



## DAY 1 READ PSALM 68:4-6 & PSALM 82:1-4

# 1

Americans work hard for 40 or 50 years while looking forward to retirement. Recently, the economy has forced many to take a hard look at Social Security and whether or not it will still provide an income when needed. Anxiety follows our uncertainty. In ancient Israel, this wasn't even an option. People died young from diseases that no longer touch us and accidents that are not fatal today. To an orphan or a widow in Israel's world, it would have been nonsense to say, "God helps those who help themselves." With no legal or social status, and no influential male relative to take their side, widows or orphans in that society simply had no way to "help themselves." Again and again, in the Psalms and many of Israel's laws, it was clear that God cared passionately about helping those who could not help themselves.

## DAY 2 READ DANIEL 9:15-19

# 2

Is there anything we hate more than being helpless? As human beings, we like to tell ourselves, "I'm not that bad. I'm not as bad as that person over there." But the truth about sin is that I am that bad, and I am helpless to save myself. Daniel knew this and prayed on behalf of Israel because they didn't recognize their great need. As followers of Christ, we understand our sinful and helpless state. People around us know the world is broken, they might need help finding out why. So let's tell them the story and pray for our country too. We pray, not because ours is the best democracy or the standard of all that is good, but because God is gracious. As Daniel said, "we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion."

## DAY 3 READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:4-7

# 3

When Christianity first came to Europe around 300 A.D., church buildings were small and dark. By the early Middle Ages, technological advances made it possible to construct taller buildings with larger windows. The churches of the Middle Ages had majestic stained glass windows, high ceilings, and tall spires. The architects designed these grand places of worship so that everyone's eyes turned upward to God in heaven. Bigger buildings or better preachers don't make our faith greater. That's just silly. Paul told the Corinthians it wasn't about what they had gained for themselves. It's not about the building, or the music, the numbers, or the preacher. It's all about Jesus and what He did for us on the cross. We have nothing except what God in His grace has given to us!

## DAY READ ROMANS 8:5-11

4

Have you ever felt like everything is working against you? That no matter what you do or how hard you work, it just doesn't come together? You feel frustrated and discouraged. Have you ever felt the same way trying to follow God? You do your best to do it right, but the trying never ends, and you feel fed up and defeated. Left to our natural impulses, Paul says, our hearts are hostile to God. Sometimes we fight against the One who freed us. Even then we have God's Spirit to help us get back on track and live in the freedom Jesus purchased by His sacrifice. Sometimes we find the Christian life frustrating because we are not trusting.

## DAY READ EPHESIANS 2:4-10

5

If you are a parent, you may have held that baby for the first time and imagined all the wonderful things he or she would do. A great dancer or guitarist, a famous surgeon, or a philanthropist who would serve others. Believe it or not, God our Father is no different. He looks at you and me and says, "I have plans for you. Not just for you but think of what I'll accomplish through you!" In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he is reminding them of what God had saved them from and what purpose He wanted to save them for. We are God's workmanship, a masterpiece. We are created for good works. Spend some time today thanking God for what He saved you from and asking Him what work He has planned for you to do!

AppNotes are available on our Facebook page, Monday-Friday.

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