

Daily Bible Reading



EXODUS
1&2 TIMOTHY
PSALMS

If you use the Daily Bible Reading Notes, we would love to hear from you! Please fill out this survey as we consider how to serve you best.



Foreword

As Christians we believe not only that God speaks to us through his word...

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16)

...but also that the opportunity to listen to him is precious.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105)

Through the pages of the Bible, we meet Jesus, the true Word of God. So, use these notes to help you regularly open your Bible and – even if it is only for a few minutes in your day. Allow God's Word to challenge, rebuke, comfort or encourage you, and point you to Jesus. We hope this leads you into prayer and assists you to commit each day to do "the good works God has prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10).

St Paul's Daily Bible Reading Notes Team

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This Booklet

On Monday and Tuesday, we will follow the sermon series, ranging from the last chapters of Exodus, through Global Mission to a focus on Relationships. From Wednesday to Saturday, we will explore the riches of Paul's letter to his "dear son" Timothy.

Each Sunday, we will meditate on a Psalm.

As usual, we will include a mix of commentary and questions.

MONDAY, 8 JUNE

EXODUS 33:1–11

A Pillar of Cloud

Have you ever had someone do something on your behalf?

1. From verses 1–3, what aspects of God’s character are shown?

2. What does this passage tell us about the Israelites who are now with Moses (4–6, 8, 10)?

3. Why was the Tent of Meeting significant (7–11)? How is the way we can relate to God now similar or different to those described in this passage?

Give thanks that because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, we can now approach our Holy God without fear. Pray that God will help us bring everything before him, knowing that he listens and delights to hear our prayers.

TUESDAY, 9 JUNE

EXODUS 33:12–23

The Glory of the LORD

Think of a time you've found yourself needing assurance.

In verses 12–18, we get a sense of great intimacy between Moses and God as they converse. Not everyone has the permission to be speaking with the LORD himself to begin with, but even more than that, Moses speaks honestly and plainly, truly as to a friend (Exodus 33:11). He brings up his concerns and insecurities asking for God's personal accompaniment in the task he's been given and, in turn, God gives him the assurance he seeks.

Moses asks to see God's glory (18) so that he can know God's presence experientially. Although Moses seems to lack confidence in himself and his position before God, he is mainly concerned for God's reputation. If Moses and the people proceed without God's presence accompanying them, other nations won't see or acknowledge their special relationship with the LORD (15–16) or, therefore, his astonishing greatness and faithfulness.

God promises to give this to Moses reassuring him of their bond. He frames the promise to reveal his glory with such gentle care, ensuring Moses' life is preserved in the process (19–23).

Was this what you expected? The LORD promises a personal proclamation of his character; the essence of his nature. Unlike ways humans might understand 'glory' (perhaps in power, might, or majesty), God's glory is shown in his compassionate grace, abounding love, faithfulness, forgiveness and justice.

Heavenly Father, thank you for who you are. You are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, forgiving and just. Help us to grow to reflect your character today. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, 10 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 1:1–2

To My Dear Son

How important do you think this introduction is?

As we shall see as we read the rest of this letter, its purpose was to equip Timothy to address the false teachers and false teachings causing disorder in the church in Ephesus. This purpose impacts the way Paul introduces himself and Timothy.

Paul is well known to the church in Ephesus, having spent considerable time there (Acts 19–20), and written at least one letter addressed specifically to the church. In Paul's address to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:28–31), he warns them of false teachers who might emerge even from within their church. So we can see this letter (and Timothy's presence in their midst) as a timely addition to strengthen their defence of the truth entrusted to them. Paul uses the unusual phrase "*apostle... by the command of God*" so emphasising his apostolic authority before confronting false teaching. He also reminds the whole church of their allegiance and indebtedness to "*God our Saviour*" (a link to God's past mighty acts of salvation) "*and of Jesus Christ our hope*" (a look forward to promised eternal life).

The letter is addressed specifically to Timothy, Paul's "*true son in the faith*". The word "true" here means genuine. Paul has had a close involvement in training Timothy as a Christian leader and they had spent considerable time together. Timothy has been sent as an apostolic delegate to lead the Ephesian church. Though several passages are addressed specifically to Timothy, it is likely both the Timothy letters were written with the gathered church as their audience, perhaps partly to ensure the whole church would acknowledge Timothy's authority as Paul's representative.

Dwell for a moment on the riches of the blessing in verse 2 – not a platitude, but a prayer for beloved brothers and sisters.

Thank you Lord for this letter and for Paul's faithful witness and leadership to Timothy, the church in Ephesus... and me. Amen.

THURSDAY, 11 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 1:3–11

Warning Against False Teachers

How do you know if what you're being taught is true? Paul has a test — not what is taught, but what it produces: love, a clear conscience, and sincere faith (5).

1. What does the text say? (3–7) Paul contrasts two kinds of teaching. What words describe the false teachers in verses 3–4 and 6–7? What does genuine teaching produce in verse 5?

2. What does it mean? (8–11) Unlike the false teachers in verse 7 who misuse the law without understanding it, Paul says "the law is good, if one uses it lawfully" (8). What is the right use of the law, and how does it point us to the gospel in verse 11?

3. How does it apply? (3–6,11) False teaching rarely announces itself — it creeps in through speculation and ideas that sound religious but produce no real change (3–6). Apply Paul's test from verse 5 to one source shaping your faith. What is one step to guard against drift this week?

Lord, show us what is shaping what we believe. Give us discernment, where teaching has drifted, and courage to act. Root us in love, a clear conscience, and sincere faith. Amen.

FRIDAY, 12 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 1:12–17

The Lord's Grace to Paul

What if God's grace could meet you exactly where you feel least worthy?

Paul's life is both a testimony and an invitation: what if God's grace could meet you exactly where you feel least worthy? Once a blasphemer, persecutor, and violent man, Paul set himself against Christ and his people. Yet the Lord did not reject him. Instead, Jesus poured out his grace, drawing him in, reshaping his life, and entrusting him with the gospel (12–14).

Paul does not hide his past. He calls himself the worst of sinners (15), not to dwell in shame, but to highlight the depth of mercy he has received. His story is not one of self-improvement – it is the story of grace interrupting a life headed in the wrong direction. Where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more.

This grace was not only for Paul. His life became an example, showing that no one is beyond the reach of Christ's patience (16). The very places we feel most unworthy may be where grace meets us most powerfully.

So Paul's reflection ends in worship: *"To the King eternal... be honour and glory for ever and ever"* (17).

The same grace that met Paul still meets us today – right where we are – changing us and lifting our eyes to the King.

Lord, praise be to you. Thank you for meeting us in our unworthiness and pouring out your grace without measure. Tune our hearts to receive it with humility and respond in worship. Amen.

SATURDAY, 13 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 1:18–2:7

Holding on to True faith

What you believe shapes how you live—but your actions show if your faith is real.

1. What does the text say? (1:18–20) Paul urges Timothy to keep his faith and a clear conscience. When Hymenaeus and Alexander abandoned this, they were *“handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme”* — a severe form of being removed from the church community, with the hope they would learn their lesson and come back. What does this show us about how the early church dealt with people who walked away from the faith?

2. What does it mean? (2:3–6) Paul connects prayer with God’s desire to save all men. In a world where many religions compete, what does it mean to say that Jesus is the one mediator who gave Himself as a ransom?

3. How does it apply? (1:18–19; 2:1–2) Holding onto faith and a clear conscience requires intentional living. Where do you sense a gap between your faith and your conscience—and what is one step you can take to realign them this week?

What would it look like to hold firmly to your faith, live with a clear conscience, and let God’s saving heart shape your prayers?

SUNDAY, 14 JUNE

PSALM 148

His Name Alone is Exalted

"All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing – Alleluia!"

1. Our visions of God are sometimes limited by our puny human minds. Reflect on verses 1–4 and imagine staring up into a vast starry sky, or observing the planets revolving around the sun or viewing images of the infinite cosmos. Why should these glorious bodies (and the angels) praise God (5–6)?

2. Now we come back to earth. Sometimes our contemporaries seem to want to worship Nature itself. How do verses 7–13 take in every aspect of nature and humanity and point us in the right direction for worship?

3. The final verse refers to the Lord *"raising up for his people a horn"*. "Horn" here symbolises "strong one" or "King". Who has God raised up for the *"people close to his heart"* and why should that increase our praise?

Join in worship of your Creator, King and Saviour.

Let all things their Creator bless and worship him in humbleness

Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son and praise the Spirit, Three in One.

Amen.

(Attributed to Francis of Assisi 1225)

MONDAY, 15 JUNE

EXODUS 34:1–9

New Stone Tablets

How would you describe the Lord to someone who does not know him?

1. How does God's provision of a new set of stone tablets (1) demonstrate God's kindness to Moses and his people after the first set were broken by the Israelites' grave disobedience (chapter 32)?

 2. What is revealed of God's character in verses 6–7?

 3. When you reflect on God's description of himself, how is your response like Moses (8–9)? How does knowing Christ make a difference?
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Thank you Lord, for your love and compassion for sinners like me. Thank you that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, I can come to you in confidence that you will forgive me and grant me eternal life with you. Amen.

TUESDAY, 16 JUNE

EXODUS 34:10–35

Renewed Relationship

Are you sometimes as “stiff-necked” (9) as the Israelites? Are you surprised by God’s response to Moses’ prayer for them?

1. Why is it important that the Israelites did not “*make a treaty with those who live in the land*” (10–17)?

2. From sons to animals, to wheat and other harvests – why does God command so many ‘first’ things to be given to him?

3. After Moses returned from his forty days and nights with the LORD (27–28), people could clearly see that Moses had been in the LORD’s presence. Why might this have been important?

As Christians, we don’t need any human to mediate between us and God. Thank the Lord that Jesus, himself, intercedes for us and his sacrificial death for us opens the way for us to enter into our Father’s presence, unashamed.

WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 2:8–15

A Fitting and Orderly Way

Why might order be important in a church gathering?

This is a controversial passage because it gets into issues of gender roles within the life of the church, submission, teaching, and more. In this short devotion the goal is not to get into the controversy but rather to take a step back and think about one big idea: God orders his church because he is a God who loves order rather than chaos. God loves order because he loves people. The order and pattern he has made in creation is good for creation. So when he made man first and then woman, and when men and women relate to each other in that order, it is good! He orders the church just as he ordered the world, creating people with equal value and dignity, and yet with distinct roles.

Since the Fall, disorder and disharmony mar our relationships even in the church. Obviously, there was a problem in the Ephesian church. While generally, women were enjoined to “pray and prophesy” (1 Corinthians 11:5), the women in this congregation are told to be silent. Was it a lack of adherence to basic biblical principles? We don’t know. But we do know that God’s desire is for his people to worship in an orderly and reverential way with an uncontentious spirit, submitted to God’s rule in their lives.

God desires peace and kindness in his church (8) as well as a church where the people are less concerned with how they look and more concerned about what they do and think (9–10). Our God loves his word to be taught and for all people to learn (11). We can give God much thanks that he has not brought us into a realm of chaos but rather an ordered realm where each person has a part to play, a valuable role in the building up of the body of his people.

Father, help us to grow in prayerful and godly attitudes, putting away those things that promote ourselves, but doing what brings you glory. Amen.

THURSDAY, 18 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 3:1–7

A Noble Task

What things do you aspire to, or set your heart on?

1. Paul emphasises, in these verses, the nobility of Christian service. Who do you associate with the role of “overseer” in our church today?

2. What are some of the personal character qualities that Paul lists for the overseer (2, 3)? What specific ability does Paul mention (in verse 2) an overseer needs to have?

3. What important aspect of family life does Paul mention in verses 4 and 5? How important is respect for authority in the family and how would this translate to the church?

4. Paul lists 2 more qualifications in verses 6 and 7. What are they? What temptations could a person fall into if Paul’s advice was ignored?

“A charge to keep I have, A God to glorify

A never-dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky:

To serve the present age, My calling to fulfil:

O may it all my powers engage to do my master’s will.”

(Charles Wesley 1707- 88)

FRIDAY, 19 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 3:8–16

Conduct in God's Household

There are lots of "Codes of Conduct" in our society today. Is there any difference in the way Christians should conduct themselves as part of the church community?

Once again, Paul is giving instructions, this time for deacons in the church. He explains to Timothy that he hopes to come to Ephesus, (15) but in case he's delayed, this is how to go about selecting deacons.

Deacons were those who were to serve within the church. It's interesting that in the early church (Acts 6:3–5) when men were chosen to serve the needs of widows in the church, their qualifications were spiritual and not just practical. So here too, Paul speaks of qualities of respect, sincerity, self-control, and integrity (8). Above all, they "*must keep hold of the faith*" (9). Their wives also were to be "*worthy of respect, not malicious talkers, self-restrained and trustworthy.*" (11)

Paul makes it quite clear that any leadership in the church, whether ministers (overseers) or lay people, should be of good character, spiritually mature and able to manage their families well. A good question to consider is: Should anyone be appointed to the role of deacon (or overseer) if these high standards aren't fulfilled?

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus, the servant King, is our example of how a leader should serve. Peter speaks about Jesus as "*the overseer of your souls*" (1Peter 2:25). No wonder Paul leads on to speak of the church with such dignity and importance! It is because it is "*God's household*" and "*the church of the Living God*" (15).

What follows is a hymn of praise to Christ Jesus himself, humbly taking on human form, but rising to glory with the Father.

Father, help me to serve you well, no matter how humble or insignificant the task. Help me to remember that as I serve others, I serve you and I'm part of God's household. Amen.

SATURDAY, 20 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 4:1–8

Hold Firm the Truth

The best way to check false teaching, is to train yourself in the truth, just like the banker gives detailed study of genuine notes so that he can spot a fake.

1. Paul says that some will abandon the faith. Rather than following the truth, what have they been following? (1) Does this suggest that Satan has led them astray? What has happened to their conscience? (2)

2. What 2 perversions of Christianity have these false teachers been promoting? (3) Do you think, by these taboos, they thought material things were evil and that greater merit was achieved by abstaining? By contrast, Paul says "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected."

3. How are we to receive God's good gifts? Do you think giving thanks before a meal is a good idea?

4. Timothy is a good example of someone who has followed the truths of the faith he has been brought up in. What further advice, both negative and positive, does Paul give him in verse 7? What difference is there between physical training and training in godliness?

"The church depends on the truth for its existence; the truth depends on the church for its defence and proclamation."

(John Stott, The Message of 1Timothy and Titus, pg. 106)

Thank God for the truth of the gospel.

SUNDAY, 21 JUNE

PSALM 149

Sing A New Song

What is your favourite way to praise God?

The exhortation to *"sing a new song to the Lord"* seems ironic in this penultimate song of 150 precious and beautiful hymns to God. We are probably comfortable and more than happy to join in the joyous praise of verses 1–4, but the second half of the psalm sounds a dissonant note for our 21st century ears.

It is worth noting that this is a communal song – to be sung in the "assembly of the saints". And not just sung, it is to be accompanied by dancing and musical instruments. Israel rejoices in their Lord and King... and the Lord himself reciprocates with delight in his people – offering salvation to the humble.

Unexpectedly verse 6 pairs praise and the wielding of a weapon. The glory of the "saints" is to bring vengeance and punishment on those who oppose God (6–9). In its original context, these verses encouraged Israel to radical obedience of God's commands, even through battle.

However, this is not our context. Many commentators have pointed to taking up the *"double edged sword"* as being a reliance on God's word (Revelation 19:15) or to wielding the *"sword of the Spirit"* (Ephesians 6:17).

Spurgeon's comment is helpful: *"If you had a sword of steel, you would fight with men; but that is no part of your business. You are not called to that cruel work; but as you have the sword of the Spirit...go forth and praise God by the use of that two-edged sword which is the Word of God."* (Charles Spurgeon, Sermon: June 19, 1887)

Father God, thank you that you take delight in your people. Help us to praise and honour you and in so doing, help us to share your offer of salvation with all we meet. Amen.

MONDAY, 22 JUNE

EXODUS 35 (37–39)

Proper Worship

What do you think God desires in worship?

The start of the mammoth task of building the tabernacle – a mobile place of worship – is marked by a surprising command (1–3). It is not a command to do but a command to be. It is more important to observe regular rest in the presence of the LORD than to power on in productivity. This is such a serious matter that disobedience warrants death (2). The purpose of the tabernacle is true and proper worship in God's presence. This is a timely reminder in Israel's history and to us today.

The next step is to gather the fine materials needed (4–9). These would undoubtedly have been highly valuable items, particularly hard to source given their location in the wilderness, but God had already prepared a way when the Egyptian people gave the fleeing slaves their gold and precious things (12:35–36). We see many are moved to bring their personal valuables – “from what you have” (5) – as “freewill offerings” to the LORD (29). The instruction is for “everyone who is willing” (5), with the word “willing” repeated multiple times in verses 20–29.

It is not just resources that they are commanded to offer. They are also commanded to offer their time and skill to construct the tabernacle (10). Skilled women artfully spin fine cloth for the project (25–26). The leaders of the project – with God-given ability – are also given the gift of teaching others (30–35). The details of the materials and craftsmanship involved in each item continue through the next four chapters. It is a huge undertaking!

The willingness of the Israelites to give the best of what they can offer is a response to what they have seen of the LORD – his awesome majesty and his saving grace.

Reflect on the opportunities you have at the moment to offer your time, resources, skills and care to projects that display the glory of God and fuel the right worship of him.

TUESDAY, 23 JUNE

EXODUS 40

The Glory of the Lord Fills the Tabernacle

What does God's presence mean to you? How do you know if or when God is present?

1. Why do you think the author repeats the LORD's instructions in 1–8 again in 16–33? What does the repetition show?

2. What is the purpose of consecration (once in 9–15, ongoing in 31–32)? What does that tell you about the relationship between God and his people?

3. What does the cloud and fire signify (see verse 35 and Acts 2:3–4)? How are the last verses of Exodus filled with reassurance from the LORD for his chosen people?

We know that the tabernacle was planned as a temporary structure for worship to point the way toward the permanent, final work of Jesus' death on the cross. What might it look like for you to live in the presence of our glorious God, walking in step with the Holy Spirit?

WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 4:9–16

The Gospel Shapes the Whole Person

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."
(Aristotle)

1. In verses 9–10, why does Paul say Christians "labour and strive," and what does this teach us about the Christian life and hope? How is Christian effort different from trying to earn salvation?

2. Paul tells Timothy to watch both his "life and doctrine" carefully (12–16). Why are both equally important for Christian leaders — and for all believers? What dangers arise when either truth or godly character is neglected?

3. Which areas mentioned in this passage most challenge you personally at the moment: speech, conduct, love, faith, purity, commitment to Scripture, or perseverance? What might it look like this week to "train yourself for godliness"?

Heavenly Father, we pray that you would keep our hearts focused on seeking guidance from your word and not from the community around us, that we would become more Christ-like rather than 'influencer-like'. Amen.

THURSDAY, 25 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 5:1–8

The Gospel Shapes the Church, God's Family

"The true test of a society is how it treats its weakest members."
(J.S. Mill in 'On Liberty', 1859)

Paul reminds Timothy that the church is not simply an organisation, but the household of God. Relationships within the church are to be marked by honour, purity, care, and responsibility — especially toward those who are vulnerable and in genuine need.

1. Why does Paul instruct Timothy to treat older and younger believers like family members (1–2)? What does this teach us about the nature of the church and Christian relationships?

2. In verses 3–8, why does Paul place responsibility for widows firstly upon their own family before the wider church? How does this reflect broader biblical themes about love, responsibility, and practical godliness?

3. Paul says that failing to care for one's relatives is to deny the faith (8). Why do you think he uses such strong language? What practical opportunities might God be giving you to show Christ-like care within your family or church community?

Father we thank you for your grace in adopting us and bringing us into your presence, into your family. Teach us how to be 'family' to those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ, for your name's sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, 26 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 5:9–16

Faithful Service and Godly Living

'Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world'
(James 1:27)

1. What qualities does Paul commend in widows who are to be supported by the church (9–10)? What does this reveal about the kind of godliness God values in his people?

2. Why do you think Paul encourages younger widows to remarry and manage their households (11–15)? How does this fit within the broader biblical themes of faithful living, witness, and avoiding behaviour that damages the reputation of the gospel?

3. This passage shows that Christian care should be both compassionate and wise. Why is it important for the church to balance generosity with discernment? How can we grow in serving others faithfully without encouraging dependence, idleness, or unhealthy patterns?

Lord, give us open eyes to see those who are vulnerable in our community, a heart that will respond in compassion and wisdom, and a willingness to care and provide for those in your household, that your name will be honoured. Amen.

SATURDAY, 27 JUNE

1 TIMOTHY 5:17–22

Guard the Purity and Integrity of the Church

“Character is what you are in the dark.”
(D.L. Moody)

1. Paul says that elders who “work hard at preaching and teaching” are worthy of honour (17–18). What does this suggest about the importance of teaching God’s word in the life of the church? How should faithful Christian leadership be expressed in the various sections of the church?

2. Why do you think Paul gives instructions both to protect elders from careless accusations and also to rebuke persistent sin publicly (19–21)? What does this teach us about justice, accountability, and holiness within God’s church?

3. In verse 21 Paul urges Timothy to act “without partiality.” Why can favouritism, haste, or personal bias be dangerous in church leadership and decision-making? How should Christians today seek to exercise wisdom, fairness, and discernment in leadership and relationships?

Father we pray for humility and insight to understand your word and to apply it to our lives that we might be living examples of what it means to be the ‘People of God’. Where we are in positions to lead others may we take this responsibility seriously. For the glory of your name! Amen.

SUNDAY, 28 JUNE

PSALM 150

Praise the Lord

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord” (6)

1. In this final Psalm, what attributes of God are singled out for praise? Thinking back over the psalms, what other aspects of God have been worthy of our praise?

2. This praise is a noisy affair – with lots of people playing lots of clanging, clashing instruments. There’s dancing too! How does this vision challenge or inspire you when you think about how you (and your church) praise God?

3. If you had to write your own list of reasons to praise God – or ways to praise him – what would be at the top of your list?

Lord, help me to remember to praise you, to take time to dwell on your goodness, not just to me, but to the whole world. Help me to live my life in joyful praise and thanks to you. Amen.

MONDAY, 29 JUNE

PSALM 65

The Hope of the Ends of the Earth

So many millions in our world do not know Jesus. What will be your part in sharing the gospel with them?

1. How do verses 2–4 help us see that although God is the Lord of the nations, his gracious kindness is extended to each individual he has chosen.

2. Verses 5–13 affirm God's reign over all of creation and his generous provision for all people. How are we reassured that God also offers salvation to those who call on him, from the ends of the earth (5, 8)?

3. We are given a picture here of the glorious future, when all be well, but at this point in history, many millions do not know the God who reigns over and loves them. In Revelation chapter 5 a new song is sung, proclaiming that the Lamb, by his blood, *"has purchased men for God, from every tribe and language and people and nation"*. Why does this make it essential that we proclaim the gospel to the nations?

Jesus said *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..."* (Matthew 28:19–20). He has promised to be with us. Pray that you will trust his promise and obey him, with confidence and joy.

TUESDAY, 30 JUNE

MATTHEW 9:35–38

Plentiful Harvest, Few Workers

Do you think of yourself as a worker in God's field?

1. How does this passage encourage you to pray for more gospel workers? Do you pray that you will proclaim the gospel boldly? Do you pray for others (including your children) to do so? Do you pray that some will go to those places where millions "dwell in darkness" without the light of Christ?

2. How does this passage encourage you to pray for our church? How can we focus on being a "lifeboat" to rescue those who are lost? How can we love people in every way – but especially by sharing the gospel?

. How does this passage encourage you to be a gospel worker in the mission field Jesus has given you – your family, office, street, or club. How can you share your story of what Jesus has done for you?

Ask Jesus for boldness to share the gospel at every opportunity, but also to go to those people and places where the gospel has not yet been heard.

WEDNESDAY, 1 JULY

1 TIMOTHY 5:23–6:2

Advice, Sin and Slaves

To what extent do Paul's instructions make practical sense for today?

5:23 shows Paul's concern for Timothy's poor health. The ancients observed that people who only drank water sometimes got diseases which people who drank wine didn't.

In 5:24 Paul returns to his instructions for dealing with church leaders who have sinned. He makes the point that some sins, like some good deeds, are obvious to all immediately, whereas some sins and good deeds are done secretly but will eventually become known. He says this to explain his instruction not to be hasty to ordain someone (22). Acting on first appearances could mean that an unsuitable person is chosen, or a suitable person is overlooked.

In 6:1 Paul turns to deal with those trapped in slavery, which was an established institution accepted throughout his world. Many masters treated slaves as chattels who could be bought or sold for the master's use. However, Christianity created a community in which all believers have equal standing before God (Galatians 3:28).

Paul addresses two situations. First, slaves should treat their masters with full respect, even if the master is harsh, so that God's name and Christian teaching would not be dishonoured (1). Second, if a Christian slave has a Christian master, the slave should not disrespect them by presuming on the relationship. In fact, they should serve their master more willingly because they are a beloved brother (2). Although this in itself was a revolutionary teaching, eventually, Christians would be at the forefront of the anti-slavery movement.

Paul's teaching here is relevant to us today. Whatever our situation, we should treat others with due respect and ensure that our conduct is marked with integrity and such that God's name and the Christian faith are not brought into disrespect.

Heavenly Father, help me to do what is just, to love others and humbly fellowship with you. Amen.

THURSDAY, 2 JULY

1 TIMOTHY 6:3–10

Love of Money

Jesus said, *"life does not consist in an abundance of possessions"*
(Luke 12:15)

Paul has two warnings in this section of chapter 6: against false teaching and against the constant quest to increase possessions which requires concentration on increasing wealth.

1. In verse 4 Paul says that the false teachers are conceited. Why do you think Paul can say this?

2. The continual arguing and quarrels among the false teachers has a damaging effect on their minds. What does Paul say in verse 5 is the resulting state of their minds?

3. In verse 6 what approach to life can result from godliness? Paul talks of this same result in Philippians 4:11–13 where he says that it helps him 'in any and every situation'.

4. In verses 9 and 10 what does Paul say is the trap for people who set their goal on getting rich? And what has been the consequence for many?

We should think carefully about the potential dangers to our spiritual life in a materialistic society.

Lord God, please give me wisdom to know those things I should hold lightly, and those I should grasp onto. Amen.

FRIDAY, 3 JULY

1 TIMOTHY 6:11–16

Godly Living

Do you know anyone qualified, as Paul was, to say *“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice”*?

(Philippians 4:9)

Paul now begins his final charge to Timothy. He reminds Timothy that he is in a battle and must “fight the good fight of the faith (12). Apart from opposing the false teachers, Timothy has the same battles as all Christians with the tempting offerings of their world’s culture, our sinful nature and the spiritual forces of evil (Satan’s servants) mentioned in Ephesians 6:12.

Paul reminds Timothy of his promises at his ordination and points to Jesus as example of a good confession. He tells Timothy to flee from the surrounding ungodliness and to concentrate on righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. He will then model a man of God.

As Paul remembers how Jesus was a faithful witness all his earthly life, he breaks out in praise. He will return to his final charge to Timothy in verse 20. But now he overflows with praise magnifying God – the only true God who is the omnipotent ruler of all things. He dwells in glorious light which mere mortals cannot approach. Above all else, God will bring about the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ to judge and bring in his eternal reign over all things. Timothy is to live a spotless and blameless life while he awaits this great day.

We too are called to live humbly and obediently all our days, persevering in developing godliness. God wants us to succeed and will help us if we sincerely and obediently ask him, Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:24 *“the one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.”*

Heavenly Father, help us to trust you day by day to grow in obedience and godliness, like our Saviour the Lord Jesus. Amen.

SATURDAY, 4 JULY

1 TIMOTHY 6:17–21

Real Treasure

Jesus said, *“For where your treasure is, your heart will be also.”*
(Matthew 6:21)

Paul deals with two subjects in today’s reading. Firstly, he returns to the subject of money. He now has instructions for those who are rich in verses 18 and 19. Secondly, Paul completes his final charge to Timothy with regard to the false teachers.

1. In verse 17 what are the two temptations which rich people may experience? Can you think of others? Where should they find certain security?

2. How are rich people told to act in verses 18 –19? What is the result for them? Does it happen immediately?

3. In verse 20 Timothy is told to guard the truth which has been entrusted to him by opposing the false teachers. What enticing description of their teaching do the false teachers use to market their wares?

Thinking back over our study of 1 Timothy, is there anything which you found helpful to grow in your spiritual life? If so, you could write a note of it to aid your memory.

Heavenly Father, please help me by your Spirit to grow more like your Son, my Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

SUNDAY, 5 JULY

PSALM 1

Blessed

Are you planted like the righteous or do you wander like the wicked?

How are we blessed? This is the question the first psalm poses to us, and to answer the questions the psalm introduces us to two types of people: the righteous and the wicked.

The righteous are those who are in right relationship with God. They don't align themselves with those who oppose God (1). Instead, they are those whose *'delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditate on his law day and night'* (2). We see this illustrated in the beautiful image of verse 3 – the righteous person is like a tree. They have planted themselves on the steady and life-giving stream of God's laws which yield fruit and strength and prosperity.

The wicked in their pride, ignore this. They do not plant themselves by this stream. They instead are blown about by the wind like loose grass (verse 4). And they are led to destruction instead of blessing.

It can be so easy to be like the wicked at this time, to be *"tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming"* (Ephesians 4:13). Our world is full of teaching and ideology that can blow us this way and that, is futile and fades, appears certain at one point in history and is despised the next.

This way of thinking can lead us to destruction. Instead blessed is the one who plants themselves in the Word of God, in Jesus Christ who *"is the same yesterday, today and forever"* (Hebrew 13:8).

Plead with God to plant you by the stream of his word, so that you never stray from it to be blown about by the teaching of our age. And that through this he would bless you and bear fruit in your life to bless others, as he longs to do.

MONDAY, 6 JULY

GENESIS 1:24–31

Created for Relationships

How important is it to remind yourself that people – each and all of them – are made in God's image?

1. On the sixth day, every living creature that lives on the land was created. Mankind is also created that day, but what makes us realise they are "set apart" (24–26)?

2. Mankind is the only creature to be made in the image of God. Both male and female are affirmed here. What does this mean for our identity, and our relationships with other humans (26–27)?

3. How would you describe God's design for the relationship between mankind and the rest of God's good creation (28–31)?

Father God, what a privilege to be created in your image! And yet we so often fail to love you and love others as we should. We are not good stewards of the beautiful world you gave us. Please forgive us and help us to change, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, Amen.

TUESDAY, 7 JULY

EPHESIANS 2:1–10

Re-Created for Renewed Relationships

Do you think of yourself as “made alive in Christ”? What difference might that make in your life?

1. How does the “But ...” at the beginning of verse 4, introduce God’s rescue, resuscitation and recreation plan for us “already dead” sinners?
2. How do you understand the role of “grace” in the life of a Christian (4, 7, 8)?
3. In our “re-created” state, what is God’s plan for us (10)? Do you pray each day that God will lead you into the good works he has prepared for you?

Lord, your grace is truly amazing, mercifully giving me new life in you, through Christ Jesus. Help me daily, to be thankful and to seek out the good works you have prepared for me to do. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, 8 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 1:1–7

Encouragement

Who in your life has led you closer to Christ?

1. Who were the people involved in the development of Timothy's faith?

2. The "laying on of hands" by Paul seems to be a kind of commissioning, setting Timothy apart for gospel proclamation. In the light of your reading of Timothy so far, what do you think the "gift of God" is (6)?

3. Read verse 7 again. Why might Paul want to remind Timothy of this?

God alone gives salvation, but he often works through people in our lives to bring us to faith. Let us thank God now for those people.

THURSDAY, 9 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 1:8–12

Don't Be Ashamed

What stops you from spreading the gospel?

If someone close to you is a convicted criminal, you're probably not jumping at the opportunity to tell people about it. In most societies, there is a sense of shame associated with imprisonment, and a perception that a criminal's loved ones are guilty-by-association. Ancient Rome was no different. So it's understandable that Timothy would be hesitant to tell people that, not only was his mentor a convicted criminal, but so was his Messiah!

Paul points out that it is the power of God that gives Timothy (and us) the strength to suffer for the gospel. Paul did not withstand so much suffering for the gospel because he was stronger or holier than us. It was the Spirit of God that *gave* him strength and *made* him Holy. That very same Spirit lives in you and me, by the grace of God through Jesus' sacrifice.

Ultimately, whatever suffering we endure for the Gospel, we have the same comfort that Paul expresses in verse 12. Jesus safeguards that which is most precious to us (our soul) and saves us from the greatest possible source of suffering (Hell). Let this reassurance give you confidence and not shame.

Read Matthew 10:27–28 and pray that God's Spirit would give you courage to spread the gospel and glorify him.

FRIDAY, 10 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 1:13–18

Guarding the Gospel

When you are lonely or discouraged, it is good to turn to God. But it is also good to turn to our fellow Christians.

1. What is the 'good deposit' Paul mentions and what might it look like for Timothy to 'guard' it?

2. Other Christians seem to have deserted Paul in his time of need (15). When might you be tempted to distance yourself from a Christian in trouble because of their faith?

3. What are the different ways that Onesiphorus has encouraged Paul?

In a time before the internet, Onesiphorus searched the largest city in the world for his imprisoned friend. With God's help, may you show the same friendship to a fellow Christian in need of encouragement.

SATURDAY, 11 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 2:1–7

Endure Hardship

Does following Jesus ever feel like hard work to you? If so, when?

Our instinct is almost always to avoid suffering. When we willingly subject ourselves to unpleasantness or discomfort, it's usually with a greater goal in mind.

Timothy oversaw many leaders of many churches, which is why Paul tells Timothy to pass on his teachings to 'reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others' (2). The next 5 verses apply to church leaders, but there is wisdom in there that every Christian can apply to their mission.

Christians are soldiers. The metaphor is used time and again both in the Bible and in Christian tradition. The Bible is our sword, and we wield it to win people for Jesus.

Soldiers are brave, they risk their lives. They are distinct from civilians and are careful not to shame their uniforms. Their minds are always on their mission.

Just as athletes cannot win by making up their own rules, we must acknowledge God as the Lord and creator of all things, and live by his rules. Farmers are not as glamorous as soldiers or athletes, but they work just as hard, if not harder. Their reward is not a victor's crown, but a share of the crops.

Telling non-believers about Jesus is uncomfortable. I remember being nervous to the point of nausea before inviting a friend to church. Just as it takes strength to get out of bed and hit the gym, it also takes strength to endure the discomfort of talking about Jesus and living for him. So what do these three examples have in common? Hard work and discipline. We must be the same, but always knowing that our real strength is "the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (1).

If being a Christian never feels like hard work, you're not doing it right. Let us pray that God will make us like soldiers, athletes, and farmers.

SUNDAY, 12 JULY

PSALM 2

God Laughs

For a moment reflect on all the nations in the world who “take their stand” against obedience to our Holy God.

In this Psalm, nations, kings, rulers and peoples are rising up against God. They want to throw off the supposed ‘shackles’ of God’s rule and his laws. And how does God respond? He laughs! He scoffs at them! He rebukes them in anger. To rebel against the rule of the God of heaven is to invoke his anger. He alone has the right and means to rule the nations. And God has an anointed king that he has installed on the throne of Heaven to blot out this rebellion and rule these nations.

“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” God proclaims at Jesus’ baptism (Matthew 3:17). He declares Jesus to be the anointed King of Kings and Lord of Lords. As God’s anointed, Jesus deals with the people’s rebellion. For those who continue to resist God’s will, Jesus will deliver God’s wrath. *“You will break them with a rod of iron you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”* (9) It is a terrible thing to resist the rule of the Lord’s anointed. So we are warned to *“Kiss his son, or he will be angry. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”* (12).

On this side of the cross we know that Jesus himself bears the right anger of God against man’s rebellion, paying that debt with his own death. Those of us who repent and put our trust in this King Jesus are forgiven and able to live under his risen rule.?

Exalt the God of Heaven and Earth, the lord of lords and the king of kings, the rightful ruler of all people. And praise him for his anointed king, Jesus, who will rule forever and ever and will bear the iron rod, but will bless those who take refuge in him.

MONDAY, 13 JULY

GENESIS 3

Sin's Impact on Relationships

It's hard to read this sad chapter. We daily experience the impact that sin has had on human relationships and our world.

1. How do the actions and words of the serpent, woman and man demonstrate their lack of trust in God's good plan for them (1–6)?

2. How is the rupture in the relationship with God (and with each other) first shown (7–13)?

3. How do we see the impact of God's judgement on the serpent, woman and man in the ruptures in relationships between creation and humanity today (14–19)?

4. How do we see God's continuing care throughout this passage?

Lord, I know that I also sometimes don't trust your love and good plan for my life. Forgive my sinfulness. Thank you that I can trust in your mercy, through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Help me to live to please you. Amen.

TUESDAY, 14 JULY

JAMES 4:1–10

What Causes Fights and Quarrels?

This passage hardly mentions the word “sin”, yet we see its impacts in every line.

1. According to verses 1–3 (and Genesis 3), what causes quarrels and fights amongst us?

2. We live in a fallen world, daily coping with the impacts of man’s sinfulness. Why does being a “friend of the world” make us an “enemy of God” (4–7)?

3. How does God want us to solve our “sin problem” (8–10)?

Are you more a friend of the world than of God? Grieve over your own sinful thoughts and deeds. *“Humble yourself before the Lord and he will lift you up”* (10).

WEDNESDAY, 15 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 2:8–13

Remember Jesus Christ

When was the last time you forgot something important?

Paul calls us to join him in his suffering in 2:3, and verses 8–13 are a continuation of that call. Amidst this suffering, Paul calls Timothy to remember Jesus and to endure. He calls us to do the same: remember Jesus and endure!

What helps Paul endure? Remembering what is at stake: other people's eternity! He endures for the sake of others, that he might help them to remain in Christ to the end.

As followers of God, we will face all sorts of struggles. Some struggles are internal; we will battle with sin and temptation. Some are external; we face pressure from the world around us, such as criticism from sceptical family members.

These struggles can make us lose heart. We might not fall away overnight, but we take small steps down the slippery slope of disillusionment. We're tempted to take the easy road, to stay quiet and hidden as Christians in the world.

But remember Jesus! Remember all that he endured for us. Remember his sufferings, his humiliation, his death. Remember that he conquered death for us by his resurrection. Remember who he is: the long-awaited son of David, come to fulfil all the Promises of God. Remember the good news!

It will be hard at times to be a follower of God, but there is so much hope in Jesus. He is with us always. Let us help one another as we endure and remember Jesus!

Is there someone in your life who you could help to endure in the faith? Pray for them and send them a message.

THURSDAY, 16 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 2:14–19

An Approved Workman

Can you think of a time when someone misquoted you or misrepresented you?

1. What does Paul warn Timothy about in this passage?

2. What hope does this passage give amidst false teaching?

3. Have you ever thought about the false teachers in the world today? Which teachers or teachings do you think we need to be careful of today?

Ask God to protect you from false teachers and help you to currently handle and understand His word.

FRIDAY, 17 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 2:20–26

Useful to the Master

Do you think of yourself as a useful utensil in God's house?

1. Timothy was young – and so the call to flee the “evil desires of youth” (22) makes sense for him. For those of us who are older, we know that we can add to this “the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth” (Matthew 13:22) as well as many other temptations. Whatever our age, what are we all called to pursue? What might this look like?

2. Returning to verses 20 –21, how do you think you can become “an instrument for noble purposes”?

3. How should a Christian leader (and all of us) handle disagreements and arguments – over the Word (23–24)? What is our motivation (25–26)?

Father God, please help me to pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace in the strength of your Spirit. And help me to gently share your gospel even with those who oppose it, in the hope that they will come to repentance and faith. Amen.

SATURDAY, 18 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 3:1–9

Godlessness

What do you think people love the most these days?

I'm sure in the long list of sinful behaviour in verse 2–4, you will recognise much that we see in our own society today...and perhaps, like me, you can see aspects of yourself there as well! Read this list again, turning the focus on yourself, before looking outward.

Paul then turns to the specific impact of so-called spiritual leaders who are infected by these attitudes. Jannes and Jambres traditionally referred to 2 magicians who opposed Moses – and attempted to copy his miracles. Paul's warning here shows us that these people – those who outwardly display "*a form of godliness*" but actually "*oppose the truth*" – are not a new problem. It has long been the task of Christian leaders who "*correctly handle the truth*" to expose and reject such people from within the church.

We have all been shocked by the revelations of exploitation and abuse within the church. Just when we think the worst is over, another scandal emerges. It breaks our hearts to see the church of God – and his Name– brought into such disrepute.

How do we guard against these people and their influence? There are some clues even in this short passage. We should love God more than anything else (4) and seek, in his strength, to live godly lives. We should be assured that Christ paid the full penalty for our sins and trust in his forgiveness – and so not be "*weighed down*" by sin (7). We should stand firm in the truth of the gospel, growing into maturity in the Word – so that we are not easily swayed (7).

Father God, please forgive me for the many ways I fail to love you and others as I should. Thank you that Jesus died for my sins. Help me to love you above all. Help me to hold firmly to the truth of the gospel and to point others to your saving grace. Amen.

SUNDAY, 19 JULY

PSALM 3

Will God Deliver Me?

Have the cares of the world ever weighed on you so heavily that you lament, "Will God deliver me?"

This is where King David, the man after God's own heart, finds himself, writing on the run, hiding from his son Absalom, who has led a coup against him and most of Israel has turned against him too.

In this dire situation those around David question David's trust in God. They say, "God will not deliver him." And it sounds like David in his downcast state is drawn to believing them. Then he remembers who his God is, and what he has done.

Do you ever feel like David, feeling like the world is caving in on you, that everyone is against you? Then rest in the comfort of the next verses. The Lord is a protective shield around you – not just helping you survive, but thrive (3). You can pour out your troubles to him and he will answer you (4). You can sleep peacefully, trusting in the Lord's sustaining care (5). No matter the odds against you, you do not need to fear (6).

There will be times in life where we will lament, but like David, we can turn to our God in our lament. He is our Father who is before and above all things, so in him, we can lie down and sleep and rest in him because he will deliver his children at the end of the age.

If you are in this season of lament at the moment, remind yourself of your Father's love for you – and that *"the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."* (1 John 4:4). Rest in his grace, mercy and steadfast love.

If all is going well for you, store up these reminders for future difficult times – and pray for a Christian brother or sister who needs to rest in these promises now.

MONDAY, 20 JULY

EPHESIANS 2:12–22

A Worthwhile Mess

Division and hostility abound in our sinful societies. Does the church feel different to you?

1. We are Gentiles. How does Paul describe our original hopeless situation?

2. How does Christ reconcile us to God and bring peace – making us “*fellow citizens*” (13–17)?

3. How does the metaphor of the temple building (20–22) emphasise our purpose and unity, giving hope to individual Christians from very different backgrounds?

Lord, we thank you that you brought us, who were far off, near to you and that through Jesus’ blood we can be reconciled to you and to each other. Thank you that we are being built together and that you live in your church by your Spirit. Amen.

TUESDAY, 21 JULY

COLOSSIANS 3:12–17

Bear With One Another

These verses make beautiful reading. We would really love to have all these qualities... and we would especially like all our Christian brothers and sisters to have them too!

1. Make a list of all the commands: "clothe, bear with.....". Think of your relationships... where do you fall down?

2. How does Christ's attitude to us – and our gratitude to him – impact our attitude and behaviour to each other?

3. Verses 15–17 emphasises the body of believers. How can we encourage each other and urge each other on?

Lord may your love bind all these virtues together (compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience). May we forgive as you forgive. May your peace rule in our heart and the word of Christ dwell richly in us. And may we do whatever we do, in Jesus' name and thankfulness to you. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, 22 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 3:10–16

Paul's Charge to Timothy

Would you describe the Christian life to be difficult? If so, how do you sustain yourself through it?

1. How does Paul describe his Christian life to Timothy in verses 10–11? What comfort is there for his circumstances?

2. What does Paul urge Timothy to do in light of what the Christian life looks like (14–15)?

3. Why are the Holy Scriptures (the Bible) so important (16–17)? Do you agree with Paul's words on this?

The Christian life will be difficult at times, filled with persecution. But Paul reminds Timothy and us that God has rescued him from those dire times, and he will surely rescue us too! others.

Pray to God that he will keep teaching us from the Bible as we read it so that we can be equipped for whatever this life brings – persecution or blessing.

THURSDAY, 23 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 4:1–5

Preach the Word

How do you feel when you are confronted with an uncomfortable truth? How do you feel when you are the one presenting the truth to someone else?

1. What charge does Paul give to Timothy? How is Timothy instructed to carry out this charge (1–2)?

2. Why is it important to preach the Word (3–4)? What's at stake if we do not do this?

3. How might you "*keep your head in all situations*" (5), either as the one hearing the truth or as the one speaking the truth?

Dear Lord, please help me to be prepared to preach the truth from your Word in all circumstances. Please help me speak your truth with great patience and careful instruction. Please help me resist the desire to hear what I want to hear, and instead hear clearly what you have to say to me. Amen.

FRIDAY, 24 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 4:6–15

The End of the Race

Pretend you're running in a marathon and you're near the end of the race. Do you look back to see how far you've come, or do you look forward to how much further you need to go?

1. What does Paul look forward to at the end of his "race" (8)? Who else looks forward to this?

2. When Paul looks back at his trials, what is he grateful towards God for (16–18)?

3. Do you find courage through God in your Christian race as you look back on what he's done in your life, and in the reward which lies ahead?

Dear Lord, thank you for rescuing me from my trials and troubles in the past. Thank you that you will bring me safely into your heavenly kingdom through Jesus Christ. Please help me to keep running my race, and to keep fighting the good fight for you. Amen.

SATURDAY, 25 JULY

2 TIMOTHY 4:16–22

Strengthened

How would you end a letter if you thought it might be your last contact with someone you cared for?

1. How does verse 16 echo Christ's ordeal?

2. In verses 17–18, how do we see Paul's trust in the Lord and his commitment to do as he instructed Timothy – to *"preach the word... in season and out of season"* (4:2)?

3. Paul goes on to share greetings and to pray a blessing on his readers (19–22). How does this whole passage (16–22) challenge you to live out your faith?

Lord, help us never to be ashamed of the gospel and always be prepared to share the hope we have in you. Help us to love and support Christian brothers and sisters, especially those who are under attack for their faithful proclamation of your Word. Amen.

SUNDAY, 26 JULY

PSALM 4

Safety in the Lord

Where do you turn to in distress?

David goes straight to God for help, demanding an answer, because he knows his Lord is righteous and merciful (1).

In difficult circumstances the people, however, are turning to false gods (2), making sacrifices to them and seeking their favour. Even though we are thousands of years apart, our 21st century culture is so like that of the people of Israel. Our neighbours turn to false gods and idols too in their distress to find their answers. In the west at least most of these idols are not physical idols but are things like money, power, sex, success, and possessions to find comfort, security and trust. These might be different from the idols that Israel turned to, but they are no less hollow.

David continues to turn to God. He prays on behalf of the people *“Let the light of your face shine on us”* (6) for God to draw close and to end their distress. He reminds himself of the great joy that a relationship with God brings (7) – an eternal joy, not the passing happiness of a great harvest. David trusts in God alone and can lie down to sleep assured that God will look after his life (8).

We are more privileged than even David, because we don't have to plead for God's face to shine on us. Jesus is God's light (2 Corinthians 4:6) and he has made himself known to us. And has said he will never forsake us. So, in distress, trust Jesus and know he holds your life, now and into eternity. (19).

Ask God to show you what (or who) it is you turn to under pressure – before you turn to him. Ask for his forgiveness. Give thanks for the riches of his promises to us and the blessings of his presence with us – and ask for strength to make the right choices next time.

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