

DEVOTIONS FOR PERSONAL AND CORPORATE RENEWAL

Throughout the centuries God has regularly brought renewal to individuals, churches and to entire nations reminding us of His grace, power and presence. Sometimes the prayers of His people have resulted in movements like the Great Awakening. Other times, the renewals have been more subtle and localized.

Late in 2017, the Lord began to move in our hearts to pray for renewal in the Missionary Church in anticipation of our annual conference. As we prayed, the six themes in this prayer guide emerged. With a commitment to continue this prayer effort, we are providing this devotional guide to focus on these themes: a longing for deeper intimacy with the Father; a greater sense of dependency on Him; a deeper desire for holiness; a greater brokenness for lost people; a broader commitment to making disciples; and a deeper commitment to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

Suggested ways you can use this guide:

1. Pray for one theme each day Monday through Saturday. Use the written prayers as prompts and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you about other prayers around those themes.
2. Pray for one theme each week for 6 weeks. Use one of the 5 written prayers as a prompt for the day.

A word from the Missionary Church President...

Sue and I were in a busy downtown restaurant when we noticed a new Mercedes which pulled up and parked suddenly just outside the restaurant window. At first it looked like the driver must be having some trouble, because he got out of the car and immediately doubled over on the ground.

A closer look through the curtains revealed that he had laid out a blanket on the asphalt, carefully turned it until it was pointing toward Mecca, and knelt down on it to pray. It was the time of Muslim prayer, and so he had pulled off the road. His wife and teen-aged son stood nearby until he had finished, and when he stood up they each took their turn kneeling and praying toward Mecca. After all 3 of them finished, they got back in their car and left.

This caused me to reflect on the nature of prayer because for the Muslim, prayer is required at 5 set times every day. But the “prayer” is really a set of memorized affirmations which they recite word for word each time. The common Muslim belief is that if they do not do this, their god will not answer their prayers.

By contrast, we as Christians understand that God doesn't require that we repeat the same memorized script multiple times a day. Our prayers flow from the fact that we have been offered a relationship with God Himself. He invites us into a never-ending conversation, filled with sharing our everyday lives with Him, and hearing His will and desire for our lives.

Prayer is the great privilege of being a Christian. It means that we can express our hearts to God in our own words. He replies to our requests, responds to our need for wisdom, and reassures us of His constant concern for our well-being.

As you use this prayer guide, remember that it is a set of conversation starters. Expect God to use these prompts to begin a dialogue with you that lasts through your entire day. He cares for you and can't wait to spend this time with you!

God's blessings,

Steve Jones

PRAYING FOR DEEPER INTIMACY WITH GOD

Psalm 27:4

*One thing I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.*

One night after I told the Lord I wanted more of Him in my life, the Lord visited me with what I call **“a baptism of His presence”**. For more than two hours I was immersed in His love as He poured His liquid love over me. Afterwards, He was my desire and I couldn’t get enough of Him in my life. **Psalm 27:4** speaks of this desire I had and still have for God as I seek to get closer and closer to Him.

David’s primary focus in **Psalm 27:4** is the “one thing” he desires. It is aimed only in the Lord’s direction and no other place. His desire for God is so strong and so focused that he knows what he wants and all other things are counted as nothing except this “one thing.”

This “one thing” David desires to do is to “DWELL” in God’s house. Wow! What an aspiration! He is not just wanting to hang out (as good as that would be), but wants to be where God is! He wants to be there in God’s Holy presence, beholding his beauty and talking about spiritual things. Nothing will satisfy David’s heart more than this and only this “one thing.” Amen! And Amen! This is my desire also – to be continually in God’s holy presence, living there in relationship, worshipping Him, and being taught by Him. This is the “one thing” I desire. I pray this to be Your desire also.

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1. **Psalm 27:4:** One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.

PRAYER: Lord God, only “one thing” is important and that is to be with You no matter what. This involves my seeking You, talking to You and being in Your presence in worship and prayer. It is my desire to be close to You, Lord, to see You and walk in Your ways daily. It is my desire to dwell in Your house, being continually in Your presence, and enjoy our time together. This I seek after in Jesus’ name. Amen.

2. **Joshua 24:14-15:** *Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

PRAYER: Father God, You have never forced me to follow You. It has always been my choice. I just want to do it. People around me show their choices all the time. I see people who are saying they choose You but are still worshiping their past and the way things used to be. I see people worshiping all that is happening today without any regard as to whether there is truth in what is occurring. They are in it for the thrill of the moment. Like Joshua, I choose You today. Like Joshua, I choose You for my family. You are the one and only true God. There is no other! I acknowledge this and proclaim it to be true in Jesus' name. Amen.

3. **2 Thessalonians 1:11:** Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,

PRAYER: Lord God, every work I do as a Christian is to be done in faith through Your power. I do the works I do because You have called me to do them. This is what being a Christian is about. I desire to be more faithful and obedient to Your call on my life. May all I do be done in Your power and for Your glory. Enable me to be more in tune with every facet of Your goodness and the power of Your Holy Spirit. I desire to be counted worthy of Your calling on my life and may it be fulfilled in me through Jesus my Lord. Amen.

4. **Hebrews 4:12:** *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

PRAYER: Father, Your Word is not just a dry book of 66 books unrelated to our lives. It is living! It is active! It is powerful! It has the ability to go into me piercing and discerning! It lets me know what my real thoughts and intentions are. It lets me know whether or not I am following my way or Your way in my life. It then brings me to You and Your solutions for the issues in my life. As I read and study Your Word, may I let it do its transforming work in me. Help me adjust my life to it in Jesus' name. Amen.

5. **Luke 10:41-42:** *And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

PRAYER: Lord God, we are anxious and troubled, not dealing with things effectively. We get caught up in the details of doing stuff. We get involved more than we would like with whatever is next on our agenda. We generally don't take time to rest, relax, listen or ponder, or seek You. Lord, I seek You for times of refreshing. I seek You for times of rest. I seek You to help me slow down my pace and to be more selective in my activities including choosing the "one thing necessary" and this is You and Your presence in Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAYING FOR A GREATER SENSE OF DEPENDENCY ON GOD

A dear friend of mine who travels the world as an itinerant evangelist recently visited the U.S. for his annual medical check-up. During his two week stay he took careful stock of American culture, in particular that of the American evangelical church. As he left the U.S. to resume international ministry, he sent me a note of personal reflection. "I am convinced that most western 'Christians' are really humanists with a thin veneer of Christian practices. God's primary relevance is to serve our needs and take us to Heaven someday."

The Psalmist wrote, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." (Psalm 20:7 NIV) But do we really trust in God? Do we truly live lives that are fully dependent on God? Living within all the opulence and technological advantages of western culture, is there still a need to depend upon God?

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the U.S., church attendance spiked in America...briefly. During that period of months, there was a pervasive sense of helplessness as Americans felt a desperate dependence on God. Psalm 20:7 became a reality...briefly. Eventually our society drifted back to an independent modus operandi. It is only when we trust in the Lord with all our hearts, and lean not upon our own understanding, that we can experience the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives and in our country.

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1. **Isaiah 40:31:** *But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

Isaiah 41:10: *Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'*

PRAYER: Father forgive us for the times when we have attempted to live out the surrendered life in our own flawed flesh, through our own limited energies. We know that you are the source of our strength, our righteous right hand. Give us the necessary patience to wait upon you and your clear direction on our lives. We place our trust and dependency solely upon you.

2. **Matthew 18:20:** *For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*

Hebrews 10:25: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

PRAYER: Lord, all too often we attempt to "do church" strictly through human programming. Forgive us for not seeking you and your direction. May we approach the gathering of believers as an opportunity to engage corporate prayer, lavishing your throne of mercy with prayers of praise, worship, and intercession.

3. **Matthew 6:25:** Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

John 15:7: *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

PRAYER: Lord, I worry too much. I realize that comes from depending on my own wisdom and understanding in order to respond to life's challenges. Teach me to depend upon you and leave my worries at the foot of the cross.

4. **Proverbs 3:5:** *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;*

John 14:13-14: *And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*

PRAYER: Father forgive us when we rush into decisions without bringing them before you. We often act out of a sense of independence, as if our judgment is adequate, our life experience sufficient to make every one of life's decisions. Teach us to approach you, seeking your divine guidance rather than leaning upon our own understanding.

5. **Ephesians 6:18:** praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

PRAYER: Lord, I am weary of praying for the same thing for years. My weariness stems from what appears to no answer from you. Teach me to pray in the Spirit, to pray without ceasing, fully trusting in you and your love for me.

PRAYING FOR A GREATER PASSION FOR HOLINESS

My deceased father-in-law, Robert (Bob) Chenoweth, had a passion for holiness. Even though he was a very successful business man, he lived a life that drew people to Jesus. The large cross that was attached to his business sign caused people to think Chenoweth Construction was a church. I have distinct memories of Bob sitting at the dinner table with tears in his eyes and clinched fists passionately conveying a moment that he led a man to Jesus in his office. In 1991, Bob died tragically with four other men when the small plane he was piloting crashed. Over 1000 people came to his funeral and the family heard many untold stories of Bob leading people to Christ or helping them to get back on track with the Lord. Bob Chenoweth led a Spirit-filled life that was obedient to God's Word and drew people to Jesus; a passionate life for holiness. His marked-up Bible (with red pen!) is in our home.

The world and Satan might try to deceive believers into thinking that holiness offends people and it is all about rules so it will not draw people to Christianity, but God's Word is Truth and it tells us that living out holiness will draw people to Jesus (2 Timothy 2:24-26; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 2 Peter 3:10-15). Holiness attracts the manifest presence of God and the presence of God changes the atmosphere and people (Ephesians 5:8-9;14-15; Acts 1:1-41).

If holiness is what draws people to Jesus, why wouldn't believers want to pursue holiness with a passion? It is what distinguishes disciples of Jesus.

1. **Ephesians 4:23:** and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help us to allow the Holy Spirit to renew our thoughts and attitudes and to change our behaviors so they are pleasing to you.

2. **2 Peter 1:5-8:** *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help us to respond to your Word with the power of the Holy Spirit. As we grow in moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, patient endurance, godliness, brotherly affection and love for everyone, we will be more productive and useful in building Your Kingdom.

3. **2 Corinthians 7:1:** *Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help us to cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear You.

4. **1 Peter 2:9:** *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help us to live out our identity that is in you so that we can show others your goodness. Help us to live up to being YOUR chosen people; YOUR royal priests; YOUR very own possession!

5. **Psalm 139:23-24:** *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, Search and know our hearts; test us and know our anxious thoughts. Point out anything in us that offends you, and lead us along the path of everlasting life.

PRAYING FOR GREATER BROKENNESS FOR LOST PEOPLE

Only for a while, and only to a point. A little dose of guilt and conviction will generally prompt a response... but only for a time, and only to a point. The effect is not lasting. Such motivation serves as a quick short-term fix, but it is never something that endures.

Altogether different, however, is when God sparks a deep, searing passion for need in the heart of His servants. Hearts ablaze like this are not unlike that of Jeremiah who had a “fire shut up in my bones” that could not be constrained. Such fire drives unrelenting mission and motivates a people who will stop at nothing.

Guilt gets us through the one-time need. Deep burdens launch movements. The apostle Paul was driven by a deep sense of the needs of those who hadn't heard the gospel. Jesus looked over the crowds and was deeply moved with compassion – in the deepest parts of Him. The word in Matthew 9:36 for His “having compassion” comes from a word that literally means “intestines,” the inner parts. It's a term that connotes strong emotional response.

Jesus wasn't merely “concerned” by the plight of the lost. He was deeply moved! We catch a glimpse of the heart of God there, a heart that drives His mission. When we pray to be made more like Christ, are we also desiring *this* heart? Let this call to prayer be a call for a greater brokenness for lost people.

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1. **Matthew 9:36-38:** *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

PRAYER: Relentlessly pursuing God, enable me to see those around me through the eyes of Jesus. Move me in the deepest parts with desperate compassion for the lost. Break my heart with that which breaks the heart of Christ Himself.

2. **Acts 16:9-10:** *During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

PRAYER: Gracious guiding Lord, bring us visions – literal or figurative – of those who need to hear the life-giving message of the gospel. Enable me to hear the calls of their heart and prompt my heart with ready desire to respond “at once” in whatever way You are directing.

3. **Acts 20:22,24:** *“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there...However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.*

PRAYER: God of mission, you have laid before us a calling to share the good news of Jesus with a world in desperate need to hear. Spirit, compel me to set aside even life itself for the sake of reaching those whose eternal life hangs in the balance. Catalyze our church with the zealousness that prompted you to launch this redemptive mission in the first place – a profoundly sacrificial, costly love. May we love as you love.

4. **Luke 15:4:** *“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?”*

PRAYER: Good Shepherd, stir my heart with the unyielding pursuit of the one. Create within me the kind of heart a good shepherd has for the wandering one. Reorder my concerns. Prompt grace within me. And compel me to seek the lost with the same kind of one-mindedness with which you sought me.

5. **Luke 19:10:** *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*

PRAYER: Jesus, you came to seek and to save the lost. You came to seek and save *me*. May lostness discomfort us. May we not be content to be merely found. May we be as singularly focused on your mission as the Son of Man was. Give us your heart, moved by compassion for those who are not yet found.

PRAYING FOR A BROADER DESIRE TO ENGAGE IN DISCIPLE-MAKING RELATIONSHIPS

In Matthew 28:18-20 we find the Great Commission: “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.’” Often, this passage is taken to be a proclamation of evangelism—a call to make converts. And that it is. But it is so much more. For our Lord tells us to teach those we reach to fully obey him in all that he commands. To be a true convert to Christianity, a true follower of Jesus, is to be one who does what Jesus says. The great proclamation of the great commission is not one of mere conversion, but one of radical obedience and discipleship to Jesus Christ.

1. **PRAYER:** Heavenly Father, thank you for the invitation to be involved in the great commission of making disciples of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Make us instruments of the good news, that in both word and deed we proclaim the risen Christ and his salvation. Help us in our own discipleship, our own obedience, and guide us as we make disciples of all nations.

2. **Luke 6:40:** *A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.*

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we are far from your likeness. We desperately need to be more like you in our thoughts and our actions. Help us to be fully committed followers of you, our Master Teacher.

3. **Acts 1:8:** *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

PRAYER: Thank you, Lord God, for sending the Holy Spirit to empower your disciples, both in ancient times and today, to make disciples throughout the world. Give us wisdom and effectiveness as we witness to the work you have done and are doing through Jesus Christ.

4. **II Timothy 2:2:** *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

PRAYER: O Heavenly Father, show us, your people, what it means to be qualified to instruct others in the gospel and in the Christian life. Mold us into your reliable servants, your trusted teachers, and incredibly contagious Christians.

5. **Matthew 24:14:** *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

PRAYER: Most gracious God, thank you for giving us the good news of the kingdom. You have instructed us to preach this gospel to the whole world. What a mighty invitation! We acknowledge that we cannot do this on our own strength. Grant us wisdom, insight, and power to accomplish this great task of preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the entire world, for your greater glory. Amen.

RENEWED COMMITMENT TO DO JUSTICE

We live in a broken and hurting world. Families are disintegrating and people are lonely and isolated in the chaos of busyness. Cries resonate from a broken and hurtful past thus forming the present and future realities for many. One can easily become discouraged, yet, as followers of Christ our call is to a renewed commitment of justice/righteousness.

In Psalm 85, the psalmist climaxes his writing with verse 10 which says, “Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness (justice) and peace kiss each other.” The culmination of this beautiful verse can be found in the incarnation of Christ. In Jesus, love, faithfulness, righteousness (justice), and peace fully come together. The fulfilment of this act is seen as Jesus hangs on the cross...her, love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness (justice) and peace kiss.

Jesus modeled a life of humble service...meeting people in their space, journeying with them toward where justice and peace kiss. Are we willing to be the hands and feet of Jesus...to embrace the hurting and downtrodden...to be present and misunderstood...to be up to our necks in messiness...to trust the Father to heal as He uses us to bind the wounds?

It's time the world once again witnesses THE CHURCH...we who willingly allow God's Word to permeate and direct our lives...we who heed god's Word in every area of life. Come, let us be the body of Christ as we serve, embodying where love and faithfulness meet together and justice and peace kiss.

1. **Micah 6:8:** *He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*

PRAYER: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name! You have shown us what we must do; who we must be. Now grant us the courage to be obedient so that our witness leads people to You, the Author and perfecter of our faith. Grant us the strength of humility and the power of Your Holy Spirit.

2. **Psalm 10:17-18:** *LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear, To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, That the man of the earth may oppress no more.*

PRAYER: Lord, in Your omniscience and sovereignty, lead us to those who need to see Your Word lived before. When you asked, “Who will go for us?” may our response be the same as Isaiah, “Here I am. Send me!”

3. **Deuteronomy 10:19:** *Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

PRAYER: Father, Your heart has always been for the whole Give me Your heart, help me to see those around me who are foreigners in a land not their own. Grant me a welcoming spirit that will embrace and encourage and walk alongside so that the “other” becomes “us”.

4. **Luke 4:17-21:** *And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:*

*“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me ^[a]to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”*

Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as you proclaimed the heart of your ministry to be that which perfectly reflects the heart of the Father, so we ask today that the heart of our life and ministry would reflect your heart. Grant me, grant us, a heart for the poor...for the neglected and hurting in my/our community.

5. **James 1:27:** *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

PRAYER: Our Father and Lord, there are so many lonely and marginalized people in our communities – the poor, the widows, the single moms, the orphans, the homeless. Open our eyes and show us how best to live your love to each of these.

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