



# A 30-DAY DEVOTIONAL FOR NAVIGATING LOSS

A gentle, Scripture-guided journey toward comfort, meaning, and renewed hope.

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# Pastoral Prologue: When Sorrow Changes the Story

There are days when a single phone call, a final breath, or a quiet, empty room rewrites the story of our lives. The pages still turn, but the plot has shifted; the sentences we knew by heart pause mid-word. In such a moment, God does not hurry you along. He does not say, "Be strong," while standing at a distance. He steps nearer. He keeps company with your tears.

We are not the first to weep. Our Lord Jesus stood at a tomb and His voice broke into silence with tears (John 11:35). The Father bends low to the crushed in spirit and stays close to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18). The Holy Spirit, Comforter and Keeper, gathers our fragments and consoles us in all our afflictions so that we might someday carry comfort to others (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).

If I may ask you a quiet question as we begin: What do you most need from God in this hour—comfort, clarity, companionship, or courage? Name it. Hold it in open hands. Let this journey meet you there.

# The Ancient Paths of Comfort

We will not rush. We will walk the ancient paths (Jeremiah 6:16) that have steadied the saints across the centuries:

## Honest Prayers

The prayers that do not disguise pain, but bring it openly before God's throne of grace.

## Scripture Read Aloud

The living Word that breaks through darkness and speaks truth when our own words fail.

## Holy Lament

The sacred art that turns our deepest sorrow into an act of worship and trust.

## Supportive Fellowship

The community that helps bear a weight too heavy for one person alone.

## Faithful Remembrance

The practice that honors love without being trapped by yesterday's pain.

## Hopeful Practices

The small, faithful actions that teach our feet to move forward again.

Take heart: the Shepherd knows this valley and will not lose you in it (Psalm 23:4). Your grief is not a failure of faith; it is the cost of love. And love—God's love—has a long memory and a longer reach. He will lead you, not around the valley, but through it.

# A Gentle Way to Use This Devotional

This book is meant to sit beside you like a friend who knows when to speak and when to keep quiet.

## Daily Practices

1. Read the Scripture slowly, aloud. Let truth pass your lips even if your heart feels far away (Hebrews 4:12).
2. Receive the Devotional Thought like a warm light on a cold morning—enough for today.
3. Journal with honesty. Write to God. Write to the one you miss. Write to yourself with kindness.
4. Pray the Guided Prayer when words are few; borrow language from the saints and the Psalms.
5. Practice one small step. A candle lit. A walk taken. A verse posted where you can see it. Small faithfulness is big work in a tender season.



Remember these gentle guidelines:

- Go slowly. If a day feels heavy, repeat it tomorrow. Healing rarely moves in straight lines.
- Keep a Grief Journal. Gather verses, memories, letters, and answered prayers; this will become an altar of remembrance (Joshua 4:1–7).
- Honor Sabbath. Every seventh day, do less. Be held more (Genesis 2:2–3; Matthew 11:28–29).

# A Prayer for When Waves Rise

And when the waves rise without warning, breathe this prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ... have mercy on me." (Luke 18:13)

Then whisper what He has already promised:

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

You are not alone. The God who weeps, keeps, and leads will shepherd you—one day, one step, one merciful breath at a time.

# WEEK 1 — NAMING THE GRIEF

**Goal: Tell the truth about your pain before God; learn to lament as worship.**

This first week invites you to name your grief honestly before God. When we bring our raw pain into His presence, we discover that He is not afraid of our tears, our questions, or our broken hearts. Through the practice of lament, we learn that telling the truth about our suffering can become a profound act of worship and trust.

The Psalms will be our guide, showing us how to pour out our hearts while still reaching for hope. As David wrote, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).



# DAY 1 – GOD IS NEAR

Scripture: "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." – Psalm 34:18

## Devotional Thought

There is a temptation in grief to measure God's love by how much He spares us from pain. But Scripture tells a different story. The Lord never promised to shield us from every sorrow, but He does promise His nearness in the midst of it. When David wrote Psalm 34:18, he was not sitting in a palace enjoying ease—he was a man hunted, weary, and heart-wounded.

Grief is not a sign of weak faith. In fact, it often reveals the depth of your love. Your tears tell a story: "I have loved deeply, and now I ache deeply." This ache is not evidence of God's absence; it is an invitation to encounter Him in a new and more intimate way.

When you feel brokenhearted, you may imagine God standing far off, waiting for you to "pull yourself together." But Psalm 34:18 says the opposite. He draws near—He bends low to listen, to hold, to rescue. Like a shepherd kneeling beside an injured sheep, He is not afraid of your wounds, your questions, or your trembling prayers.

God's nearness is not always felt as a rush of emotion. Sometimes it is a quiet stillness in the middle of tears. Sometimes it is the strength to get out of bed. Sometimes it is the gentle word of a friend who shows up without answers. These are all whispers of His presence.

## Reflection

- Where do I feel the most broken today?
- What part of my story feels too raw or too messy to bring before God?
- Can I trust that God is already there, waiting for me to name it?

## Gentle Practice

Find a quiet space. Take a deep breath, close your eyes, and picture God sitting beside you—not rushing you, not lecturing you, just being present. Then write one honest sentence in your journal:

"Today, I feel \_\_\_\_\_."

Do not edit or overthink it. This is not for anyone else's eyes. It is a simple act of telling the truth before the One who already knows.

# DAY 2 – PERMISSION TO WEEP

Scripture: "When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in His spirit and greatly troubled... Jesus wept." (John 11:33–36)

## Devotional Thought

Tears are not a failure of faith—they are part of faith. At the tomb of Lazarus, the Lord of Life did not rush the moment or silence the mourners. He stood inside their sorrow, felt it, and wept. If the sinless Son of God let grief move through His body as tears, then your tears are not only permissible—they are dignified.

Scripture never treats weeping as unspiritual. We are told to "weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). The Psalms carry the sound of sobbing ("I flood my bed with tears," Psalm 6:6), and God promises to count and keep every tear (Psalm 56:8). Jesus is the Man of Sorrows (Isaiah 53:3), acquainted with grief—not merely observing it from a safe distance, but entering it.

Notice, too, that Jesus wept before He raised Lazarus. This means tears are not canceled by future hope; they are honored within it. Christian grief is honest about loss and steadfast about resurrection. We cry now, trusting that one day God will "wipe away every tear" (Revelation 21:4). Until that Day, holy weeping is a faithful way to love.

"Man of Sorrows, teach me holy weeping. As You stood at the tomb and wept, stand with me now. Receive every tear as prayer. Soften what is numb, soothe what is raw, and remind me I am not alone. In Your compassion, hold me close and make my tears a path toward Your comfort. Amen."

# DAY 3 – A PSALM OF LAMENT

Scripture: Psalm 42:1–11 (consider reading Psalm 43 as well; it carries the same refrain)

## Devotional Thought

Biblical lament is the grace-filled space where pain and hope stand side by side. Psalm 42 teaches us how to do this honestly. Notice the movement:

- **Holy longing** (vv.1–2): "As the deer pants... my soul thirsts for God." Grief awakens a deep thirst—not just for answers, but for God Himself.
- **Naming the ache** (v.3): "My tears have been my food day and night." The psalmist does not edit reality; he records it.
- **Remembering worship** (v.4): He recalls processions to the house of God—memory becomes a doorway back to trust.
- **Talking to the soul** (vv.5, 11): "Why are you cast down, O my soul?... Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him." He does not let feelings preach the only sermon; he preaches to his feelings.

- **Waves and steadfast love** (vv.7–8): "Deep calls to deep... all Your breakers... By day the LORD commands His steadfast love, and at night His song is with me." Even when waves crash, covenant love holds.
- **Honest protest** (v.9): "Why have You forgotten me?" He says what hurts to God, not away from God.

Lament is not a cul-de-sac of despair; it is a bridge that carries sorrow toward worship. The refrain ("Why are you cast down... Hope in God... I shall again praise Him") is repeated to train the heart in resilient remembrance. You are allowed to weep and to worship in the same breath.

1

### Read Psalm 42 Slowly

Read it aloud if possible. Let the words wash over you and give voice to your own heart's cry.

2

### Mark the Movements

Underline in one color every phrase of sorrow (e.g., vv.3, 7, 9–10). Underline in a second color every phrase of trust/hope (e.g., vv.5, 8, 11).

3

### Write Your Own Refrain

Create a short refrain beginning with: "Yet I will praise You because \_\_\_\_\_. I will hope in You because \_\_\_\_\_."

Keep that refrain visible and speak it whenever waves rise (v.7).

# DAY 4 – NAMING THE LOSS

Scripture: "Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us." — Psalm 62:8

## Devotional Thought

Grief becomes heavier when it stays wordless. Psalm 62 invites you to pour out your heart—spilling what won't fit inside you—into the hands of a God strong enough to hold it. Naming the loss does not increase pain; it orders pain before God. When you put words to what has been taken—a person, a role, a future you expected—your heart begins to move from a fog of ache to a conversation with the Lord.

Remember: loss is often layered. There is the primary loss (the person who died), and there are secondary losses (companionship, routines, shared dreams, financial security, identity as "spouse/child/friend," a sense of safety). Some losses are ambiguous (no clear closure) or disenfranchised (others don't recognize your grief). God sees every layer. He invites you to "cast your burden on the LORD" (Psalm 55:22), to "cast all your cares on Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Pouring out is not complaining about God; it is speaking to God. David models this: "I pour out my complaint before Him; I tell my trouble before Him" (Psalm 142:2). When you name your losses before the Lord, you are not being dramatic—you are being biblical. The One who said "Blessed are those who mourn" (Matthew 5:4) is ready to receive each word, each tear, each silence.

## Gentle Practice — Name Three Losses

In your journal, draw a simple three-row list:

1. Loss #1: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Loss #2: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Loss #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Next to each loss, add two short notes:

- What it meant: (e.g., "companionship," "stability," "identity as wife/husband/son/daughter").
- What I entrust to God today: (e.g., "my loneliness in the evening," "my fear about finances," "my worth apart from this role").

# DAY 5 – THE VALLEY IS REAL

Scripture: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." — Psalm 23:4

## Devotional Thought

God is not only the Shepherd of green pastures and still waters (Psalm 23:2); He is the Shepherd in the valley. David names it plainly: "the valley of the shadow of death"—in Hebrew, a phrase that also means deep darkness (cf. Job 10:21–22). Scripture refuses to pretend the path is always bright. Yet it equally refuses despair: "I walk through." Not around. Not stuck forever. Through—because the Shepherd is with you.

Notice the change of address in Psalm 23. Earlier David speaks of God in the third person ("He leads... He restores"). In the valley, he turns to the second person: "You are with me." Valleys move faith from information to intimacy. The presence of the Shepherd does not always remove the darkness, but it redefines it: you are not alone in it (Hebrews 13:5; Isaiah 43:2).

What do rod and staff mean?

- The rod was a sturdy club used for protection—to strike predators.
- The staff (with its crook) was used for guidance and rescue—to draw a sheep close or lift it from a ledge.

Together they picture defense and direction. God guards you from what you cannot see and gently steers you when you cannot stand. Comfort here is not sentimental; it is strong, active care (John 10:11, 27–29).

If today feels like shadow—fear, uncertainty, grief—remember: valleys are real, and so is the Shepherd. Your steps may be slow; that's all right. He matches your pace. His presence is your safety, and His promise is your path.

## Reflection

- What feels darkest right now—fear, loneliness, decisions, finances, memories?
- Where have I seen even a small sign of the Shepherd's protection or guidance?
- If I spoke to God in the second person today ("You are with me"), how would my prayer change?

## Gentle Practice

Take a short walk (even 5–10 minutes). With each step, pray Psalm 23 slowly.

- On your inhale: "The Lord is my Shepherd."
- On your exhale: "I shall not want."

Continue through the psalm line by line. If you can't walk, sit by a window and trace the psalm phrase by phrase in your journal.

# DAY 6 – HONEST QUESTIONS

Scripture:

"O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and You will not hear?" — Habakkuk 1:2

"How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day?" — Psalm 13:1–2

## Devotional Thought

Faith is not the absence of questions; faith brings its questions to God. The prophet Habakkuk stands in the tension between what he believes about God's justice and what he sees in the world. David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, prays four times, "How long?" in just two verses. Scripture gives you words for the ache you already feel.

God does not rebuke the honest "How long?" He records it in His Word as a model of courageous prayer. To ask is to trust that Someone is listening. Lament aims its questions toward God, not away from Him. It is the posture of a child who refuses to go silent, even when answers delay.

Notice the pattern in Psalm 13: the psalm moves from protest (vv. 1–2), to petition (vv. 3–4), to praise (vv. 5–6). Questions are not the enemy of praise; they are often the path to it. When you give voice to confusion, you clear space in your soul to receive light. You may not get every answer you want, but you will meet the God who answers with Himself (cf. Job 38–42).

## Gentle Practice — Write Your Question to God

Use a blank page. Begin with:

"Lord, my question is \_\_\_\_\_. I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

Leave half the page empty for God's answer—whether it comes as Scripture later, a sense of peace, wise counsel, or a change in circumstance. Date the page so you can trace His faithfulness.

Hold the question in prayer for three minutes, breathing slowly:

- Inhale: "How long, O Lord?"
- Exhale: "My hope is in You." (Psalm 39:7)

# DAY 7 – REST DAY

Scripture: "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me... and you will find rest for your souls." — Matthew 11:28–29

## Devotional Thought

Grief is exhausting work. Jesus does not say, "Try harder." He says, "Come to Me." Rest, in the Christian way, is not merely time off; it is time with—with the Lord who carries the heavier end of the yoke. Sabbath rest has always been God's compassionate rhythm (Genesis 2:2–3; Exodus 20:8–11). On this seventh day, you are invited to stop striving, to breathe, and to let God's care—not your effort—be the headline.

Question to hold: What might I lay down today, so that Jesus can lift me up?



### A Simple Rest Liturgy (10–15 minutes)

1. **Quiet Call to Worship** (whispered):  
"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want... He leads me beside still waters; He restores my soul." (Psalm 23:1–3)
2. **Breath Prayer** (3–4 minutes):  
Inhale: "Come to Me..."  
Exhale: "...and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)
3. **Short Reading** (choose one):  
Isaiah 30:15 — "In returning and rest you shall be saved."  
Psalm 131 — "I have calmed and quieted my soul."  
Hebrews 4:9–11 — "There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God."
4. **Prayer of Yielding**:  
"Jesus, I come to You for rest. I set down what I cannot carry. Teach me Your gentleness. Give rest to my soul. Amen."
5. **Silence** (2 minutes): Simply be with Him.

### Gentle Practices for Today

- **Rest:** Take a short nap or sit by a window. Let your body be unhurried.
- **Hydrate:** Drink water slowly; thank God for this ordinary mercy.
- **Walk:** A 10–15 minute unhurried walk; no agenda—just awareness of God's nearness (Psalm 23:4).
- **Worship:** Play a hymn or worship song you already love. If tears come, let them.
- **Warmth:** Wrap yourself in a blanket, or take a warm bath/tea—an embodied reminder of God's comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).
- **One Good Thing:** Eat something nourishing; receive it as a gift (James 1:17).

# WEEK 2 — SITTING WITH GOD IN THE VALLEY

**Goal: Welcome God into numbness, anger, guilt, and the ache of absence.**

This week invites you to welcome God into the difficult emotions that often accompany grief. When we feel numb, angry, guilty, or overwhelmed by absence, we may be tempted to hide these feelings from God. But He invites us to bring every part of our experience into His presence.

As we journey through this valley, we discover that God is not afraid of our raw emotions. He meets us in our numbness with gentle awakening, in our anger with patient understanding, in our guilt with forgiveness, and in our loneliness with His faithful presence.

Remember the promise: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you" (Isaiah 43:2).

# DAY 8 – WHEN NUMBNESS LINGERS

Scripture: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you." — Isaiah 43:2

## Devotional Thought

Numbness is often the soul's emergency shelter. After impact, your inner life may instinctively "switch off" to keep you from shattering. You may feel flat, foggy, or strangely detached from moments that used to move you. This does not mean you are faithless—or heartless. It means you are protecting what hurts.

Scripture does not demand instant feeling. God promises presence: "I will be with you." Notice the prepositions in Isaiah 43:2—through the waters... through the fire. Not around. Not above. Through. God can enter even the rooms your heart has locked. He is not impatient with your dullness; He is gentle and lowly (Matthew 11:29). He does not force the door; He knocks (Revelation 3:20), and His nearness slowly warms the places that have gone cold.

Sometimes numbness is grief's way of saying, "We will feel this in smaller portions." Let that be okay. The Lord who formed your frame (Psalm 139:13–16) understands your frame (Psalm 103:13–14). He knows how to awaken feeling without flooding you. Trust that even now, beneath the frost, the Root of Jesse holds your life (Isaiah 11:1). Spring comes, but in God's time.

## Reflection

- Where do I feel "nothing" right now—prayer, worship, friendships, simple joys?
- If numbness is a shelter, what might I be sheltering from (shock, fear, regret, exhaustion)?
- What would it sound like to invite God into the numb room of my heart: "Lord, sit with me here"?

## Guided Prayer

"Holy One, when I pass through the waters, be with me. You know the rooms in me that feel closed and quiet. I do not force myself to feel; I welcome You to be near. Warm what is cold, steady what is shaken, and let Your gentle presence awaken me a little at a time. Amen."

## Gentle Practice (3–5 minutes)

Notice one sensation with God. Sit comfortably. Close your eyes if you like.

1. Place a hand on your chest or abdomen.
2. Breathe naturally and notice: the rise and fall, the heartbeat, the air at the tip of your nose.
3. Each time your mind drifts, return to this phrase on your breath:
  - Inhale: "You are with me."
  - Exhale: "I will not be overwhelmed." (cf. Isaiah 43:2)

Treat this not as a technique to make you feel, but as a small pathway for communion—being-with God in whatever is true right now.

# DAY 9 – THE ANGER INSIDE GRIEF

Scripture:

"Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent." — Psalm 4:4

"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." — Ephesians 4:26

## Devotional Thought

Anger is often grief in armor. It rises to defend what was precious—love, safety, justice, the life that should have been. In Scripture, anger itself is not condemned; it is guided. David teaches us to bring it before God in reverent honesty (Psalm 4:4). Paul echoes this, urging a holy boundary: feel it without letting it rule (Ephesians 4:26).

Two truths can live together:

1. Your anger makes sense. It signals that something good and holy has been violated or lost.
2. Your anger needs a Shepherd. Unled anger can scorch what you still love. Brought to Jesus, it can become intercession, courage, and truthful lament.

At the Cross, we see the only truly Righteous One absorbing the world's worst injustice and transforming it into salvation (1 Peter 2:23–24). Bring your anger there—not to deny it, but to let it be held, purified, and repurposed. Let Jesus' authority set its boundaries (Romans 12:19), His compassion soften its edge (Psalm 103:13–14), and His Spirit turn its heat toward healing (Galatians 5:22–23).

## Gentle Practice — Write an "Anger Psalm" and Surrender It

1. **Address God honestly** (2–3 lines):  
"O God, You see my fury about \_\_\_\_\_. Why did \_\_\_\_\_ happen?"
2. **Name the wound** (3–5 lines):  
"This cost me \_\_\_\_\_. I feel \_\_\_\_\_. It is not how it should be."
3. **Ask specifically** (2–3 lines):  
"Rise to defend, heal, and set things right. Give me wisdom for \_\_\_\_\_."
4. **Surrender** (1–2 lines):  
"I place justice and timing in Your hands (Romans 12:19)."
5. **Refrain of trust** (1–2 lines):  
"Yet I will praise You; You are my refuge (Psalm 62:8)."

When you finish, read it aloud to God. Then fold the page and place it under a Bible or beside a small cross as a sign of entrustment.

# DAY 10 – THE WEIGHT OF GUILT AND "IF ONLY"

Scripture:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." — 1 John 1:9

"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love... as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us." — Psalm 103:8–12

## Devotional Thought

Grief often carries two heavy companions: true guilt (where we have sinned and need cleansing) and false guilt (where love aches over what we could never control). The Good Shepherd tends both. He forgives sin fully and He lifts burdens we were never meant to carry.

- **True guilt** says, "I did wrong." God answers with mercy and cleansing (1 John 1:9; Psalm 51:1–12).
- **False guilt** says, "If only I had known... If only I had done more." This is the ache of helpless love, not sin. God answers with comfort and truth (Psalm 103:13–14; Matthew 5:4).

Scripture distinguishes godly sorrow (which leads to repentance and life) from worldly sorrow (which produces despair) (2 Corinthians 7:10). Godly sorrow is specific, confesses, receives forgiveness, and—where appropriate—makes amends. Worldly sorrow stays vague, self-accusing, and never lets you come up for air. Remember: at the Cross, Christ bore both our iniquities and our infirmities (Isaiah 53:4–6). He cleanses the conscience (Hebrews 9:14) and quiets the storm of "if only."

Think of Peter. He denied Jesus, wept bitterly, and then was restored by the risen Lord (John 21:15–19). Confession did not shrink his calling; it deepened it. The Shepherd who forgave Peter will forgive you; the Shepherd who comforted John at the Cross will comfort you (John 19:26–27).

Sin to Confess	Sorrow to Entrust
(Specific action/attitude; no vagueness)	(Limits I couldn't change; timing I didn't control; outcomes beyond me)
Confess to God (1 John 1:9). If needed, plan a step of amends/restitution (Luke 19:8; Romans 12:18).	Entrust to God's mercy (1 Peter 5:7). Write a short release prayer: "Lord, I give You ____."

Read Psalm 103:8–12 aloud when you finish. If confession was needed, receive it by faith: "As far as the east is from the west..." If sorrow was entrusted, place your open hands on your lap and breathe, "You care for me."

# DAY 11 – THE EMPTY CHAIR

Scripture: "You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?" — Psalm 56:8

## Devotional Thought

There is a silence that visits the room after loss—the glance toward the empty chair, the reflex to call a name you can no longer call, the pause at the doorway where laughter used to begin. Scripture tells you this ache is not unnoticed. God is the One who counts every restless night and keeps every tear, as if each were a line in a sacred story He refuses to forget (Psalm 56:8). He knows the story behind that chair—the jokes told there, the counsel given there, the prayers whispered there, even the disagreements that later turned into grace.

Grief often mingles pain and comfort in the same memory: a birthday tradition that now stings yet warms; a phrase you still hear in your mind; a favorite hymn that brings both tears and peace. This is not a contradiction; it is love remembering. The Lord does not ask you to amputate memory to avoid pain. Instead, He invites you to consecrate memory—to bring it into His presence where sorrow can be honored and transformed into thanksgiving (Philippians 1:3; Psalm 77:11–12).

Notice that in the psalms, remembrance is a holy practice: "I will remember the deeds of the LORD... I will ponder all Your work" (Psalm 77:11–12). Today, you are invited to remember the deeds of the Lord through the life you miss—the graces He gave you through that person, the ways God's character shone in them (kindness, perseverance, humor, faith). Memory becomes worship when it names God's gifts and hands them back in gratitude.

## Gentle Practice — A Small Act of Remembrance

1. Choose a photo or token (a book, a scarf, a tool, a hymn sheet) and place it in a quiet corner—your "little altar of remembrance" (Joshua 4:1–7).
2. Sit for a moment and say one thank-You out loud to God:

"Lord, thank You for \_\_\_\_\_ that I received through this life."

1. If you wish, write one paragraph beginning, "What I don't want to forget is..." Keep this in your journal.

# DAY 12 – WHEN SLEEP WON'T COME

Scripture: "When I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on You in the watches of the night; for You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me." — Psalm 63:6–8

## Devotional Thought

There are nights when weariness lies down but sleep does not. Thoughts circle, memories sting, the room grows long and thin with silence. Scripture gives us an ancient, gentle practice for such hours: turn night watches into prayer watches. David, hunted and heart-weary, remembers and meditates on God in the darkness (Psalm 63:6). He does not deny his distress; he directs it—toward the God who has been his help.

Notice the movement:

- **Remember** (v.6): Call to mind who God is and how He has helped you before (Psalm 77:11–12).
- **Hide** (v.7): Take shelter "in the shadow of Your wings" (cf. Psalm 91:1–4).
- **Sing** (v.7): Even a whispered hymn is warfare against despair (Acts 16:25).
- **Cling** (v.8): Hold to God; trust that His right hand is already holding you (Isaiah 41:10).

Night does not change God's nearness. It only quiets the world so you can hear His heartbeat. If sleep comes, receive it as a gift (Psalm 4:8). If it delays, rest in His presence; let your bed become an altar of trust.

## Gentle Practice — A Simple Bedtime Liturgy

Prepare this before bed; keep it the same each night for a season.

1. **One Psalm** (slowly, aloud): choose one
  - Psalm 23 (Shepherd care)
  - Psalm 121 (the Lord who keeps you)
  - Psalm 4 (peace and sleep)
  - Psalm 91:1–4 (shelter under His wings)
2. **One Short Prayer:**

"Lord, into Your hands I commit my spirit, my thoughts, and my night. Guard me as the apple of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings. Amen." (cf. Luke 23:46; Psalm 17:8)

### One Breath Phrase (5–10 slow breaths)

- Inhale: "You are with me."
- Exhale: "I will not fear."  
(Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 41:10)

### One Act of Surrender

Place your open hands on your chest or pillow and whisper, "I entrust \_\_\_\_\_ to You."

### If Awake Later

Return to a single verse on repeat (e.g., Psalm 56:3). If anxious thoughts return, write them on a bedside notecard labeled "Tomorrow with God" (Matthew 6:34), then set the card aside.

# DAY 13 – GOD OF THE ORDINARY DAY

Scripture: "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. 'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in Him.'" — Lamentations 3:22–24

## Devotional Thought

Grief can make ordinary life feel impossibly heavy: dishes, emails, bathing, church, a short walk. Lamentations was penned in a season of devastation, yet right in the middle of ruin the prophet discovers a quiet miracle—new mercies arriving with the morning. Not always dramatic rescues, but daily provisions: a breath you didn't think you had, a friend's text at the right time, enough energy to make the bed, the ability to pray a short prayer.

New mercies are often small strength for the next right thing. They don't erase sorrow; they enable faithfulness within it. Notice the sequence:


- **Never-ceasing love** → you are not abandoned.
- **Unending mercies** → God's patience will outlast your pain.
- **New every morning** → today has fresh grace; yesterday's allotment was for yesterday.
- **Great faithfulness** → God will be who He has always been.
- **"The LORD is my portion"** → God Himself is your enough when nothing else feels like enough.

The old paths (Jeremiah 6:16) teach us to meet God in the ordinary: prayer, Scripture, small duties, fellowship, rest. Today, do not despise "small." God often stitches healing through small stitches done steadily in His presence.

## Gentle Practice — The Next Right Thing

1. Name one simple, concrete action for today. Write it:

"Today I will \_\_\_\_\_."

1. Do it slowly, with God. Whisper as you begin: "Great is Your faithfulness."
2. Mark it as grace. When finished, draw a small  in your journal and write one sentence: "This, too, was mercy."

# DAY 14 – REST DAY

Scripture: "O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forevermore." — Psalm 131

## Devotional Thought

Psalm 131 is one of the shortest psalms, but it is a deep well for weary hearts. David speaks of quiet trust, not restless striving. He is not trying to solve mysteries too vast for him, nor is he stretching himself into a life he cannot yet carry. Instead, he chooses the posture of a weaned child—not frantic for what he cannot have, not fighting to be somewhere else, but resting in the presence of the one who loves and sustains him.

In grief, our minds often run ahead: Why did this happen? How will I face the future? When will the pain stop? These questions matter, but they can leave us spinning when today's grace is to simply be still. Psalm 131 teaches us the gentle art of soul-quieting—releasing what is too heavy for today and leaning into the steadying arms of God.

Rest is not idleness. Rest is trust expressed. On this seventh day, you are invited to put down the tools of analysis, pause the search for answers, and simply sit with the Shepherd who calls you His own (John 10:14–15). This is a day for breathing slower, speaking less, and noticing more of His nearness.



## Gentle Practice — Breathing the Psalm

1. Find a comfortable position—seated, feet grounded, or lying down with your hands open.
2. Read Psalm 131 aloud slowly, pausing after each verse.
3. Breathe with the lines:
  - Inhale: "I have calmed..."
  - Exhale: "...and quieted my soul."
1. Picture yourself as a child resting against a loving parent—no demands, just presence.
2. If thoughts or worries surface, gently say, "That is too great for me today, Lord. I leave it with You."

## Optional Quiet Ritual for the Day

- Light a candle as a symbol of God's steady presence.
- Put away distractions for 15–30 minutes.
- Listen to a single hymn or worship song without multitasking.
- Take a slow walk, noticing nature as God's handiwork.
- Close the day by whispering verse 3: "Hope in the LORD from this time forth and forevermore."

# WEEK 3 — REMEMBRANCE, RELEASE, AND RENEWAL

**Goal: Remember with gratitude, release what burdens, and make room for new rhythms.**

This week guides us through the delicate balance of honoring what was while beginning to look forward. We learn to remember with gratitude, to release what weighs us down, and to establish new rhythms that carry us forward.

Through practices of holy remembrance, forgiveness, thanksgiving, and rebuilding, we discover that love does not end with loss—it transforms. We find ways to honor our loved ones while also creating space for new life to emerge.

As Ecclesiastes reminds us, "For everything there is a season" (3:1). This week helps us recognize the season we're in and take faithful steps appropriate to this time.

# DAY 15 – HOLY REMEMBRANCE

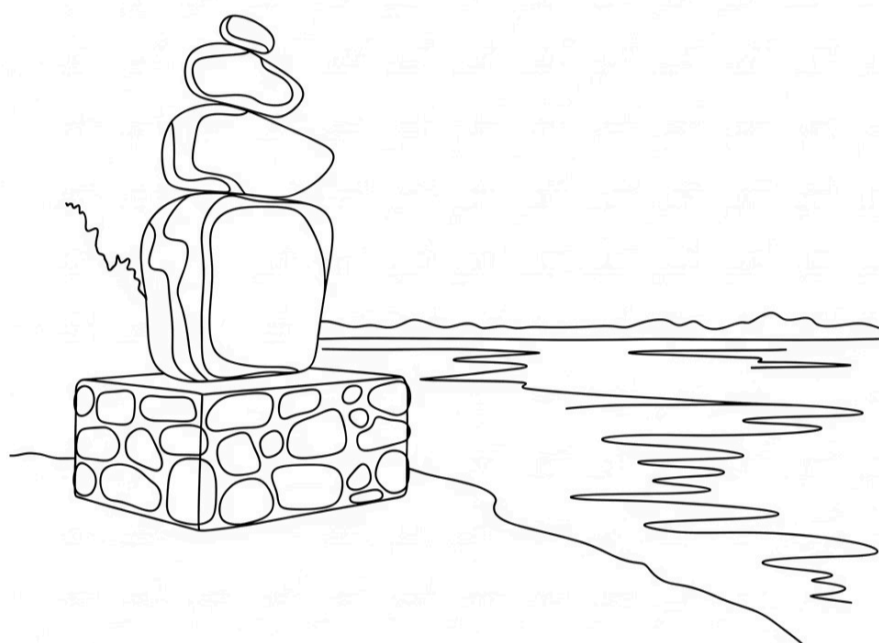
Scripture: "Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, and command them, saying, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan... that this may be a sign among you... So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever.'" — Joshua 4:1–7

## Devotional Thought

When Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground, God told them to carry stones from the riverbed and stack them at Gilgal. Why? Because memory is a spiritual discipline. The memorial stood as a public testimony and a personal anchor: "When your children ask, 'What do these stones mean?' you shall tell them..." (Joshua 4:6–7).

Grief often tempts us to remember only the moment of loss. Holy remembrance widens the lens: we also remember the mercies that preceded the loss and the mercies that remain. We remember how God met us "in the river"—strength we didn't know we had, prayers that held us, Scriptures that found us, the quiet ways the Shepherd guided our steps.

Holy remembrance is not nostalgia. It doesn't pretend the wilderness never happened or that pain is light. It names both: the ache and the aid, the tears and the keeping. In that honest remembering, gratitude begins to breathe again (Psalm 77:11–12; Philippians 1:3). Memorials teach our hearts to say: God has helped me this far (1 Samuel 7:12), and therefore hope becomes reasonable (Lamentations 3:21–24).



## Reflection

- Looking back over this story, what "stones"—specific moments of help—can I carry forward?
- Who did God send to me as a mercy? What word or verse became a lifeline?
- If a child (or my future self) asked, "What do these stones mean?", what testimony would I tell?
- Where do I still need God to turn raw memory into redeemed remembrance?

## Gentle Practice — Build a Small Memorial

Choose one simple way to "stack stones" today. Keep it humble and visible.

Options:

- **Journal Page:** Title it "Stones from the River." Draw 6–12 small stones. In each one, write a short mercy: "A friend sat with me," "Psalm 23 kept me," "Strength to make the call," "Provision arrived."
- **Candle + Verse:** Place a candle beside a card with Joshua 4:6–7 or Lamentations 3:22–24. Light it while you thank God for one help each evening this week.
- **Framed Memory:** Print a verse or a photo that represents God's help. Add a date and one line of testimony beneath: "Thus far the LORD has helped us." (1 Samuel 7:12)

When someone asks what it means—or when your own heart forgets—tell the story of God's keeping.

# DAY 16 – TELLING THE STORY

Scripture: "One generation shall commend Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of Your awesome deeds, and I will declare Your greatness. They shall pour forth the fame of Your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of Your righteousness." — Psalm 145:4–7

## Devotional Thought

Grief tends to isolate; testimony reconnects. In Psalm 145 the people of God commend, declare, speak, pour forth, sing. Notice how remembrance is spoken—not kept in a private vault. When you tell the story of the one you loved, you are not only recalling the past; you are knitting your heart to others in grace and naming the works of God that shone through that life.

Christian remembering is honest and hopeful at the same time. We name what hurt, but we also name the gifts: the kindness they showed, the prayer they prayed, the laughter that brightened a room, the Scripture they loved. In telling these things, you are practicing the old paths—meditating on God's goodness and declaring His faithfulness (Psalm 145:5–7; Psalm 77:11–12).

Your story matters in the fellowship of the Church (Acts 2:42–47). As you speak, someone else finds courage to speak; as you share, another is strengthened to carry their own story. And in the mystery of grace, the Spirit often uses shared memory to comfort those who mourn (Matthew 5:4) and to bind up the brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1–3).

## Gentle Practice — Share One Cherished Memory

1. Choose your listener: someone safe, patient, and prayerful.
2. Choose one memory: a moment that shows who they were (a mealtime prayer, a quiet act of service, a shared joke, a verse they always quoted).
3. Name God's grace in it: one sentence beginning, "I saw God's goodness when..."
4. Share it aloud (or write a short letter/text if speaking feels too tender).
5. Close with gratitude: "Lord, thank You for this gift," and, if appropriate, ask the listener to pray a brief blessing over you.

# DAY 17 – FORGIVING AND BEING FORGIVEN

Scripture:

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." — Matthew 6:12–15

"...as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." — Colossians 3:13

## Devotional Thought

Forgiveness does not erase grief, pretend evil was small, or invite harm back into your life. Forgiveness releases your heart to heal. In Scripture, sin is often pictured as a debt (Matthew 6:12). To forgive is to write "Paid in full" across what someone owes you and entrust the matter to God's perfect justice (Romans 12:19) and mercy (Micah 7:18–19).

A few clarifications that protect the heart:

- **Forgiveness ≠ feelings.** You may still feel pain after you forgive. Forgiveness is a decision before God; comfort often follows over time (Ephesians 4:31–32).
- **Forgiveness ≠ forgetting.** Scripture calls us to remember wisely, set wise boundaries, and walk in truth (Proverbs 4:23).
- **Forgiveness ≠ reconciliation.** Reconciliation requires repentance, safety, and trust rebuilt (Luke 17:3–4; Matthew 18:15–17). You can forgive even if reconciliation isn't presently possible or wise.
- **Self-forgiveness begins with God's forgiveness.** We receive His pardon in Christ (1 John 1:9; Psalm 103:10–12), then we agree with God by releasing ourselves from a debt He has already canceled (Romans 8:1).

In grief, "if only" can harden into blame—toward others, toward ourselves, even (secretly) toward God. The Cross stands in the center of our pain: "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34). The Risen Lord restores the fallen (Peter, John 21:15–19) and empowers us to extend the same grace we have received (Colossians 3:13). Forgiveness will not change the past, but it changes the weight you carry into the future.

## Gentle Practice — A Prayer of Release and Blessing

1. **Name the debt:** "Lord, N. owes me \_\_\_\_."
2. **Place it at the Cross:** "Because You forgave me, I release this debt to You." (Ephesians 4:32)
3. **Bless, don't rehearse:** Pray a brief blessing over the person you're releasing (Luke 6:28):

"Father, do them good—lead them to repentance, truth, and peace in Christ."

1. **Set a boundary (if needed):** Note one wise limit or next step (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 18:15–17).
2. **Receive pardon for yourself:** Read Psalm 103:10–12 aloud and say, "In Christ, I am forgiven."

You can repeat this as often as the memory resurfaces. Forgiveness is sometimes a practice before it is a feeling.

# DAY 18 – BLESSING THE GOOD THAT WAS

Scripture: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." — Philippians 1:3

## Devotional Thought

Gratitude and grief often walk side by side. Saying "thank You" does not minimize your loss; it dignifies the love that made the loss so weighty. Paul's words in Philippians are not naïve; he writes from prison, with real constraints and uncertainties. Yet when he remembers the believers at Philippi, thanksgiving rises. This is a holy skill: to bless God for the good He gave within a story that also holds pain.

Blessing the good is not pretending everything was easy. It is tracing grace through ordinary days—meals shared, counsel offered, quiet faithfulness, prayers whispered, humor given, sacrifices made, the way God's character shone through this person. It is also naming how the Lord met you through them: "I saw Your kindness in her hospitality... Your strength in his perseverance... Your tenderness in their prayers." In Scripture, remembering God's works leads to worship (Psalm 77:11–12; Psalm 103:2). Today, let remembrance lead you to thanksgiving.

Gratitude will not erase tears, but it keeps sorrow from rewriting the whole story as darkness. When you bless the good, you honor God as Giver (James 1:17) and you honor the one you love by acknowledging the real gifts their life brought.

## Gentle Practice — A Brief "Thank-You Letter"

Write a short letter (keep or share as you wish). Use the prompts to keep it concrete:

1. **Address:** "Dear \_\_\_\_\_,"
2. **Name three gifts:**
  - "Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_."
  - "Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_."
  - "Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_."
1. **Trace God's grace:** "Through you, I saw God's \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., kindness, perseverance, faith)."
2. **One memory:** "I remember when \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm grateful because \_\_\_\_\_."
3. **Blessing:** "I bless God for your life and the good He gave me through you."
4. **Amen:** "With gratitude before God, \_\_\_\_\_."

If sharing is too tender, place the letter in your Bible at Philippians 1 and pray over it.

# DAY 19 – WHEN ANNIVERSARIES HURT

Scripture: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven... a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance." — Ecclesiastes 3:1–4

## Devotional Thought

Anniversaries can arrive like weather: circled on the calendar or suddenly in the air—an aroma, a song, a route you used to take. Your body remembers before your mind does. Dread often accompanies these days, as if you must brace yourself for a storm. Scripture gives you a wiser way: receive these dates as sacred observances—set-apart times to mourn honestly, remember faithfully, and meet God deliberately.

Ecclesiastes teaches that God authors seasons. Mourning has its rightful time; so does laughter. The goal is not to cancel the hard day but to consecrate it. When you mark an anniversary with prayer, Psalm, and a simple ritual, you are choosing worship over avoidance and companionship with God over isolation. This transforms the day from something happening to you into something you enter with the Lord—the One who numbers your days (Psalm 139:16), holds your tears (Psalm 56:8), and keeps company with your grief (John 11:35).

Remember: sacred observance does not demand performance. It welcomes presence—God's, and perhaps a trusted friend's. It leaves room for both tears and gratitude, for quiet and testimony. Over time, such rituals can turn jagged anniversaries into altars of remembrance (Joshua 4:1–7), where pain is honored and hope is quietly renewed.

## Reflection

- Which dates need special care this year? (death date, birthdays, holidays, diagnosis day, wedding anniversary, favorite-season markers)
- What one feeling do I anticipate on that day—fear, sadness, loneliness—and how might I invite God into it ahead of time?
- What simple practice would help me tell the truth and receive comfort (psalm, candle, letter, small act of service)?
- Who might stand with me—one companion to pray, listen, or sit quietly?

## Gentle Practice — Plan a Simple Ritual

Choose one or two elements to shape the day. Keep it small, sincere, and repeatable.

### Before the day (today or this week):

1. **Select a Psalm:**
  - Lament: Psalms 13, 23, 42, 46, 77
  - Hope: Psalms 27, 34, 121, 130
2. **Choose one symbol:** a candle, a flower, a photo, or a verse card (e.g., Lamentations 3:22–24).
3. **Decide one act of love:**
  - Give a gift in their honor (donation, meal to someone in need; Proverbs 19:17).
  - Share a story with a trusted friend or family member (Psalm 145:4–7).
  - Visit a place that holds a kind memory, if helpful—and safe.

## On the day: a 10–20 minute liturgy

1. **Light the candle** (or place the symbol). Whisper: "The Lord is my light" (Psalm 27:1).
2. **Read your Psalm** slowly. Pause after phrases that meet you.
3. **Name the day to God:** "Father, today I remember \_\_\_\_\_. It hurts here: \_\_\_\_\_. Thank You for this gift: \_\_\_\_\_."
4. **Pray the blessing:** "Into Your hands I entrust this day and this love." (cf. Psalm 31:5)
5. **Close with hope:** Read Revelation 21:3–5 or 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; extinguish the candle as a sign of entrusting the ache to God.

# DAY 20 – REBUILDING DAILY RHYTHMS

Scripture: "Then I said to them, 'You see the trouble we are in... Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem...' And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good... And they said, 'Let us rise up and build.' So they strengthened their hands for the good work." — Nehemiah 2:17–20

## Devotional Thought

After a season of loss, even the basics—sleep, meals, prayer, movement, fellowship—can feel scattered. Nehemiah's story offers a gentle pattern for rebuilding: not in a day, but day by day. He surveyed the ruins, named the reality, gathered helpers, and began to set small bricks in place—with God's good hand upon them (Nehemiah 2:18). There was resistance (Sanballat and Tobiah mocked), but the people "had a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6), and they kept setting stones until, in due time, "the wall was finished" (Nehemiah 6:15).

Spiritual and personal rhythms are built the same way: little and often. One psalm prayed. One short walk. One meal eaten slowly. One call to a trusted friend. One Lord's Day gathered with the church (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24–25). These are not grand gestures; they are faithful bricks. Over weeks and months, they form a wall of grace that protects and steadies your life.

Remember, you do not build alone. "The joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). God's hand is upon you for good (Nehemiah 2:18), His mercies are new this morning (Lamentations 3:22–24), and the favor of the Lord can establish the work of your hands (Psalm 90:17). Your role is to choose the next right rhythm; His role is to supply power (Philippians 2:13; John 15:5).

## Gentle Practice — Choose Two Habits and Schedule Them

Pick one REST habit and one CONNECTION habit. Keep them simple, short, and specific. Then place them on your calendar.

# Examples of Daily Rhythms

Rest (choose one)	Connection (choose one)
10-minute morning psalm (read Psalm 23/121 aloud)	5-minute daily check-in text/call to one trusted person
15-minute evening wind-down (dim lights, one prayer, device off)	Commit to Sunday worship + linger 10 minutes to speak with someone
10-minute gentle walk after lunch, praying one verse	Midweek small group / prayer meeting
"Two glasses of water + one nutritious snack" ritual	Share one story or memory each week with family/friend


Make it concrete:

- "At 7:15 a.m. each weekday, I will read one psalm with tea."
- "At 6:30 p.m. Mon/Wed/Fri, I will walk to the corner and back, saying Psalm 23."
- "Every Sunday, I will attend worship and greet one person with intention."
- "Each Tuesday 8:00 p.m., I will call \_\_ for a 10-minute check-in."

Tip: Pair a new rhythm with something you already do (brush teeth → pray the Lord's Prayer; boil water for tea → read five verses). Keep each habit under 15 minutes at first.

## A Simple One-Week Plan

- Mon–Fri (Morning): Psalm + 2-minute quiet (7:15 a.m.)
- Mon/Wed/Fri (Evening): 10-minute walk + breath prayer (6:30 p.m.)
- Tue (Night): 10-minute call/text to \_\_ (8:00 p.m.)
- Sun: Worship + greet one person by name; share one memory as thanksgiving.

Put a small  each time you complete a rhythm. When you miss, begin again next time—no scolding, just the next brick (Galatians 6:9).

## Guardrails for Sustainable Rebuilding

- **Start tiny.** Better a 5-minute psalm you keep than a 45-minute plan you abandon.
- **Link to times/places.** Same chair, same hour anchors the habit.
- **Expect resistance.** Name discouragement (Nehemiah 4:1–3) and answer it with prayer and practical steps (Nehemiah 4:9).
- **Invite help.** "Let us rise up and build" (Nehemiah 2:18). Ask one person to encourage you.
- **Celebrate small wins.** Each checkmark is a stone set with God.

# DAY 21 – REST DAY

Scripture: "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." — Isaiah 40:28–31

## Devotional Thought

Rest day is for remembering who God is: everlasting, untiring, all-wise. You are not asked to be strong today; you are invited to receive strength. Notice the order in Isaiah 40: the promise ends not with flying or running, but with walking. Most days in the Christian life are "walking days"—steady, unglamorous faithfulness. Today's worship is unhurried: wait, breathe, and let God's strength quietly return.

Question to hold: Where am I trying to fly, when God is simply asking me to walk with Him today?

## Unhurried Worship: A Simple Rest Liturgy (10–15 minutes)

1. **Call to Worship** (whispered):  
"The LORD is the everlasting God... He gives power to the faint" (Isaiah 40:28–29).
2. **Slow Reading** (lectio): Read Isaiah 40:28–31 twice. On the second reading, emphasize a verb that meets you: wait, renew, mount, run, walk.
3. **Breath Prayer** (3–4 minutes):
  - Inhale: "I wait for You, Lord."
  - Exhale: "Renew my strength."
1. **Short Prayer of Yielding**:  
"Everlasting God, I lay down hurry and self-reliance. Teach me to wait, to walk, and to receive."
2. **Two Minutes of Quiet**: Simply sit, aware that He does not grow weary—and He is here.

## Reflection

- What part of me is most tired—body, mind, or soul?
- Which word in Isaiah 40:31 do I need today—wait, renew, walk?
- What small sign of God's sustaining care have I noticed this week?

## Gentle Practices for the Day

- **Unhurried worship**: Sing or play one hymn from start to finish (no multitasking).
- **Scripture on the hour**: Choose one line—"They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength"—and speak it aloud at the top of each hour for three hours.
- **A slow walk**: 10–15 minutes. With each series of steps say: "Wait... Renew... Walk."
- **Hands-open rest**: Sit with open palms for two minutes, offering your fatigue to the Lord (1 Peter 5:7).
- **Early night**: Honor your body with rest; receive sleep as a gift (Psalm 4:8).

# WEEK 4 — WALKING FORWARD WITH HOPE

**Goal: Receive courage to live faithfully, honor the past, and carry love forward.**

In this final week, we turn our faces toward the future while honoring what lies behind. We discover that grief does not end, but it changes—becoming part of our story rather than consuming our entire story.

Through practices of courage, community, meaning-making, and hope, we learn how to carry love forward. We find that the God who has been with us in the valley continues to walk beside us as we emerge into new landscapes of life.

As we conclude this 30-day journey, we remember that healing is not a destination but a pilgrimage—one that continues with the faithful companionship of our Shepherd, who promises, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

# DAY 22 – GOD WITH US, STILL

Scripture: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." — Hebrews 13:5

## Devotional Thought

Loss can make rooms feel larger and nights feel longer. You reach for a hand that isn't there, and the quiet seems to echo. Into that quiet, God speaks a promise that does not expire: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." This is not a sentiment; it is a covenant word, echoed through Scripture across generations (Deuteronomy 31:6, 8; Joshua 1:5). In Christ, it becomes your present-tense reality: "I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

Notice the weight of the promise:

- **Never** — no exception clause for hard weeks or heavy anniversaries.
- **Leave** — God does not step out when sorrow steps in.
- **Forsake** — He does not abandon you to figure it out alone.

God's presence does not remove loneliness instantly, but it re-frames it. Your loneliness is real, but it is not ultimate. The Lord who knit you together (Psalm 139:13) also hems you in—behind and before (Psalm 139:5). He is the One who says, "Fear not, for I am with you... I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10) When others can only sit near, He can abide within (John 14:16–18). When words fail, His Spirit intercedes (Romans 8:26–27).

Today's hope is simple and strong: the God who kept company with you then keeps company with you now. "God with us" (Emmanuel) was not only a manger truth; it is a life truth—God with you, still.

## Reflection

- Where do I most need to remember, "I will never leave you"—at the table, in the night, in decisions, in church, at work?
- What would it sound like to address God in the second person today: "You are with me here..." (compare Psalm 23:4)?
- If His presence is permanent, what fear can I name and place in His hand (Isaiah 41:10)?

## Gentle Practice — Keep the Promise in View

- Place Hebrews 13:5 where you will see it often—phone lock screen, mirror, fridge, inside your Bible.
- Each time you notice it, pause and whisper: "You are with me here."
- Consider pairing it with Psalm 139:7–10 on a second card to remind you that no place—high or low, day or night—is outside His reach.

Optional breath prayer (2 minutes):

- Inhale: "You are with me."
- Exhale: "I will not fear." (Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 41:10)

# DAY 23 – COURAGE FOR THE NEXT STEP

Scripture: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." — Joshua 1:9

## Devotional Thought

Biblical courage is not bravado; it is obedience with God's presence. When Joshua heard this command, he was stepping into leadership after Moses, facing unknown territory and real enemies. God did not hand him a full blueprint—He gave him a next step and a promise: "I am with you." (Joshua 1:5; Matthew 28:20)

Courage, in grief, rarely looks loud. It looks like quietly doing the next right thing: making a phone call, keeping a doctor's appointment, returning to church, opening your Bible, going for a walk, asking for help. The command "Be strong and courageous" sits beside the assurance "the LORD your God is with you." Strength is not self-generated; it is received from the One who walks beside you (Isaiah 41:10; Psalm 23:4).

Note the trio in Joshua 1:


- **Command:** "Be strong and courageous."
- **Prohibition:** "Do not be frightened or dismayed."
- **Promise:** "For the LORD your God is with you."

Your feelings may still tremble, but your feet can still move. Courage is faith in motion—one step, taken with God.

## Gentle Practice — Do the Next Right Thing (with Support)

1. **Name it** (write one line):

"My next right thing this week is: \_\_\_\_\_."

1. **Make it tiny and time-bound:** Attach a day and time (e.g., "Wednesday 10:00 a.m. call," "Tomorrow 7:15 a.m. Psalm 27 aloud," "Friday 6:30 p.m. 10-minute walk").
2. **Tell a friend:** Share your step with one supportive person and ask, "Would you check in with me after I do it?" (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10; Galatians 6:2)
3. **Do it with God:** Before you begin, whisper Joshua 1:9. After you finish, say, "Thank You, Lord; You were with me."
4. **Mark it as grace:** Put a  in your journal under "Courage Steps."

# DAY 24 – COMMUNITY AND CHURCH

Scripture:

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... And all who believed were together and had all things in common... praising God and having favor with all the people." — Acts 2:42–47

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." — Galatians 6:2

## Devotional Thought

Grief narrows our world; the church widens it again. From the very beginning, Christians did not heal in isolation. They devoted themselves—to Scripture, fellowship, the Table, and prayer (Acts 2:42). Notice the verbs of togetherness: devoted, shared, broke bread, prayed, gave, received. This is not sentimental community; it is covenant care.

Paul's command is simple and strong: "Bear one another's burdens." (Galatians 6:2) Your burden may feel uniquely heavy, but you were never meant to carry it alone. Some days you will need to be carried—by someone's faith when yours feels small (Mark 2:3–5), by a meal when cooking is too much, by a prayer when words won't come. Other days, you will shoulder a small corner of another's load and discover that shared sorrow is softened and shared hope is strengthened.

Community does not remove absence, but it interrupts aloneness. It gives you a place to weep, a table to sit at, a psalm to sing with others when you cannot sing alone. The family of God becomes a living reminder that Emmanuel—God with us—often arrives through us.



## Reflection

- Who are my people in this season? (Name a pastor, small group, friend, neighbor, family member.)
- What kind of support would actually help this week—prayer, a visit, a ride, sitting together in church, help with an errand?
- Where have I withdrawn out of weariness or fear—and what small step back toward fellowship could I take?

## Gentle Practice — One Reach-Out Today

Choose one of the following (keep it simple and concrete).

- **Pastor/Shepherd:** Send a brief message: "Could we pray for 10 minutes this week?"
- **Small Group:** Text: "I'm walking through a heavy week. Could I sit with someone at church Sunday?"
- **Trusted Friend:** Call or voice note: "Would you check in on me Wednesday evening?"
- **Service/Connection:** Ask to join a low-energy church rhythm (attend prayer meeting, help set the communion table, sit in on choir practice without pressure to sing).

Put a time on your calendar. When it's done, mark a ✓ in your journal: "Burden shared."

# DAY 25 – MEANING AND CALLING AFTER LOSS

Scripture: "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." — Romans 8:28–29

## Devotional Thought

Romans 8:28 is not a slogan to tape over pain; it is a promise anchored in a Person. Paul does not say all things are good; he says God works all things together for good—and then defines that "good" in verse 29: being conformed to the image of Christ. The mystery is not that loss suddenly becomes sweet; the mercy is that nothing—not sorrow, not confusion, not the long ache—can block God's purpose to shape Christ in you (Romans 8:35–39).

In grief, meaning rarely arrives as a tidy explanation. More often, it comes as a holy formation:

- A tenderness toward other sufferers you did not have before (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).
- A patience that grows where hurry used to live (James 1:2–4).
- A deeper dependence on prayer and Scripture (Psalm 119:71).
- A clarity about what matters—and what doesn't (Philippians 1:9–11).

God is not the author of evil, yet He is masterful at weaving redemption through what evil intended (Genesis 50:20). Think of Joseph's testimony; think of Peter's restoration (John 21:15–19); think of your own small resurrections—places where something of Christ (His compassion, His endurance, His gentle strength) has begun to surface in you. This is not the end of your grief, but it is the beginning of a calling: comfort as you have been comforted, witness as you have been held, serve as you have been served (2 Corinthians 1:4; 1 Peter 4:10–11).

## Gentle Practice — Serve from Your Story (One Concrete Step)

1. Name one person who is grieving (or carrying a heavy burden).
2. Choose one small act you can do this week (pick one):
  - Write a handwritten note sharing a Scripture that helped you (Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 41:10).
  - Prepare a simple meal or send a gift card with the message, "Thinking of you."
  - Offer a specific help: "I can drive you to your appointment Tuesday at 3."
  - Sit with them at church; after the service, ask, "Would it help to pray Psalm 23 together?"
1. Put it on your calendar; tell one friend for gentle accountability (Galatians 6:2).
2. Before you act, pray: "Lord, love them through me."

# DAY 26 – LEGACY OF LOVE

Scripture:

"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and His might, and the wonders that He has done." — Psalm 78:4

"The memory of the righteous is a blessing." — Proverbs 10:7

## Devotional Thought

In Christ, love does not end; it becomes legacy. Death can interrupt conversations, routines, and plans—but it cannot erase the good that God sowed through a life. Scripture calls us to tell what God has done (Psalm 78:4) and to let the memory of the righteous become a blessing (Proverbs 10:7). That blessing grows when we name it, practice it, and pass it on.

Legacy is not only monuments and scholarships. It is the way a person's faith and character keep shaping us: the prayer they prayed, the hospitality they practiced, the Scripture they loved, the courage they showed. Think of Lois and Eunice, whose sincere faith lived in Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5). Think of leaders whose faith we are told to remember and imitate (Hebrews 13:7). Love becomes legacy when we carry their good forward—in word and deed, for the glory of God and the good of others.

No legacy is perfect. We bless the good without denying the complex. We thank God for what reflects His heart, and we ask for grace to redeem and release what did not. In this way, grief becomes a seed (John 12:24): what was planted in love bears fruit in a new season.



## Reflection

- What virtue from their life do I want to practice—faith, generosity, steadfastness, hospitality, prayer?
- What story about them reveals God's goodness and should be told to the next generation (Psalm 78:4)?
- What simple deed could carry their love forward this month—an act of service, a gift, a habit?
- Where do I need wisdom to honor their legacy honestly—blessing what reflects Christ and surrendering what does not?

## Gentle Practice — Start a Small Legacy Project

Choose one simple, sustainable project that fits this season. Keep it small and repeatable.

### 1. Story Bank (Word)

- Create a "Legacy Stories" journal page.
- Write three short scenes that reveal their character (3–5 sentences each).
- Add one Bible verse that matches each scene (e.g., hospitality → Romans 12:13).

### 1. Letter Archive (Word)

- Begin a folder (paper or digital) titled "Letters to the Next Generation."
- Write a one-page letter: "What I learned about God from \_\_\_\_."
- Optional: invite family/friends to add a letter. Read them together annually.

### 1. Habit-as-Legacy (Deed)

- Identify one practice they lived (daily prayer at dawn, visiting the sick, Sunday meal for neighbors).
- Adopt a scaled version for this season (e.g., pray one psalm each morning; visit one person monthly; host a simple soup night quarterly).

# DAY 27 – HOPE THAT DOES NOT DISAPPOINT

Scripture: "We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." — Romans 5:3–5

## Devotional Thought

Paul does not ask us to enjoy suffering; he invites us to know what God is doing inside it. In Christ, hardship is not a cul-de-sac; it is a Spirit-led pathway:

- 1. **Suffering → Endurance** (hypomonē): a God-enabled staying power. You are still standing—perhaps wobbly, but standing—because grace is holding you (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- 2. **Endurance → Character** (dokimē): tested, refined, trustworthy life. The heat does not hollow you; it tempers you (1 Peter 1:6–7).
- 3. **Character → Hope**: not vague optimism, but a confidence anchored in Christ (Hebrews 6:19), the One who conquered death.

And why does this hope not disappoint? Because it is constantly resupplied: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit." The verb is rich—poured out, like a steady stream that keeps arriving. When your jar feels empty, the Spirit keeps pouring the Father's love into you—enough for today, and then again tomorrow (Lamentations 3:22–24).

This does not trivialize your pain. It dignifies it by placing it within God's redeeming work. Your tears are real; so is His forming. Your weakness is real; so is His strength. Your future in Christ is not fragile; it is kept (1 Peter 1:3–5). That is why Christian hope—born through the press of endurance and the patience of God—will not put you to shame.



### Suffering

The real pain and loss you experience in a broken world

"In this world you will have tribulation" (John 16:33)



### Endurance

God-enabled staying power through difficulty

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13)



### Character

Refined, tested, trustworthy life

"That you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:4)



### Hope

Confidence anchored in Christ

"A hope that does not disappoint" (Romans 5:5)

# DAY 28 – ANTICIPATING THE RESURRECTION

Scripture:

"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep... And the dead in Christ will rise first... and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words." — 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people... He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away... 'Behold, I am making all things new.'" — Revelation 21:3–5

## Devotional Thought

Christian grief is honest—there are tears, empty chairs, and long nights—but it is never hopeless. Our confidence is not in the durability of our memories but in the resurrection of Jesus. Paul anchors comfort in a fact: "Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again..." (1 Thessalonians 4:14). Because Christ rose, the dead in Christ will rise; because He lives, we will always be with the Lord. The church's comfort is not sentimental—it is eschatological: the sure future God has promised and sealed by the risen Son.

Revelation 21 widens the horizon. God Himself will dwell with us. Every tear will be personally wiped away by nail-scarred hands. Death, mourning, and pain will be abolished, not merely reduced. The One seated on the throne does not say, "I am making a few things better," but, "I am making all things new." This is the future that walks backward into our present and steadies us. It does not erase grief; it reframes it with a horizon where loss is not the last word.

Early Christians comforted one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:18). We do the same. At gravesides and around kitchen tables, we speak resurrection truth in gentle tones: "This is not the end; we will be with the Lord; we will see them again in Christ; God will wipe away every tear." This is not denial; it is doctrine sung softly—and it sustains the soul.

## Gentle Practice — Read Aloud and Receive Comfort

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 aloud, slowly. Underline phrases that steady you (e.g., "we do not grieve... as others," "God will bring with Him," "we will always be with the Lord").
2. Read Revelation 21:3–5 aloud. Underline promises of presence and renewal ("He will dwell," "wipe away every tear," "death shall be no more," "making all things new").
3. After reading, speak this short refrain:

"Christ is risen. We shall rise. We will be with the Lord."

1. If you're able, share one underlined phrase with a trusted friend or family member and say: "This is what holds me today."

# DAY 29 – THANKSGIVING IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Scripture: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." — 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

## Devotional Thought

Paul does not ask us to give thanks for all circumstances, but in them. Gratitude is not denial; it is a declaration—that God is faithful here and now, in the middle of what we don't understand (Lamentations 3:22–24). Thanksgiving, practiced honestly, becomes an anchor for the heart: it names real gifts without pretending the pain is small.

Gratitude reorients us to God's character. When we say, "Thank You," we are confessing that He is still Giver (James 1:17), still Keeper (Psalm 121), still Near to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18). It turns the soul from rumination to remembrance (Psalm 103:2), from scarcity to sufficiency—"The LORD is my portion" (Lamentations 3:24).

In Scripture, thanksgiving is not mere manners; it is spiritual warfare. It pushes back against the storm of fear and the fog of despair (Philippians 4:6–7).

Gratitude does not cancel grief, but it keeps grief from editing God out of the story. Today's practice is simple and sturdy: name five present graces—small, specific, real—and offer them back to God.



## Reflection

- What can I genuinely thank God for today—not in theory, but in this hour?
- Where have I seen a small mercy: a verse, a smile, a memory that warmed, a call at the right time, strength to do one task?
- How might giving thanks shape the way I speak, rest, or decide today (Colossians 3:15–17)?

## Gentle Practice — Five Present Graces (Small, Specific, Real)

Take five minutes. Slow your breathing. Ask the Spirit to bring to mind today's gifts. Write them as one-line prayers:

1. "Thank You for \_\_\_\_."
2. "Thank You for \_\_\_\_."
3. "Thank You for \_\_\_\_."
4. "Thank You for \_\_\_\_."
5. "Thank You for \_\_\_\_."

Examples to spark noticing: warm sunlight on your face; a text that said "I'm here"; one verse that stayed with you; enough energy to walk to the gate; a meal you could taste; a hymn you could hum; a quiet hour; a tear that finally came; a moment you laughed.

Seal the practice: read your five lines aloud to the Lord. Then whisper: "Great is Your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:23)

# DAY 30 – BENEDICTION AND BLESSING

Scripture:

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace." — Numbers 6:24–26

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." — Jude 24–25

## Devotional Thought

You have walked thirty days of honest lament, steady prayer, and small obediences. Today is for blessing—for receiving again what has been true all along: you are held by a keeping God. Numbers 6 is not a wish; it is God's own name placed upon His people (Numbers 6:27). The Lord Himself commits to bless, keep, shine, be gracious, lift, and give peace. Jude's doxology answers with confidence: the God who has kept you this far is able to keep you still—to steady your steps now and to present you with great joy in the end.

Grief remains real, but it is no longer the only word. Over these weeks, God has been at work: teaching you to name sorrow, to rest, to remember, to forgive, to rebuild, to hope. Today, let the benediction become the banner over your story. Stand beneath it. Receive it. Speak it over your own life. You are not closing a project; you are continuing a pilgrimage under the blessing of a faithful Shepherd (Psalm 23:6).

## Guided Prayer — Receive and Speak the Blessing

Pray the Aaronic blessing over yourself, slowly, with your name:

"The LORD bless [your name] and keep [your name];  
the LORD make His face shine upon [your name] and be gracious to [your name];  
the LORD lift up His countenance upon [your name] and give [your name] peace."  
(Numbers 6:24–26)

Then close with Jude:

"Now to You who are able to keep me from stumbling and to present me blameless with great joy—to You be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." (Jude 24–25)

# When the Waves Hit Hard (Use Anytime)

There will be hours when grief rushes in without warning—at the sink, in the car, in the pew, waking at 3 a.m. This page is your "reach-for-it-now" guide: short, biblical, repeatable.

## 1) Breath Prayer (30–90 seconds)

- Inhale: "Lord Jesus Christ..."
- Exhale: "...have mercy on me." (Luke 18:13)

Repeat slowly 6–10 times. Let the name of Jesus steady your breath and shorten your prayer to the essential cry of faith.

Optional additions (still synced to your breath):

- "Jesus... keep me." (Jude 24)
- "Shepherd... lead me." (Psalm 23:1–4)

## 2) One-Verse Anchors (say aloud; carry on a card)

Choose one for the moment. Speak it three times, slower each time.

- Psalm 46:1 — "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."
- Isaiah 41:10 — "Fear not, for I am with you... I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

## 3) Emergency Prayer (pray as-is)

"God, hold me. Say again that I'm not alone. Amen."

Follow it with one of Jesus' promises, spoken directly to Him:

- "You are with me." (Psalm 23:4)
- "You will never leave me." (Hebrews 13:5)
- "You give me peace." (John 14:27)

## 4) Three-Step Grounding (3 minutes)

When the body feels flooded, let your senses anchor you while you stay with God.

1. Name 3 things you see. Whisper, "You made them, Lord." (Genesis 1)
2. Touch 2 things (chair, ring, Bible). "You uphold me." (Isaiah 41:10)
3. Take 1 slow sip of water or place a hand over your heart. "You hold me." (Psalm 139:10)

## 5) Scripture-in-the-Body (2 minutes)

- Hand on chest: "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted." (Psalm 34:18)
- Open palms: "I cast my cares on You." (1 Peter 5:7)
- Stand (if able): "I will not be shaken, for You are at my right hand." (Psalm 16:8)

# More Emergency Practices

## 6) Call-and-Answer (for when words are few)

Leader (you): "When I pass through the waters..."

Response (you): "You are with me." (Isaiah 43:2)

Leader: "Even though I walk through the valley..."

Response: "You are with me." (Psalm 23:4)

Leader: "Peace I leave with you..."

Response: "You give me peace." (John 14:27)

## 7) Two-Minute Prayer Walk (indoors or out)

- Steps 1–10: "The Lord is my Shepherd." (Psalm 23:1)
- Steps 11–20: "I will not fear; You are with me." (Psalm 23:4)
- Steps 21–30: "Into Your hands I commit this hour." (Psalm 31:5)

If you cannot walk, trace these lines with your finger across a page or along your Bible's edge.

## 8) Reach Out (one person, one sentence)

Text or say: "Wave is heavy—please pray Psalm 23 over me." (Galatians 6:2; James 5:16)

You are not weak for asking; you are biblical.

## 9) If Night Anxiety Returns

- Read Psalm 4 or Psalm 63:6–8 quietly.
- Place your "one-verse anchor" by your pillow.
- Whisper: "Under Your wings I sing through the night." (Psalm 63:7)

## 10) After the Wave Subsides (60 seconds of review)

Note one line in your journal (or phone): "In the wave, God helped me by \_\_\_\_\_. " (Psalm 77:11–12)

Small testimonies train the heart for the next surge.

### Keep Handy (prep once; use often)

- A small card with today's four anchor verses.
- A printed copy of this page tucked in your Bible.
- One name to call when you can't pray (pastor/friend).

Pastoral Encouragement: Surges will come and go. None of them outlasts the Lord's presence. You are not required to feel brave; you are invited to stay connected—to Christ's name, Christ's Word, Christ's people. These simple practices are not magic; they are old paths for weary saints, and they work because He keeps company with you.

# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY AFTER DAY 30

You've walked a faithful thirty days. Healing now shifts from a "program" to a pilgrim way—steady, ordinary, led by the Shepherd. Here's a gentle rule of life to keep you moving with hope.

## 1) Stay Rooted in Church

Word, Prayer, Sacrament, Fellowship (Acts 2:42)

- **Word:** Keep one anchor passage for the month (e.g., Psalm 121; Isaiah 41:10). Read it aloud each morning.
- **Prayer:** Join the prayers of the church—Sunday worship, midweek prayer, a small group. When words are thin, borrow the Psalms (Psalm 61; Psalm 62; Psalm 130).
- **Sacrament:** Receive Communion regularly as "food for the journey" (Luke 24:30–32; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26).
- **Fellowship:** Sit with the saints; share a pew and a potluck (Romans 12:9–15; Galatians 6:2).

Small weekly rhythm (example):

- Sun: Worship + linger 10 minutes in conversation.
- Wed: Prayer meeting (or 10 minutes of home prayer using a psalm).
- Fri: Short check-in with a trusted friend or pastor.

## 2) Periodic Check-Ins

Mark significant dates with psalms and prayer.

- Create a "Sacred Dates" list (death date, birthdays, holidays, medical anniversaries). Two weeks beforehand, decide a simple observance:
  1. Psalm: choose one (13, 23, 27, 42, 46, 121).
  2. Practice: light a candle; write a paragraph of remembrance; give a small gift in their honor (Joshua 4:1–7; Ecclesiastes 3:1–4).
  3. Prayer: "Lord of times and seasons, meet me on this day."
- Quarterly review (15 minutes): "Where did God meet me? What still aches? What will help me next quarter?" (Psalm 77:11–12; Lamentations 3:21–24)

# More Continuing Practices

## 3) Companion in the Way

Seek steady guidance; many counselors bring safety (Proverbs 11:14)

- **Christian counselor / spiritual director:** A trained companion helps you untangle guilt vs. grief, set wise boundaries, and rebuild rhythms (Psalm 32:8; 2 Corinthians 1:3–4).
- **Grief support group:** Shared stories lessen isolation and strengthen hope (Romans 12:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- **Pastoral care:** Ask a pastor/elder to pray the Aaronic blessing over you periodically (Numbers 6:24–26).

How to begin: Write a brief aim—"In this season I need help with \_\_\_\_." Bring one Scripture you lean on and one question you carry.

## 4) Serve from Your Story

Comfort with the comfort you've received (2 Corinthians 1:4)

- **Start small and specific:** a handwritten note, a meal, a ride, sitting with someone at church, a brief prayer over the phone (Micah 6:8; Acts 20:35).
- **Name the grace, not the details:** "This verse helped me when I was low—may it steady you today" (Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 41:10).
- **Set a pace you can keep:** once a month is faithful.
- **Guard your heart:** serving isn't self-erasure. Keep Sabbath and boundaries (Mark 6:31; Proverbs 4:23).

## A Simple "Rule of Life" You Can Carry Forward

- **Daily (10–15 min):** One psalm + one honest prayer + one small task (Lamentations 3:22–24).
- **Weekly:** Sunday worship; one walk with a breath prayer (Psalm 23); one conversation.
- **Monthly:** Communion; review your "Mercies Log"; write one letter or note of comfort.
- **Quarterly:** Sacred Dates observance; meet with counselor or pastor; refresh your anchor verse.

# When the Waves Rise Again

- Return to your refrains: "You are with me" (Psalm 23:4); "Hope in God" (Psalm 42:5); "Do not fear, I am with you" (Isaiah 41:10).
- Pray short: "Lord, have mercy." "Jesus, keep me." "Spirit, help me." (Luke 18:13; Romans 8:26–27)
- Ask for help early: Text your three people; let the church be the church (Galatians 6:2).
- Repeat a day: It's okay to revisit any day from the 30—healing is not linear.

## A Closing Blessing for the Road

"The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore." — Psalm 121:8

"Now to Him who is able to keep you..." — Jude 24–25

Walk on—rooted in the church, checked-in with your own heart, companioned by wise guides, and slowly turning your story into service. The Shepherd who has led you thus far will lead you still (Psalm 23:1–6).

# Selected Scriptures for Comfort and Study

## Psalms of Comfort

- Psalm 23 - The Lord is my shepherd
- Psalm 27 - The Lord is my light and my salvation
- Psalm 34 - I will bless the Lord at all times
- Psalm 46 - God is our refuge and strength
- Psalm 91 - He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High

## Prophetic Comfort

- Isaiah 40 - Comfort, comfort my people
- Isaiah 43 - Fear not, for I have redeemed you
- Isaiah 53 - The suffering servant
- Lamentations 3:21-26 - The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases

## Gospel Hope

- Matthew 5:4 - Blessed are those who mourn
- John 11 - Jesus weeps and raises Lazarus
- John 14 - Let not your hearts be troubled

## Epistles of Hope

- Romans 5, 8 - Suffering produces hope; nothing can separate us
- 1 Corinthians 15 - The resurrection chapter
- 2 Corinthians 1, 4-5 - God of all comfort; light momentary affliction
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - We do not grieve as those who have no hope
- Revelation 21-22 - New heavens and new earth; no more tears

# A Word from Me

Dear Friend,

If you have walked through these 30 days, you have done something brave. You have dared to face the ache, to tell the truth before God, and to keep breathing when it might have felt easier to close off your heart. I want you to know—your grief is not wasted. It is noticed. It is held. And it is honored by the One who created you and the one you loved.

I have not written these pages as someone with all the answers, but as a fellow traveler who has seen both the shadows and the sunrise. I believe with all my heart that the God who weeps with us (John 11:35) is the same God who will one day wipe away every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:4). Until that day, we live between the "already" of His comfort and the "not yet" of His complete restoration.

My prayer for you is simple: that you will keep bringing your whole heart to Him—your tears, your anger, your silence, your gratitude—because He can carry it all. And as you do, may you find that His presence is not only near in the pain, but also able to lead you gently into the hope and purpose still ahead.

Hold on to His promise: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). That is the anchor you can keep in every season.

With love, hope, and prayers,

JAMES KOFI ABBREY

(Counsellor / Pastor / Friend)

# Additional Recommended Readings (Christian Grief & Hope)

Below are brief, pastoral guides to four trusted books—what each offers, who it may help most, and a gentle way to read them alongside Scripture.

## **C. S. Lewis — A Grief Observed (1961)**

**What it is:** Lewis's raw journal after the death of his wife, Joy. Honest, unvarnished wrestling with God, love, and pain.

**You'll find:** Permission to name doubt, anger, and the feeling of God's "silence," yet a slow return to trust.

**Best for:** Early- to mid-grief readers who need honesty more than tidy answers.

**How to read:** Small portions. Pause often. Let a psalm answer back (e.g., Psalms 13, 42, 62).

**Pair with Scripture:** Psalm 34:18; Psalm 13; Job 38–42; John 11:35.

**A question to carry:** Where do Lewis's candid pages give me language I've been afraid to pray?

## **Jerry Sittser — A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss (1996; rev. ed. later)**

**What it is:** A professor-pastor's reflections after losing his wife, daughter, and mother in one accident. Deep, accessible wisdom on transformation through sorrow.

**You'll find:** The difference between bitterness and brokenness, how "the soul expands" through loss, and practical ways to live faithfully within a changed life.

**Best for:** Readers ready to ask, "How do I live now?" and to cultivate healthy rhythms.

**How to read:** One chapter per week; journal one practice for the coming days (Sabbath, simple service, lament prayer).

**Pair with Scripture:** Lamentations 3:22–24; Romans 8:28–29; James 1:2–4; Psalm 121.

**A question to carry:** What small grace is God using to grow my soul in this season?

# More Recommended Readings

## Nicholas Wolterstorff — Lament for a Son (1987)

**What it is:** A philosopher-theologian's lyrical laments after the death of his son. Short, piercing entries that mingle love, protest, and hope.

**You'll find:** A theology of tears, justice, and the God who suffers with us; elegant meditations that can be read in minutes but linger for days.

**Best for:** Those who appreciate poetic prose, or who need a companion for deep, quiet lament.

**How to read:** One or two entries at a time; then pray a psalm of lament (Psalms 6, 22, 77).

**Pair with Scripture:** Psalm 56:8; Isaiah 53:3; Revelation 21:3–5; 2 Corinthians 1:3–4.

**A question to carry:** What truth about God does my grief uncover rather than hide?

## Timothy Keller — Walking with God through Pain and Suffering (2013)

**What it is:** A pastoral-apologetic overview—why suffering exists, how the gospel uniquely meets sufferers, and practices for walking with God in the dark.

**You'll find:** Clear biblical framing, voices from church history, and practical disciplines (prayer, community, hope).

**Best for:** Readers who want both a thoughtful theological map and concrete steps.

**How to read:** Read Part 2 (how to face suffering) devotionally; discuss with a friend or small group.

**Pair with Scripture:** 1 Peter 1:3–9; Romans 5:3–5; Psalm 23; John 16:33.

**A question to carry:** Which practice—prayer, church, serving—will help me "walk with God" this week?

## How to Use These Books Well

- Read slowly, prayerfully. Pair a chapter or short section with a psalm and a brief prayer.
- Write in the margins. Note one sentence that names your experience and one Scripture that steadies you.
- Discuss with a companion. A friend, pastor, or group can help translate insights into practice (Proverbs 11:14).
- Remember seasons. Some pages fit early grief; others fit later. It's okay to set a book down and return when you're ready.

# A Simple Reading Plan (4–8 weeks)

- **Week 1–2:** A Grief Observed — 10–15 pages per sitting + Psalm 13/42.
- **Week 3–4:** A Grace Disguised — one chapter weekly + Lamentations 3:22–24.
- **Week 5–6:** Lament for a Son — two entries per day + Psalm 56:8.
- **Week 7–8:** Keller — select chapters from Part 2 + Romans 5:3–5



## Journal Prompts While Reading

1. What one line from today's reading speaks most directly to where I am?
2. How does this author's experience connect with or differ from mine?
3. What Scripture mentioned in the book do I want to explore further?
4. What small practice might I try this week based on what I've read?
5. Where do I see God's presence in this author's journey—and in mine?

Remember: These books are companions, not prescriptions. Take what helps; leave what doesn't. Let Scripture be your primary guide, and these voices secondary witnesses to God's faithfulness in the valley.

# 30 QUOTES – ONE FOR EACH DAY

## Week 1: Naming the Grief

**Day 1:** Grief is not faithlessness; it's love with nowhere to go. God comes close to the brokenhearted.

**Day 2:** Jesus dignified tears. If He wept, so may you.

**Day 3:** Lament is holding pain and hope in the same hands.

**Day 4:** Pour out your heart; God can hold what you cannot.

**Day 5:** God not only leads by still waters—He walks with you through the valley.

**Day 6:** Faith can ask hard questions; God welcomes your "How long?"

**Day 7:** Rest is an act of trust—lay down the weight and let Him carry you.

## Week 2: Sitting with God in the Valley

**Day 8:** Even numbness is a place God can enter.

**Day 9:** Anger in grief is love defending what was precious—bring it to the Cross.

**Day 10:** God forgives true sin and lifts the burden of false guilt.

**Day 11:** God counts your tears and knows the story behind the empty chair.

**Day 12:** When sleep won't come, let the night watch become a prayer watch.

**Day 13:** God's mercies often look like strength for just one more step.

**Day 14:** Quiet your soul before God like a child resting in a mother's arms.

# More Daily Quotes

## **Week 3: Remembrance, Release, and Renewal**

**Day 15:** Remembering God's help builds a memorial in your heart.

**Day 16:** Telling your story can knit your heart to others in grace.

**Day 17:** Forgiveness does not erase grief; it releases your heart to heal.

**Day 18:** Gratitude doesn't deny pain—it dignifies love.

**Day 19:** Marking hard dates with prayer turns dread into sacred observance.

**Day 20:** Small daily rhythms are the bricks of a rebuilt life.

**Day 21:** Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength.

## **Week 4: Walking Forward with Hope**

**Day 22:** God's presence is permanent; your loneliness is not ultimate.

**Day 23:** Courage is not noise—it's doing the next right thing.

**Day 24:** We were never meant to carry grief alone.

**Day 25:** Loss can awaken a compassion that becomes your calling.

**Day 26:** Love does not end; it becomes legacy.

**Day 27:** Hope that is born in suffering will never disappoint.

**Day 28:** Christian grief is honest but never hopeless.

**Day 29:** Thanksgiving in grief is declaring that God is faithful—still.

**Day 30:** You are held by the keeping God who can make you stand.

# Grief Journal Template

Use these simple templates to structure your grief journal. Feel free to adapt them to your own needs and preferences.

## Daily Check-In

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Today I feel: \_\_\_\_\_ (one word or phrase)

Scripture that met me: \_\_\_\_\_

One honest prayer:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Small mercy I noticed: \_\_\_\_\_

One step I took today: \_\_\_\_\_

## Weekly Reflection

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

Hardest moment: \_\_\_\_\_

Unexpected grace: \_\_\_\_\_

Where I sensed God's presence:

\_\_\_\_\_

Question I'm holding: \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture that sustained me: \_\_\_\_\_

One hope for next week: \_\_\_\_\_

## Memory Keeper

A story I want to remember:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What this memory reveals about them:

\_\_\_\_\_

How I saw God's goodness in this:

\_\_\_\_\_

Why I want to keep this memory:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Lament Prayer

My honest question or pain:

\_\_\_\_\_

What I'm asking God for:

\_\_\_\_\_

What I choose to trust, even now:

\_\_\_\_\_

Scripture to hold onto:

\_\_\_\_\_

# Prayers for Difficult Moments

## When Grief Feels Overwhelming

Lord Jesus, I am drowning in this wave of grief. You who calmed the storm, speak peace to my heart. When I cannot swim, be my lifeguard. When I cannot stand, be my rock. When I cannot speak, interpret my groans. I trust that You are holding me even when I cannot feel Your hands. Remind me that this wave will not last forever, and that You are with me in the depths. Amen.

## For Sleepless Nights

Father of comfort, as night stretches long and sleep stays far, I turn these hours into a sanctuary with You. Guard my thoughts from anxious spiraling. Quiet the noise in my mind. Wrap me in the knowledge of Your watchful care. Whether I sleep or wake, I am Yours. Use even this restlessness to draw me closer to Your heart. Under Your wings I find refuge until morning comes. Amen.

## When Anger Burns

Righteous God, You see the anger that burns within me. I bring it honestly before You—not hiding it, not letting it consume me. Take this heat and transform it into something that heals rather than harms. Show me what to do with these feelings. Where I have sinned in my anger, forgive me. Where my anger points to injustice, guide me toward right action. I entrust all judgment to You, the perfect Judge. Amen.

## For Anniversary Days

Lord of all seasons, today marks another circle around the sun without them. Meet me in this tender space. Help me to honor what was without being trapped by what is no more. Give me courage to feel what comes, wisdom to share what helps, and gentle boundaries for what I need. Let memory become blessing, and sorrow become a doorway to Your comfort. Hold me especially close today. Amen.

# More Prayers for the Journey

## When Numbness Persists

Gentle Shepherd, I come to You feeling nothing when I wish to feel something. This numbness is not peace—it is absence. You who breathed life into dust, breathe feeling back into my heart, but at a pace I can bear. Sit with me in this frozen place. Warm what has gone cold. I trust that beneath this ice, living waters still flow. In Your time, thaw me with Your patient love. Amen.

## For Courage to Rebuild

Master Builder, I stand amid what feels like ruins, unsure how to begin again. Give me courage to set one stone upon another—one small rhythm, one faithful practice, one moment of connection. Establish the work of my hands. When I grow weary, remind me that You are building with me and through me. What feels broken can become beautiful in Your hands. I trust Your blueprint for my healing. Amen.

## When Others Don't Understand

All-knowing Father, You see the gap between my experience and others' understanding. When words fail and isolation grows, remind me that You comprehend every unspoken ache. Guard my heart from bitterness. Give me grace for those who cannot grasp this path, and gratitude for those who try. Lead me to companions who can sit with me in truth. Above all, thank You that I am fully known and fully loved by You. Amen.

## For Hope When Darkness Lingers

God of all comfort, when darkness lingers longer than I expected, be my unwavering light. Anchor my hope not in circumstances or feelings, but in Your unchanging character. Remind me that this valley is a path, not a permanent address. Give me eyes to see small mercies, a heart to receive daily bread, and faith to believe that dawn will come. Until then, teach me to sing in the shadows, trusting Your presence more than my perception. Amen.

# Scripture Cards for Comfort

Print or copy these verses onto small cards to carry with you, place around your home, or share with others who are grieving.

## God's Presence in Pain

"The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

— Psalm 34:18

## Strength for Today

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

— Isaiah 41:10

## Shepherd's Care

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

— Psalm 23:4

## New Mercies

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

— Lamentations 3:22-23

## Tears Honored

"You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?"

— Psalm 56:8

## Peace Promised

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

— John 14:27

## Hope Assured

"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope."

— 1 Thessalonians 4:13

## Future Promise

"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

— Revelation 21:4

# Helping Someone Who Is Grieving

If you're supporting someone through grief, here are practical ways to show love and care.

## What Helps

- **Be present** without trying to fix. Sit in silence if needed.
- **Listen** to the same stories repeatedly. Each telling is part of healing.
- **Speak their loved one's name.** Mention specific memories.
- **Offer specific help:** "I'm bringing dinner Thursday" rather than "Call if you need anything."
- **Mark dates** on your calendar (death anniversary, birthdays) and reach out.
- **Give permission** for all emotions—tears, anger, laughter, numbness.
- **Pray with and for them**, using Scripture when appropriate.
- **Remember them after the first few weeks** when others have returned to normal life.

## What to Avoid

- **Comparing losses** or saying "I know how you feel" unless you truly do.
- **Using clichés** like "They're in a better place" or "God needed another angel."
- **Setting timelines** for grief or suggesting they "move on."
- **Avoiding mention** of the deceased person out of discomfort.
- **Making their grief about your discomfort** or needing them to reassure you.
- **Theological explanations** that minimize pain or suggest blame.
- **Taking their anger personally** if it surfaces in your presence.
- **Disappearing** because you don't know what to say.

## Simple Things to Say

- "I'm so sorry. I'm here with you."
- "I remember when [name] did/said..."
- "This must be so hard. I'm listening."
- "I don't have words, but I care deeply."
- "Would it help to pray together right now?"

## Practical Support Ideas

- Regular text check-ins without requiring responses
- Gift cards for groceries, restaurants, gas
- Help with childcare, pet care, yard work
- Rides to appointments or church
- Remembrance gifts on significant dates

# Creating Remembrance Rituals

Meaningful rituals can help honor your loved one and process grief in healthy ways. Here are some ideas to consider.

## Annual Remembrances

- **Memory Meal:** Prepare their favorite food and invite close friends/family to share stories.
- **Light a Candle:** On birthdays or anniversaries, light a special candle and read a meaningful Scripture or poem.
- **Plant Something:** Add a new plant to your garden each year that will bloom around a significant date.
- **Legacy Gift:** Make an annual donation to a cause they cared about.

## Ongoing Practices

- **Memory Box:** Collect items that remind you of them—photos, letters, small mementos.
- **Journal Conversations:** Write letters to your loved one about your life now.
- **Prayer Corner:** Create a small space with a photo, Scripture, and candle for regular reflection.
- **Story Collection:** Ask friends and family to write down memories you might not know.

## Including Others

- **Share Their Wisdom:** Pass on things they taught you to others.
- **Invite Stories:** "Tell me something about [name] I might not know."
- **Continue Traditions:** Maintain meaningful family customs they valued.
- **Create New Traditions:** Honor their memory while acknowledging life continues to unfold.

Remember: Rituals should bring comfort, not obligation. Adapt or change them as your grief journey evolves.

# Finding Professional Support

While this devotional provides spiritual guidance, sometimes additional professional support is needed. Here's how to find help when grief becomes overwhelming.

## When to Consider Professional Help

- Persistent thoughts of not wanting to live
- Inability to function in daily responsibilities for an extended period
- Significant changes in sleep, appetite, or self-care
- Turning to substances to numb the pain
- Intense guilt, anger, or anxiety that doesn't lessen with time
- Isolation from all supportive relationships
- Complicated grief that intensifies rather than gradually transforming

## Types of Support

- **Christian Counselors:** Trained therapists who integrate faith with evidence-based approaches
- **Grief Support Groups:** Shared experience with others walking a similar path
- **Pastoral Counseling:** Spiritual guidance from trained clergy
- **Grief Specialists:** Therapists with specific training in bereavement

## How to Find Help

- Ask your pastor for trusted referrals
- Contact Christian counseling centers in your area
- Check with your insurance provider for covered options
- Visit [GriefShare.org](https://www.griefshare.org) to find local grief groups
- Consider telehealth options if local resources are limited

## What to Ask Potential Providers

- "What is your approach to integrating faith in therapy?"
- "What experience do you have with grief counseling?"
- "How do you view the relationship between grief and faith?"
- "What might our work together look like?"

Remember: Seeking help is not a sign of weak faith—it's wise stewardship of your mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Just as you would see a doctor for physical pain, professional support for grief is a legitimate form of care.

# A Final Blessing

May the God of all comfort,  
who knows every tear you've shed and every ache you've felt,  
continue to hold you in the palm of His hand.

May you find His presence in both the silence and the storm,  
His wisdom in your questions,  
His strength in your weakness,  
and His hope in your darkest hours.

May your memories become blessings,  
your grief become a garden where new life grows,  
and your love become a legacy that continues to speak.

May the peace of Christ guard your heart and mind,  
the love of the Father sustain your soul,  
and the comfort of the Holy Spirit be your constant companion.

Remember always: you are seen, you are held, you are loved.  
And the One who began this good work in you  
will be faithful to complete it.

In the name of the Father who created you,  
the Son who redeems you,  
and the Spirit who walks with you,  
both now and forevermore.

Amen.

"The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."

— Numbers 6:24-26