



### **Week 1: Be still**

*Psalm 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God! I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted throughout the earth!"*

The world truly finds itself in a time where fear is running rampant, where hearts are uncertain, where people are questioning God, where there is a desperate need for hope, faith, and love.

I felt led to write a devotion a day during our nation's lockdown – I truly pray that this series of 10 will be a blessing to you as we journey together through these days – we are NOT alone!

Psalm 46:10, has been on my heart and mind the past few days, "Be still and know that I am God! I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted throughout the earth!"



It seems so fitting in these times – especially during the lockdown where we were 'forced' to be still – removed from the business of our day-to-day lives. I am such a 'doer', so the thought of staying still and being away from people for soooooo long frightened me. But, I noticed that this is not a passive 'still' but a 'doing' still, it is a peace in knowing, trusting and having faith that God is God and has never ceased to be God – even in chaos, He is still in control. He has not given up His authority, and in the end, He will use it all for good and for His glory.

*"Be still and know that I am God..."* — is written in the context of a time of trouble and war; where fear ran rampant, where hearts were uncertain, where people questioned God, where there was a desperate need for hope, faith, and love – similar to where we find ourselves today. God's people should interpret the command to read more like: 'snap out of it,' 'wake up,' 'stop fearing'—acknowledge who your God is—be in awe of who He is! We need to have faith in who God is, and who He is during such a time as this.

*"I will be exalted among the nations..."* The Hebrew word for "nation" in this context means foreign nations or Gentiles. During this time, we need to trust and pray that nations, and even people in our own nation that do not know Christ, will come to know Him and exalt Him as Lord and King of their lives. God is shaking the nations; people are realising that they are not in control and cannot control their futures, people are faced with the reality of COVID-19 (and its widespread reach) and the possibility of death. We need to be loving towards these people and point them to Christ during this time.

*"I will be exalted throughout the earth..."* God does not simply stop at just the nations of this world – but says that He will be exalted throughout the earth. This is a time where darkness seems to be everywhere, for believers and non-believers

alike. We need to encourage our brothers, sisters and even those who do not follow Christ, with hope – we need to light the ‘fires’ in the darkness and point out that there is still hope. By the grace of God this too shall pass. We need to give the world hope during this time so that others may see Jesus and ultimately glorify HIM and exalt HIM.

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## **Week 2: Detox the world**

*Colossians 3:2 “Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.” (NLT)*

*Romans 12:2 “Don’t copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (NLT)*



As we walk through life and go through our daily routines, things sneak in and take root in our lives, hearts, and minds – even though we never invited them in or intended for it to be that way.

What an opportunity we have had, during ‘lockdown’ – and beyond – to ‘detox’ from the things of this world, break bad habits, and eliminate those things that distract us from our beloved Saviour and most precious friend.

Take some time today and ask the Lord what it is that has snuck into your life, that is not of Him, and then over the next 21 days break the habit – which ironically is the approximate

time it takes to break a bad habit.

It could be physical bad habits like eating or exercise. Maybe it is more spiritual, and sin has crept into your heart like pride, selfishness, unforgiveness, judgment, or self-reliance rather than dependence on our beautiful Father.

Listen to your Beloved today, allow Him to take you to the parts of your heart you have not journeyed to in a while. Allow Him to purify you, to change the way you think, and to transform you. Allow Him to speak and fix your mind on that “which is above” – all that is ultimately and eternally important.

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## Week 3: Be strong and courageous

Joshua heard the words “be strong and courageous” many times, it seemed to be the theme song of his life.

Moses addressed Israel in *Deuteronomy 31:6* “Be strong, courageous, and firm; fear not nor be in terror before them, for it is the Lord your God Who goes with you; He will not fail you or forsake you.”

*Deuteronomy 31:7* “And Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, ‘Be strong, courageous, and firm, for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to possess it.’”

*Deuteronomy 31:23* “And [the Lord] charged Joshua, son of Nun, ‘Be strong and courageous and firm, for you shall bring the Israelites into the land which I swore to give them, and I will be with you’.”

*Joshua 1:7* “Only you be strong and very courageous, that you may do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.”

*Joshua 1:9* “Have not I commanded you? [commanded!]. Be strong, vigorous, and very courageous. Be not afraid, neither be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” [Wherever you go - includes where you stay!]

*Joshua 1:18* “Only be strong, vigorous, and of good courage.”

*Joshua 10:25* - “Joshua said to them, Fear not nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage. For thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom you fight.”

Joshua was Moses’ assistant. After Moses died, Joshua was charged with the task of leading Israel from the wilderness into the ‘Promised Land’. However, their first obstacle was the city of Jericho, an unconquerable, walled city. Excavations reveal that it was a stone wall over three metres high and four metres wide. At its top was a smooth stone slope, angling upward at 35 degrees for 10 metres, where it joined massive stone walls that towered even higher. It was virtually impregnable.

I am sure when Joshua stood at the foot of this wall and looked up, he felt fear; he felt discouraged; he felt weak; and that was when he was reminded in his heart of all the times God had said to him, “Joshua, be strong and courageous – do not be afraid, I am with you.”

Like Joshua, over these days and months of uncertainty ahead, I don’t know how many times you will need to hear the command of God to “be strong and courageous” – here’s the first – be strong, and take heart, in the end, the walls of Jericho fell.

“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.” (Nelson Mandela)



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## Week 4: Be joyful, prayerful, and thankful

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus." (NLT)*



In these challenging and uncertain times, we have a beautiful opportunity and privilege before us to practise this scripture, to always be joyful, to never stop praying and to always give thanks, for it is the will of our Beloved.

What does Paul mean when he commands us to **'always be joyful'**? It seems like quite a strange concept, but it is important to remember that he wrote this to new believers who were suffering persecution because of their faith. This command to rejoice always must be viewed not as a matter of feeling, but rather of obedience. When we find ourselves in difficult times, or trials, or if people have mistreated us because of our faith, we have

a choice: either we can focus on our trials and lapse into self-pity or we can choose joy - knowing in Whose hands our eternity lies.

The idea of **'never stop praying'** means praying with persistence. The word "pray" is in the present tense and carries the idea of customary prayer. Continued prayer is a state of steady communion with God, it becomes a part of who you are, a daily lifestyle. Great people of God in the Bible persevered in their appointed times, and non-appointed times of prayer. They never got out of communication with the 'throne of grace'. They constantly had a sense of dependence on God.

This Scripture says that in **ALL circumstances, we are to be thankful**, this includes the good and the bad. When all is going well with us and according to our plan we seem to find it easier to be thankful to God, but when bad times strike, or when we get knocked off our feet for a while, we feel that we've somehow been abandoned by God, and struggle to count our blessings.

Take time today to see God in the little things, see Him in the fact that you woke this morning, see Him in the provision of your home, health and food, see Him in the laughter of your children and in the singing of the birds. Everything we have, and every opportunity we get to experience, is by the hand and grace of a loving Father. Take time today to journal these blessings, and to thank God for each one. Today, choose joy, thankfulness, and continuous prayer.

## Week 5: Wait patiently for the Lord

*Psalm 27:14 "Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord." (NLT)*

So many of David's Psalms in the Bible were penned during times of deep personal distress. The Holy Spirit moved David's heart to write the Psalms during these moments and to pour out His heart to a loving Father. Psalm 27 is no different.

The Hebrew word for "wait" is *qavah* and means, "to bind together." "Waiting" is a proactive stance of drawing close to God. That is why we see in Psalm 27:8 David says: *"My heart has heard you say, 'Come and talk with me.' And my heart responds, 'LORD, I am coming.'"*

When we are abiding in Christ our heart is empowered and our courage is enlarged. When we are resting in His love, our soul is strengthened by the Spirit of the Lord.



We need patient endurance as we wait for the Lord to work in the difficult circumstances of life, this encourages our faith in God to be strengthened. Faith is often tested in those long and painful seasons of life when patient endurance is called upon - as we trustingly wait for the Lord to act.

The Lord is always calling us to talk with Him, to wait upon Him, to love upon Him, to go deeper, even when things are difficult. Take some time with the Lord today and wait upon Him, pressing in and respond as David's heart did, in verse 8, when He heard God call, he said: *"Lord I am coming!"*

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## Week 6: The Tent of Meeting

*Exodus 33:11 "Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Afterwards Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting." (NLT)*

The personal relationship Moses had with God was a beautiful example to the entire nation of Israel, as we see in *Exodus 33: 9-10 "As he (Moses) went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at its entrance while the Lord spoke with Moses. When the people saw the cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, they would stand and bow down in front of their own tents."*



It was also a special example to his assistant Joshua, when Moses drew close to God it also drew Joshua close to God, so much so that Joshua remained behind in the tent of meeting. Joshua stayed in the tent because of his love of God's presence, that was modelled to him by Moses's example.

This was a significant time for Joshua, as the Lord was preparing Him to lead the nation of Israel from the wilderness into the 'Promised Land'. Joshua just needed to continue to allow God's heartbeat to saturate his very being, till his heart throbbed in perfect harmony with God's heart, desires, and plans.

The tent of meeting (God's presence/spending time with Him) is the place where God moulds us into the image of His Son. It is in HIS presence that we are changed and prepared for what is to come, and for the plans, our Father has for us. It is where He speaks deeply into our hearts, where we learn to be dependent on Him and it is the intimate place, where we get the opportunity to learn more about our Beloved.

Today, close the door, go into your 'tent of meeting', find that sacred place with your Beloved, and meet with God, face to face, as you do with friends, family members, and mentors.

Image: Pexel/Robert Forever Ago

## Week 7: Directed Steps

*Psalm 37:23-24 "The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand." (NLT)*

As we journey through life as children of God, our Father sets out the path we should follow. God wants us to trust that He is working out His plans and purposes in our lives. As Charles Spurgeon commented: "All his course of life is graciously ordained, and in lovingkindness, all is fixed, settled, and maintained. No reckless fate, no fickle chance rules us; our every step is the subject of divine decree."

Our Father not only cares about the path we walk through life but also every detail of the steps we take. He cares about whether or not we take that promotion. He cares that we were hurt. He cares about the joy of a new-born baby. He cares about who we will marry, and He cares about so many more details of our lives – more than we will ever know. And the beauty of it all is that He wants to share these details with us and walk with us through all the sorrows and joyful moments.



When David says, "Though they stumble," he may have been pointing to his own life when he did not stay on the right path and fell into sin. And this is important to note – even as children of God we are not perfect – we stumble daily, getting side-tracked, or sinning. But, *"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 beauty of walking with God and holding His hand through life is that He is always there to lift us up, wipe the tears and point us back in the direction He originally set out for us. We serve a beautiful and faithful Father! Today, choose to walk hand-in-hand with a loving Father.

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## Week 8: Delight in Him

*Psalm 37:4 "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." (ESV)*



One meets up with a friend for coffee, and he or she pours their heart out about certain struggles they are facing. A little lost for words, one responds: "Don't worry Susan, the Lord will give you the desires of your heart!" We hear this scripture and quote it so often with the underlying motive of getting the desires of our hearts. We often forget that "delighting ourselves in the Lord" always comes before getting the desires of our heart.

To delight in something is to relish, to adore, to love deeply, to glory in, and to enjoy something with great pleasure. The Hebrew word for 'delight' (*anag*) encourages us to find enjoyment in God and being in

His presence. The Lord wants us to incline our hearts towards Him, to lean into Christ and to commune with Him, where we will discover unspeakable joy and peace.

True delight in Him causes us to take our eyes off what we want in order to long for what He alone desires. To desire after God will bring peace by putting all our other wishes and desires in their right place – God's hands.

When we delight ourselves in the Lord and take pleasure in the things that are uppermost on God's own heart, we will discover that they become the joy of our heart. It is when our desires fade away that our will aligns with the heart and will of God. Today, delight in the Lord, spend some time with Him enjoying His presence!

"The more I seek You" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltdS1LddO38>

Image: Pexels/Jill Wellington

## Week 9: My Soul Thirsts

*Psalm 42:1-2 “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” (NLT)*

A deer generally enjoys feeding near streams of water. When hunted, it takes to the river to hide its scent from its predator. In the chase, the deer becomes faint, longs for water intensely and begins to pant. Panting is not a quiet longing or an inward desire, rather it is audible and produced by the agony of thirst, it is an intense desire and an overwhelming sense of need.

Imagine running for 20km, swimming for 30km or doing a long-distance cycle of 100km! How would your body respond to the impact of these sports? You would definitely be tired, sweaty and panting – longing for water or some form of refreshment!



The writer of this Psalm is using the deer under these circumstances as an example of how he longs and thirsts for God. It is a deep and intense desire to be with God, as we read at the end of verse 2: “When can I go and meet with God?” – not just any God, the living God!

Throughout Scripture, God is often referred to as the source of living water, for the refreshment of the spiritually thirsty. Isaiah 12:3 “With joy you will drink deeply from the fountain of salvation!” (NLT) John 4:14 “But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.” (NLT) For the spiritually thirsty, drink deeply from the fountain of salvation found in the living God.

May we be found today panting for God, intensely thirsting for God, longing deeply to meet with Him and be with Him.

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## Week 10: Love God with everything

*Matthew 22:37-38 "Jesus replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.'" (NLT)*



To love God with all of your heart is to love Him with your inward affections and emotions. God created us with a heart to love Him wholly and absolutely. He created us for the purpose of a deep, intimate relationship with Him. Daily, our heart is drawn to many other things besides God, like our jobs, our spouse, our children, our cell phones, and homes. Revelation 2:4 says, "But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first!" Are there things in your life that have been put above God? In what way can you love God more, with all your heart?

To love God, with all your soul, is to love Him with your consciousness and will. The soul is the part of

us that defines who we are. The essence of the biblical definition of the soul means life, personality, the inner 'self' and identity. It is where we make our decisions and choices, the part of us which ultimately decides our lifestyle and behaviour. Loving God, and obeying His word, is a daily choice that we make. Psalm 103:1 says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name." Today, choose to bless the holy name of the Lord, with all your soul!

To love God, with all your mind, is to love Him with your intellect and thoughts. The best way to do this is to consciously renew your mind by reading the Word of God. Fill your mind with things that inspire you to love God and not things that take you away from Him. What we do with our mind affects our ability to receive and express love. Psalm 119:30 says: "I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your regulations." What are some ways you can love God with all your mind today?

When Jesus gave the command to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind – it was a command to love God with everything that we are, today, and forevermore! Let us commit ourselves to go deeper with God like we never have before!

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