

“Faith is not a light that scatters all our darkness but a lamp that guides our steps in the night.”

POPE FRANCIS



Daily Prayer Journal

The Psalms show us how to prayer and when to pray—when tired, angry frustrated, lonely forsaken, overwhelmed as well as when joyous, full of praise, thankful, or happy. Spending time with a Psalm each day will draw you into an open and honest dialogue with God.

Read slowly, repeatedly and write your thoughts and images that come mind. Follow the prayer prompts. Review the resource “Experiencing God in the Psalms” for other ideas to experiment as you learn to pray scripture in all its raw and “subversive” emotion and glory.

WHAT ARE SOME

“TREASURES IN THE DARK”

YOU HAVE FOUND DURING THIS SEASON OF LIFE?

ISAIAH 45:3

Introduction

Welcome to 40 Days of Discovery! Discovery! Yes, the next 40 days offers you the opportunity to grow in your faith in these challenging times. Isaiah 45:3 says, *“I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.”* God lets a pagan king know that he has treasures in darkness and riches (hoards) in secret places, so that God’s name may be glorified.

There lies in each of us the capacity for great faith, which God wants to nurture and grow. God knows in what area your faith needs to grow, and he will use whatever means necessary to make that happen. As a loving father, he will draw out the faith that already exists in you, but that you place in others, to be transfer to him. Pain and suffering, disappointments and discouragement, the trials of others are all in his tool chest. These challenges become invitations! Our faith grows in proportion to the challenge we face and the trust we place in our God. So, the greater the difficulty and obstacle to overcome, the greater the opportunities to watch God do “Even Greater Things.”

This 40-day journey will be grounding-breaking for Golden Gate. First, this is our first all-digital 40-day spiritual growth campaign and second, the first campaign designed, written, and produced by our own Golden Gate members.

We have two primary goals for this 40-day journey together:

1. Growing faith in tough times.
2. Learning to pray by reading the Psalms.

These two goals can be accomplished by entering into and following through on three commitments.

1. Spending time with God using the Daily Devotional Journal. Each day you will dive into the prayer book of the Bible.
2. Encountering God in his word with others. A weekly Bible study taught by some great guest teachers will enlighten and offer hope to you and your friends who journey with you.
3. Adoring God in weekly corporate worship. Every Sunday at 10:15, join the Golden Gate family as we seek to bring pleasure to God in praise, prayer and preaching.

A banner for "40 Days of Discovery" featuring the title in large, glowing blue letters with a starry night sky background. A silhouette of a person is visible in the bottom right corner, holding a flashlight that illuminates a path.

40 DAYS OF DISCOVERY

GROWING YOUR FAITH IN DARKNESS

How To Use the 40 DOD Weekly Resources

VIDEO LESSONS

- Each week, a video lesson will be released along with a downloadable lesson guide. Use the guide to follow along, jotting down the key points of the lesson. You may watch the lesson individually, with your discovery partner, or with a group. Always take the opportunity to invite someone new into your study: friends, co-workers, family, etc.
- Set a weekly time to meet with your partner or group and answer the reflection questions.
- Pray together and challenge one another to exercise the application points listed in the guide.
- Join in on the fellowship and discussion on our Sunday Chat & Chew at 11:30am CST where we will allow open forum and discussion.

WEEKEND SERMON NOTES

- Take notes of the weekly sermons. There is space provided with your weekly lesson to take sermon notes as well. Write any questions, immediate thoughts and comments from what you hear.
- You are welcome to join in the after church “Chat & Chew” on Zoom to engage with others on the sermon for the day and another topics related to the theme for the week.

DAILY PRAYER JOURNAL

- The journal offers a daily walk through the “Prayer Book” of the Bible. Each day, a passage from the Psalms based on the theme for the week allows you to absorb the prayer itself and offer it back to God.

LEARNING IN

Start your day every Monday and Friday at 6:00 a.m. with a word of encouragement highlighting the theme for the week. Several guests have been invited to share God’s word on Golden Gate’s FB Live and Free Conference call. Invite someone to join in with you as well.

SOCIAL MEDIA HASHTAG

#GG40Days2021

SUGGESTED WEEKLY DISCOVERY EXERCISES

In order to encourage you to truly experience the Psalms and make them your own, complete one of the following exercises for each weekly lesson in this study. These aren't designed to create busywork, but are to stretch you spiritually. When you finish, report back to your partner or group how the exercise worked for you. Ideally, you'll vary the exercises from lesson to lesson to allow the psalms to become part of you in new ways.

- 1. Pray a Psalm.** Select one of the psalms along the theme of the lesson. Then, using the ideas and as many of the words as seem to fit your situation, pray that prayer to God, inserting your own struggles and needs within the prayer. Go through the entire psalm, paraphrasing it as you pray it sincerely to God. Many people have exercised this kind of prayer – they pray through every Scripture passage they read. Why don't you start this practice with one of the psalms?
- 2. Meditate on a Psalm.** To meditate means to think deeply about something and mull it over in your mind over a period of time. You might read it several times in different translations. Say it over to yourself to feel the words on your lips. Write it out longhand. Consider the meaning of each important word. Memorization is another exercise, but memorizing is a good way to meditate on a verse or a passage.
- 3. Read a Psalm to a Shut-in.** People who are home-bound or in hospitals, nursing homes, jails, etc. need encouragement. As your exercise, read a psalm from this week's theme to a shut-in. If you read more than one, you'll be doubly blessed!
- 4. Paraphrase a Psalm.** Write out a paraphrase of the psalm of your choosing in your own words. Try to find modern-day synonyms and thoughts that correspond to the thoughts in the psalm. Don't be afraid to be creative.
- 5. Write Your Own Psalm.** Write your own psalm based on the theme of this lesson. You're entirely free in how you do this. Some approaches include:
 - Write in the style of Hebrew poetry using thought parallelism and imagery. This will be fun, though you may find it challenging. Consult my Introduction to Psalms in the section on Hebrew Poetry before beginning.
 - Write a psalm with lines that rhyme like traditional Western poetry.
 - Write a psalm in free verse, not bothering to make the lines rhyme. Just express yourself to God.
 - Write a psalm in Haiku style.
 - Write a psalm in any style you wish. The idea here is to learn to express yourself to God more freely.
- 6. Sing a Psalm.** Find a song, hymn, or praise chorus that relates to the theme of this chapter – and that is based on a psalm. Then sing it or lead it for your group. If you like, write your own song, or find a melody that you can use to sing the words of the song from a translation you prefer. Be creative here.
- 7. Prepare a Liturgy, Responsive Reading, or Choral Reading from a Psalm.** Psalms are at the core of the liturgy of Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican branches of the Church. Explore adapting a psalm for public worship. You might enjoy writing the script for a choral reading of a psalm or portion of a psalm creating parts for 3 or 4 readers. Then try it out during a worship service or in your small group or class.
- 8. Teach or Preach a Psalm.** It's hard to prepare a message for people without really getting inside the text. Teach a psalm to a class of children, youth, or adults, or preach a psalm to your congregation.
- 9. Memorize a Psalm.** "My mind is too old to memorize!" Hogwash! Try it, but perhaps start with a short psalm, or one you've already partially memorized. It's work, but you can do it and you'll find it very spiritually enriching. In ancient days many Hebrew boys memorized the entire Psalter. **In his 90s, Billy Graham put it this way: "Over the years I've memorized many passages from the Bible, and I'm especially thankful now that I did this. I wish we gave more attention to Bible memorization in our churches today."**¹

Memorize one psalm that relates to the theme of the lesson.

¹ Billy Graham in "Quotation Marks," *Christianity Today*, June 2007, p.19.

DAY 1

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.

PSALM 40:1-3

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?


PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

This is God's movement towards you. Simply rest in His embrace. When your mind wanders, center yourself by returning to the spirit of the passage



*I waited patiently
for the Lord...*

PSALM 40:1-3 (ESV)

“I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.”

I AM
WITH YOU
always
MATT. 28:20

DAY 2

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.

PSALM 130:5-6

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

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PSALM 130:5-6 (ESV)

“I wait for the
LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word
I hope;
my soul waits for the
Lord more than
watchmen for the
morning, more than
watchmen for the
morning.”

The LORD is
good
to those
who wait for Him

LAMENTATIONS 3:25

DAY 3

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.

PSALM 69:1-3

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

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Save me, O God!

*I have come into
deep waters*

PSALM 69:1-3 (ESV)

“Save me, O God!
For the waters have
come up to my neck.
I sink in deep mire,
where there is no
foothold; I have
come into deep
waters, and the
flood sweeps over
me. I am weary
with my crying out;
my throat is
parched. My eyes
grow dim
with waiting for
my God.”

I wait for God my
SAVIOR
my God will hear me

MICAH 7:7

DAY 4

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.

PSALM 62:1-4

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

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PSALM 62:1-4 NLT)

"I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken. So many enemies against one man— all of them trying to kill me. To them I'm just a broken-down wall or a tottering fence. They plan to topple me from my high position. They delight in telling lies about me. They praise me to my face but curse me in their hearts. Interlude"

*Jesus replied,
"you don't understand
what I'm doing now,
but someday you will."
John 13:7*

DAY 5

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.



PSALM 62:5-12

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

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PSALM 62:5-12 (NLT)

“Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken. My victory and honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me. O my people, trust in him at all times. Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge. Interlude Common people are as worthless as a puff of wind, and the powerful are not what they appear to be. If you weigh them on the scales, together they are lighter than a breath of air. Don’t make your living by extortion or put your hope in stealing. And if your wealth increases, don’t make it the center of your life. God has spoken plainly, and I have heard it many times: Power, O God, belongs to you; unending love, O Lord, is yours. Surely you repay all people according to what they have done.”

DAY 6

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.

PSALM 27:11-14

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

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PSALM 27:11-14 (NLT)

“Teach me how to live, O LORD. Lead me along the right path, for my enemies are waiting for me.

Do not let me fall into their hands. For they accuse me of things I've never done; with every breath they threaten me with violence.

Yet I am confident I will see the LORD's goodness while I am here in the land of the living. Wait patiently for the LORD. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.”

I will
Answer
you

JEREMIAH 33:3

DAY 7

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.

PSALM 33:20-22

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

This is God's movement towards you. Simply rest in His embrace. When your mind wanders, center yourself by returning to the spirit of the passage



PSALM 33:20-22 (ESV)

“Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you.”

