. We all have those someday ideas that float around in our heads. We have those daydreams that we keep close in our heart.

But have you ever thought of the actual probability of some of those things? With prayer there are possibilities!

NO MAGIC BOXES

And hear me now. I'm not talking about a Ferrari or a Mercedes-Benz just showing up in your driveway. Or climbing Mount Everest at the age of 102 or something. But I'm talking about those real desires of your heart. And by the way, if a Ferrari is one of your heart desires that God has given you, then maybe pray for a good job, or a way to get a good education to land a good job that will help you reach the desired income you need to get that special car.

I'm sure you've heard that saying, that *sometimes we have to put feet to our prayers*.

A magic box is not what prayer is, and if you come before the throne of grace with that attitude, you will be sorely disappointed. But God does want us to come boldly before Him and tell Him our wants and desires. He wants us to be those mountain movers.

And I think we have to learn to tell the difference between the desires of our heart and just plain greed. I think when we get that in perspective, it opens us up to really seeing what mountains we want to move in our lives. We see what really is important to us. We see God's will more plainly. And it helps us open up to the Holy Spirit to allow guidance in what we ask of God.

Knowing the difference between the God given desires of our heart and greed will help with our possibility perspective.

MOUNTAIN MOVERS

What mountains do you need moved? What burden do you need lifted? What would make your heart much lighter?

Have a desire to go to go back to school or further your education? Have a desire to start a business? Have a desire to win souls? Have a desire for your family to know Christ and see Salvation?

What about a new roof on your house? What about upgrading your kitchen? What about purchasing some new clothes that you need? What about a pair of needed new shoes or a pair just because they are pretty and you are drawn to them?

What about a car that runs and is reliable?

You may want to do some things but just have never had the time to do them. Pray God works out all the planning for you. Pray that you will get that time you need to accomplish your goals. It might be something as simple as time to clean out a garage or a storage shed. It might be that you need to pray for the time to take a trip or have some down-time.

Maybe you want to do something different in ministry in your local church that maybe you haven't tried before, but you are scared what others will think. Or you are scared that the job's too big for you. Pray about it. It might be what God has for you to do.

Maybe you need money for something. You can pray for the money. You can pray for the extra hours at work. You can pray for a raise. Just pray about it!

I know some of us have expensive tastes. I do. That doesn't mean we can't pray for those things. That doesn't mean we can't have them just because they are expensive.

Personally, I don't spend a lot of money on things. There are a lot of expensive brands that I love, but I never pay full price for them. I get them discounted or I shop thrift stores for them. And don't think I don't pray before I go to those thrift stores either. We are to pray about everything. I pray that there will be something just for me there and that God will provide what I need, and on top of that, I pray for what I *want*.

MY SHIRT STORY

I'm a firm believer in praying for what we want. For example, let me tell you my shirt story. Long sleeve button down shirts are what I like to wear, even in summer. I roll the sleeves up on them. And my favorite brand of shirts is Foxcroft. Have I ever bought a Foxcroft shirt full price? Well, no! The style I like are the button-down ones which are \$89 regular price on their website. Sorry. I'm not paying that for one shirt.

I first tried them several years back when I got a couple at a thrift shop, and I absolutely loved them. So, I made it a matter of prayer. Next thing you know, I am standing there checking out at a thrift store with

9 of them in immaculate condition. all in my size, all in an array of colors sitting on the counter. I can still see them piled up there and my heart was just singing. Hallelujah! It was such a beautiful pile of shirts! And I was paying \$2.99 a piece for them.

I now have 19 Foxcroft button downs in my closet. All colors, except white. A white one is on my prayer list. I'm praying for a really deep discount on them somewhere.

Over time God has blessed me with my shirt desire I guess you would say. I have scaled down my closet immensely, but I wear these every day, and they make me happy, so I keep them. They are all in pristine condition and all came from thrift shops and all less than \$5 apiece.

God can bless in even things that may seem little to someone else, but to you it's the world! It's your mountain, so to speak. That mountain of shirts moved from that thrift store counter right into my closet.

And I'm not saying you must get everything from thrift stores either in order to get your prayers answered. I'm not saying that at all. I just wanted to show you how God blessed me with one of my desires. I think swapping prayer stories is good for us as Christians.

I just want you to know that I am a firm believer that I must make my wardrobe a part of my prayer life because you know what? I like pretty clothes, pretty jewelry, and all pretty things, and I am not ashamed to admit it. I like to look nice. And I like things that are made well and fit me well. It makes me feel confident as I go about my day, and I think that's a good thing.

EYES WIDE OPEN

I know I need reminded from time to time that it is okay to ask for something maybe out of the ordinary in prayer. Maybe something I wouldn't dare dream I could have. Maybe a problem that I think will never be solved. When I start focusing on what faith can do and what God can do, it opens up a world of possibilities for me. It helps make my eyes wide open for what God can do through prayer.

And I'm not talking about just *things*, but God can work in hearts in such big ways. He can work in the coldest of hearts. He can help people see the error of their ways. He can turn a person that bullies into a kind person. The possibilities are endless!

I think some of us have been programed to tell ourselves, "We can't have that" or "We can't pray for that".

We must change our thinking. When we start studying all the passages in the Bible on prayer, the *we can't have that* thinking just doesn't compute with what prayer really is. We can see that by just the verses we have looked at so far during this **Loving to Talk to God** Memory Challenge.

CONCLUSION

Seeing the possibilities of prayer makes me remember in awe again just how great a God I have. God can do the impossible and He can and will do it for me.



Prayer & Agreement

February 12, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

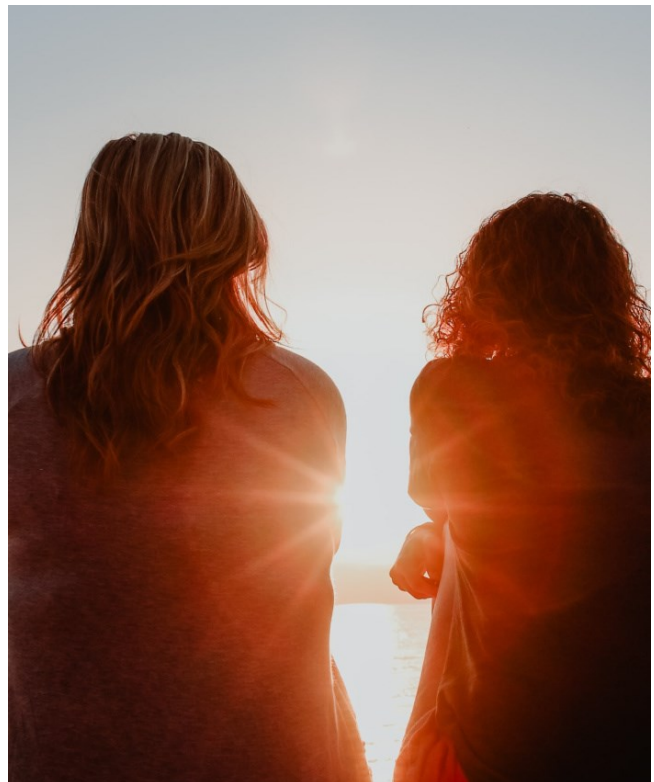
Our thought for prayer today is that,

**Prayer can be shared
in agreement.**

DAY # 12 MEMORY VERSE

*For where two or three are
gathered together in my name,
there am I in the midst of them.*

Matthew 18:20



PRAYER CAN BE SHARED IN AGREEMENT

Once again, our verse comes from a passage where Jesus is teaching His disciples as He did so many times. And this is one of those verses that you really must read the passage above it to make it fall into perspective.

This is a passage about discipline in the local church. Jesus is telling the disciples how it should be done.

I hope if you have known Christ very long at all, that you have been taught the steps of proper discipline when it comes to believers, forgiveness, and getting along in the body of Christ. It's found in the preceding verses to our memory verse today in Matthew 18. You can read the passage yourself to take it all in by reading Matthew 18:15-20.

I wanted to just mention that quickly because the prayer we are talking about today is the kind connected to that church discipline. The shared prayer that our memory verse alludes to is done by those ones who are involved in this type of discipline and are agreeing to the exclusion of someone from the church.

SERIOUS MATTERS

I want you to look at what Charles Spurgeon had to say about this verse, way back in 1883.

“The meetings of God’s servants for the necessary discipline of the church are not trifling meetings, but there is a divine power in them, since what they do is done in the name of Jesus Christ their Lord. Oh, that church-meetings were more generally looked at in this solemn light!”

The Lord With Two or Three Charles Haddon Spurgeon
Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Volume 30
October 4, 1883

Spurgeon says, the meetings done in churches to delve out discipline of a member are not *trifling* matters.

This, my friends, is serious stuff! Church discipline should not be done lightly. And above all, it should be done for the cause of Christ. It shouldn't be done in anger, or in a way to punish someone because you don't see eye to eye on matters in general. This is something that any believer that takes part in should do prayerfully, and united with the other believers.

Our memory verse is basically Jesus telling His disciples the promise He had for His apostles and those who were going to have to deal with church discipline. If they were gathered in Jesus' name, then Jesus would be there with them.

Look at that verse that immediately precedes our memory verse,

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. Matthew 18:19.

I actually could have made this our memory verse, but I chose verse 20, because we had other verses concentrating on the asking part. I wanted to focus more on gathering together and God being with us.

IN THE MIDST

Jesus knew that these types of instances would come up in the church, and He was instructing His disciples how to go about dealing with it, and He promised them that He would be there “in the midst of them” when they agreed.

This is what I want us to remember today, is that two or more believers together can handle the tough stuff that comes along with church discipline. Prayer can be shared in agreement.

I know a lot of you that follow me are women's ministry leaders or work in leadership in the church in some way, and there are times when those difficult situations between believers will arise. You might not be having to deal out church discipline in the extreme of cases like in this passage. But you may be in charge of a group of ladies or a specific ministry within your local church, and you may have arguments, disagreements, and fighting among believers in your group or ministry.

Sometimes leaders can get caught in the cross hairs of commotion between other believers somehow, and you have to know that prayer can be such an important step in these situations. You have to know how Jesus wants church discipline handled. Getting along in the body of Christ is so important.

THROUGH THE TOUGH STUFF

This memory verse today is about Jesus being there for His disciples and apostles as time came to build the early church. But God is still there in the midst of believers when they come together to pray for their local churches. He is there when we are praying together about those sensitive things that come into play.

God is there during the tough stuff. He is there through the challenges and struggles that sometimes happen in our local churches.

GATHERING TOGETHER

And, although this memory verse isn't specifically talking about it, the Lord is with us when we pray with each other about anything. Sharing is part of building relationships with other believers. It helps us see their needs. It helps us bond together.

Sure, this memory verse is talking about agreeing on church discipline, but there are so many things we can choose to agree on in prayer. There are so many things that we can all pray about together. And when we are walking in unity in the body of Christ it is a beautiful thing.

Grabbing another person to pray with over needs about your church, personal needs, the Salvation of others, or whatever it is can be so bonding and powerful.

CONCLUSION

I'm so thankful that we can have that fellowship and pray with and for each other in the body of Christ. Praying together strengthens us and is such a wonderful way that we can talk to God.



Prayer & Contentment

February 13, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Our prevailing thought to go with this verse today is,

Prayer can make us complain less.

DAY # 13 MEMORY VERSE

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

James 5:13



PRAYER CAN MAKE US COMPLAIN LESS

You will notice for our thought today, that I didn't say not complain at all. I said complain *less*, because we are human and complaining is part

of what we do, but I do think that praying daily helps reduce the level at which we complain.

I'm not sure about you, but when I talk to the Lord in prayer, it soothes my complaining attitude. Especially when I bring worship as part of my prayer. When I am worshipping and praising such a Mighty God, it kind of puts my life into perspective. He is the Potter. I am the clay. He died for me. Surely, I can squash my complaining attitude.

I've mentioned already during this Memory Challenge several things that go with prayer like peanut butter and jelly. This is yet another one of them. Praise and prayer go together. They are great friends.

OPTIONS

Look what James says in our memory verse. He is telling us that if we are suffering, then we should pray. He is telling us if we are happy, then we should sing songs.

Many people go through trying circumstances in their lives that may leave them weary, emotionally torn, and weighted down. But, the thing is, if we have hurts, concerns, sickness, suffering, or hardships of any kind, we don't have to whine about it. We don't have to grumble about it. We don't have to mutter under our breath about it. We don't have to curse God about it. We don't have to complain about it.

Prayer is the better option!



EXTREMES

I love that our memory verse covers the extremes of how we are feeling.

I think of the Apostle Paul, and how he learned the art of not complaining through his highs and lows. He learned to be content.

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Philippians 4:11, 12

CONSEQUENCES

I think we tend to think that complaining is a little thing just because everyone does it. But really it isn't a little thing. I'm always reminded of that when I think about what happened to the children of Israel when they were wandering around the wilderness complaining in the Old Testament.

I studied that chapter in Numbers 11, when I wrote a devotional on different aspects of the wind several years ago. And that story of the *Wind and the Quails* has stuck with me since. The people were given manna to eat in the wilderness, but they wanted fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. Oh my! Let's just say the penalty for complaining was very high. There were consequences.

They complained so much that even a great man such as Moses got into one of those, *Kill me, Just kill me now* moods. (Numbers 11:15)

THE BETTER CHOICE

Our verse today is a short one, but can really be a lifesaver to recall when we are tempted to complain about something. We can choose prayer over complaining.

Think of it as on a tray being offered to you.

Would you like complaining or prayer to go with that hardship?

We have to remember when we constantly choose complaining off of the tray that some bad tasting side dishes will come with it, and some real heart burn will be involved.

We will alienate people we love. We will annoy friends and coworkers and they will begin to distance themselves from us. We will be intentionally left out of conversations because people just don't like talking with complainers. Our real concerns will be taken less seriously because they will be seen as complaints. We will hurt the cause of Christ. We will crush other people's happiness. We might even make others complain after they hear our complaining.

I've heard that complaining is bad for you because of what it physically does in your brain, but I also read somewhere that there was a study that said that if someone listens to complaining from other people for 30 minutes or more that it will affect that person's brain as well. I'm

like...what?! I need to be more careful. I don't want to hurt someone's brain! I need to do what James said and pray instead.

CONCLUSION

And what is prayer? It's talking to God. That's what we have been learning about all through our Memory Challenge. I'm so glad prayer is there for me when I am tempted to complain because just like other people, I find complaining is easy to do when I am having a bad day or when I have problems in my life. Prayer makes me more content.



Prayer & Connection

February 14, 2022

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Our thought today to go along with our memory verse is,

Prayer connects us with God.

We can join with the Lord through prayer, and it can be a continual connection.



DAY # 14 MEMORY VERSE

Pray without ceasing.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

PRAYER CONNECTS US WITH GOD

Our verse today is short and simple. Just a few words to remind us to

pray persistently and consistently. We can connect with the Lord anytime we want. Prayer is always there for all occasions. It's always there for us to grab hold of in times of trouble or times of joy. It is always there to rely on when we need direction. It is always there to rely on when we need comfort.

Our hearts should always be inclined to pray.

And our verse we have today is right among a list of things that we, as believers in Christ, are to do or not to do in 1 Thessalonians 5. Some are simple phrases that are easy to remember, but wow. They are powerful things contained there in that chapter.

I consider this one of those power-up chapters for a Christian. If we are doing those things it mentions throughout, then grab onto your hat, because your life is going to be powerful and amazing for the Lord! Your relationship with the Lord will be at peak performance.

CONNECTED PEOPLE STAY IN CONTACT

What do all good relationships have in common? Whether it's couples or friendships, people in good relationships stay in contact with each other. If they fail to ever communicate, the relationship goes downhill fast. People in relationships have to stay in contact in some way or another.

Praying without ceasing is that continual contact with the Lord. Communication with the Lord is so important.

And what does continual communication between a believer and the Lord do? Here are 10 things that I came up with after thinking about this for a while.

10 THINGS CONNECTION WITH GOD CAN DO FOR THE BELIEVER

- ✓ Helps us effectively share our feelings with God.
- ✓ Helps us build our faith.
- ✓ Helps us strengthen our respect and love for God.
- ✓ Helps us improve our daily attitude.
- ✓ Helps us not to feel isolated from God.
- ✓ Helps us know God more.
- ✓ Helps us listen to God more.
- ✓ Helps us consider God's direction and leading more.
- ✓ Helps us show more affection and praise to God.
- ✓ Helps us love others more.

A relationship is two sided, and we know God is doing His part. We just have to step up and put the work into our relationship with the Lord. A big part of that is staying connected to the Lord through talking to Him through prayer and allowing the Lord to talk to us through His Word.

MEMORY CHALLENGE REVIEW

We have gone over a lot of things about prayer during our Memory Challenge with regard to **Loving to Talk to God.**

Let's do a quick review of the points.

1. Prayer is important. (DAY #1)
2. Prayer relies on faith. (DAY #2)
3. Prayer is always available. (DAY #3)
4. Prayer keeps us from temptation. (DAY #4)
5. Prayer can be done with boldness. (DAY #5)
6. Prayer takes dedication. (DAY #6)
7. Prayer is a two-way conversation. (DAY #7)
8. Prayer is powerful. (DAY #8)
9. Prayer relieves our worries. (DAY #9)
10. Prayer can be intimate. (DAY #10)
11. Prayer helps us see possibilities. (DAY #11)
12. Prayer can be shared in agreement. (DAY #12)
13. Prayer can make us complain less. (DAY #13)
14. Prayer connects us with God. (DAY #14)

CONCLUSION

I hope that all of the verses we have worked on memorizing during this Memory Challenge inspires you in your prayer life and makes you want to talk to God more.

When we start **Loving to Talk to God**, our outlook changes. We become more involved in that relationship with God like we talked about in relation to today's memory verse. We will begin praying more consistently. We will begin praying more persistently. We will begin *praying without ceasing*.

And when we begin finding that real love to talk to the Lord on a deeper

and more meaningful level, it will in turn help us to love others more and make us want to improve our relationships with others.

When we spend a considerable amount of time with God, we can't help but start loving other people more, because that's what spending time with the Lord does for us. It makes us more loving and beautiful human beings.

EXTRA CHALLENGE:

Read the entire chapter of 1 Thessalonians 5. It will help power you up!



**Thank you
for joining me
for the**

Loving to Talk to God

**2022
Bible Memory
Challenge**

Julia