



# prayer *life!*

## Weekly Prayer Focus

January 24, 2016

### Don't Stop Believing

*Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. —Hebrews 3:12-14*

God has a way of working with His children to make us grow. He alternates great deeds of deliverance with seasons of waiting—even struggle. First, He demonstrates that He is mighty to save, then He allows us to go through times of difficulty, when we feel “on our own.” Of course, we’re never truly on our own, but like a parent teaching a child to walk, He lets us struggle, so to speak, in our own strength. But in His plan, “strength” means faith—the ability to trust in Him, whatever happens.

David is a perfect example. Anointed as king at an early age, exalted as Israel’s great hero when he killed Goliath, God allowed him to go through years of exile and personal danger, when his only grasp on God’s promise was his faith that God would keep him.

The same is true of Israel. After withering in slavery for 400 years, God set them free in a display of power the world seldom sees. In the process, He humbled the mightiest nation on earth—ancient Egypt’s eighteenth dynasty. The ten plagues God brought on that proud land showed His power over the gods they worshiped, proved their priests to be the frauds they were, and reduced their defiant Pharaoh to tearful compliance. Parting the Red Sea, displayed the LORD’s astounding power to save His people. Drowning Egypt’s army showed that no power on earth can stand before His might.

But then, God let His people wander through the desert and wonder where their next meal would come from. He tested them with thirst, to see if they would trust Him. This test was no accident. It is His way. Not only was He testing their faith, He was establishing that He is LORD and proving He can be trusted in everything. Psalm 95 confronts their refusal to believe.

Job’s experience offers a glimpse of the dynamics in the heavenly realms and opens a window into his suffering soul. Job’s story reveals Satan as the source of the evil that assailed Job, but shows God in complete control over all things—even the forces of evil that oppose Him and His people. The story also reveals the dynamics of the struggle of faith, where a man of faith contests God’s very right to act as God in his life. In the bitter end Job put his trust in his LORD, no matter what happened.

This faith is what God is after. Faith that overcomes the world. Peter calls this faith *more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire* (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:7). John identifies it as *the victory that has overcome the world* (1<sup>st</sup> John 5:4). Notice the tense of the verb, *has overcome*. Jesus has already won the battle for us. Our faith is in His finished work. Our job is to believe this fact as we take on whatever challenge God sets before us. And the ancient stories of God’s people are examples to lead us trust and obey the God who has proved Himself faithful in every test (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:6).

When we go through sickness, God is teaching us to trust Him. The loss we experience is a tool He uses to teach us faith. When trial touches us or our children, God is working His eternal purpose. That weakness we wish He would take away forces us to lean heavily on Him and learn His mighty power.

Things happen in life, but nothing just happens. God’s sovereignty in everything means more than His control of events or His right to call the shots. It means His positive purpose, no matter what He calls us to endure. It means we can trust Him no matter what.

Peter was an eyewitness to the greatest suffering a human being ever experienced. Using Christ as an example, he urges believers to keep believing. One day, those who follow Christ in His suffering will enter with Him into His victory. *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed* (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:12-13).

*To the praise of God’s glory*

# Prayer for the Week

**Sunday (Church):** Pray that God will use our Youth Pastor, Jonathan Clubb, to lead our students to love Christ, trust Him, and follow His ways.

**Monday (Home and Family):** Seek God’s eternal blessing for your extended family: uncles, aunts, cousins, and their families.

**Tuesday (Job/School):** Ask Christ to reveal Himself through you to your fellow students or those you serve through your job.

**Wednesday (Neighborhood and Community):** Pray for the spiritual, physical, and emotional safety of our local community workers, city leaders, teachers, police and fire departments.

**Thursday (The Nation):** Ask God to use His blessings on our nation to serve others and glorify Himself, so that our wealth and freedom serves His kingdom and leads others to Him.

**Friday (The World):** Ask God to protect and build His Church in Middle East and to establish liberty, stability, and peace in that region.

**Saturday (Praise and Rejoicing):** Praise God for your family and friends. They are special gifts from Him to you.

## Prayer Record

Record specific prayers you have below. Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

| Date | Request | Date | Answer |
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*No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. –1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:13*