

# 7 DAYS OF PRAYING THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

*Featuring  
insights and scriptures from  
THE MESSAGE OF HOPE*

+

*prayers from  
your friends at NavPress*

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# Introduction

What follows is not a collection of devotional readings for your quiet time. It is not a seven-step guide to a more dynamic prayer life. It may function as those things, but they are not what this is.

What this is, is complicated. It is made complicated by the circumstances we find ourselves in:

United as a global community by a worldwide pandemic, a virus that infects at an exponential rate.

Fragmented to our most irreducible states, as the virus pushes us into isolation in our households, for our own safety and that of our neighbors.

We are simultaneously confronted by our essential community and exiled from it. This resource is a reminder of that.

But that is not all that this resource is.

This resource is also a reminder that accompanying every difficult circumstance, every calamity that befalls us and every crisis that besets us, is a God who loves us and invites us into hope.

That hope is not divorced from reality. If God is anything, he is a realist.

But neither is that hope paralyzed by reality. If God is anything, he is sovereign over and superior to even the worst that hits us in this world.

So then, what this resource is, is an invitation to a sevenfold prayer—one that begins with lament and ends with vision, one that faces reality with sobriety but which never loses sight of the promises God has made us, the assurance that God has graced us with, the trust that has been validated throughout the history of God's people, the testimony that is our privilege to share, the commission that sends us out into the world with good news.

In this resource you'll find passages from *The Message* Bible, a contemporary rendering of the text of Scripture that is known and loved for its resonant language and its fierce commitment to practicing a real faith in the real world. You'll also find prayers written by several NavPress authors specifically for your use. You might take a day at a time to move through this resource. You might move through it in one sitting. You might return to it again and again when you find yourself in a moment of lament or in a moment where your vision is hard to recover. However you use it, know that it is born of a sense that prayer is our ultimate resource, reviving our connection to God and to one another, empowering us to act redemptively in the world even when we are confined to our homes. May your prayers be bold throughout this journey, and may you experience hope at every step.

# Lament, *Day 1*

Aubrey Sampson



Lament is where the people God calls his are invited to turn when they find themselves separated from hope. Therefore, lament is, paradoxically, where the message of hope begins.

God, listen! Listen to my prayer,  
listen to the pain in my cries.  
Don't turn your back on me  
just when I need you so desperately.  
Pay attention! This is a cry for *help*!  
And hurry—this can't wait!

Psalm 102:1-2

God, pick up the pieces.  
Put me back together again. . . .  
Don't add to my troubles.  
Give me some relief!

Jeremiah 17:14, 17

## A Prayer of Lament

How long, Oh Lord, will this go on? We lament for our country and the world. We cry out for the overlooked and isolated, the broken-hearted, the hungry and the sick. We grieve for those who have lost incomes, homes, and businesses. We lament for victims of oppression and racism. We mourn with those who have lost loved ones. We lament rites of passages – graduations, birthdays, weddings, births, funerals. They are not what we want them to be. Look on us, Lord. Be near.

Yet in our shared grief, we lament with hope because your loyal love never runs out. Your mercy never dries up. Your faithfulness is great. In our uncertainty, we're clinging to the victory of Jesus.

# Promises, *Day 2*

*Tom Yeakley*



It doesn't take long flipping through the pages of the Bible to discover that God is a maker (and a keeper) of promises. Having lamented those things in our lives that seem to lack hope, we turn now to this God of promises and invite him to reframe our expectations of life and the world.

God is all mercy and grace—  
not quick to anger, is rich in love.

God is good to one and all;  
everything he does is soaked  
through with grace.

Psalms 145:8-9

Depend on God and keep at it  
because in the Lord God you  
have a sure thing.

Isaiah 26:4

## **A Prayer of Promise**

Lord, I thank you for the promise of forgiveness of my sins (1 John 1:9) and the promise of the hope of eternal life (1 John 2:25). I thank you also for the many personal promises for my life and ministry that anchor my soul in times of trial.

I'm comforted that all your promises are backed by your character – you do not lie or change your mind. And I'm reassured, when tempted to doubt, that your unlimited power enables you to do what seems impossible. May you glorify yourself as you fulfill your promises in and through me. Amen.

# Assurance, *Day 3*

*Don Whitney*



The hope that the Bible offers is often invisible, beyond understanding. And yet it is more grounded in ultimate reality than the substitutes for hope we so often reach for. God's promises, if we allow them, nurture in us the assurance that God is for us and actively shepherding us to a flourishing future.

Where is the god who can compare  
with you—

wiping the slate clean of guilt,

Turning a blind eye, a deaf ear,

to the past sins of your purged  
and precious people?

You don't nurse your anger and don't  
stay angry long,

for mercy is your specialty. That's  
what you love most.

Micah 7:18

This comprehensive setting-things-right  
that is salvation is *God's* business, and  
a most flourishing business it is.

Romans 10:3

## **A Prayer of Assurance**

O Lord of Heaven and earth, all our hope is in you—not in leaders or governments or courts or armies, but in you. For your steadfast love for your people is everlasting. You are no less loving and faithful to your people today than you were to Abraham, David, Peter, or Paul. You are not a God who changes.

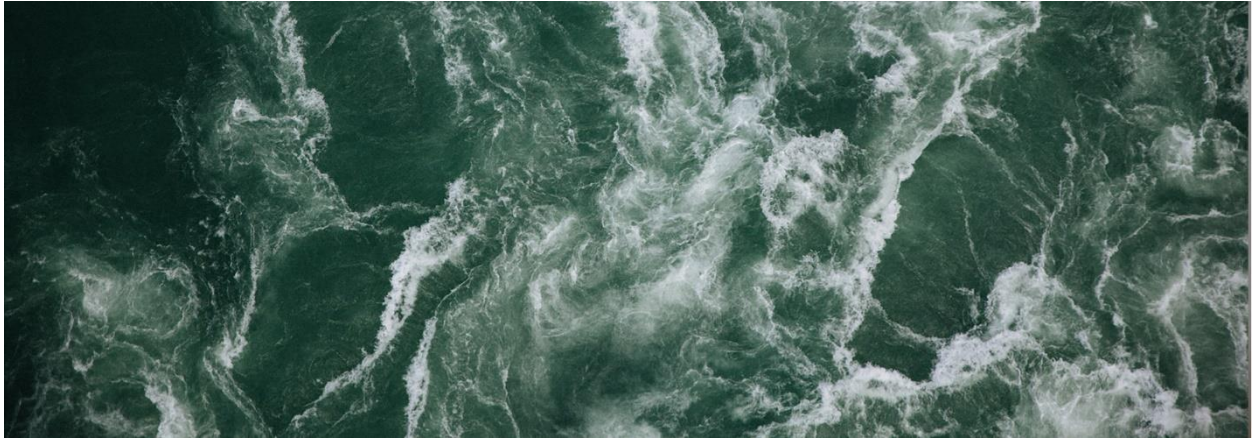
We are sure that what Jesus accomplished for us through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension can never be diminished by time, politics, culture, or even hell itself.

We rejoice in knowing that you are a covenant-keeping, promise-keeping God. Strengthen our faith today in every word of your good and precious promises. This we ask in Jesus' name and for your glory. Amen.



# Trust, *Day 4*

*Cynthia Heald*



Having been invited by God to settle the matter firmly in our hearts that God is, God is good, and God is for us, we now turn back toward our lives with new eyes, living and acting out of our trust in God's provision and care.

Stay with God!

Take heart. Don't quit.

I'll say it again:

Stay with God.

Psalm 27:14

God's not finished. He's waiting around  
to be gracious to you.

He's gathering strength to show  
mercy to you.

God takes the time to do everything  
right— everything.

Those who wait around for him are  
the lucky ones.

Isaiah 30:18

## **A Prayer of Trust**

Father, in the midst of our uncertain world, what peace and comfort we have because you are our sovereign, trustworthy God whose plans stand firm forever to be accomplished in your way and in your time. You alone are our rock in whom we find protection, our fortress where we will not be shaken, our refuge and strength for each day. Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for we trust in your holy name. Amen.



# Testimony, *Day 5*

*Leslie Leyland Fields*



We are not alone in the world. As we look around with renewed vision, we notice that others require the invitation to hope that we have so recently embraced. Our first and best ministry to them is to share the reason for the hope that is within us—to tell our own story of hope.

“From now on, you’re the good-news people.”

*Zechariah 8:13*

God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine!”

*Matthew 5:13-16*

## **A Prayer of Testimony**

Lord, you have utterly rewritten my story: from loss to riches, from dark to light, from despair to hope. Let me not hoard or hide who you are and all you’ve done. Give me love for others that overcomes all fear and hesitancy. Let me be known as a “good-news person,” joyfully ready to invite others into the new and better story God has written for all of us.

# Commission, *Day 6*

*D. A. Horton*



God is the Lord of our legs. To tell our story of hope is as essential as it is basic, but it is not enough. We are invited to be the hands and feet of Christ, to be bearers of hope to the world, bringing hope where hope is not.

“I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You’ll never—I promise—regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we’re at our worst. Our Father is kind; you be kind.”

Luke 6:35-36

So if you’re serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, act like it. Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don’t shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that’s where the action is. See things from his perspective.

Colossians 3:1-2

## **A Prayer of Commission**

Merciful Father, we are blessed to call you Father because your Son perfectly fulfilled His mission trip to seek and save the lost. As we have embraced Christ as our Lord and Savior, we have also embraced his commission for us to be sent.

We ask for you to open doors for us to make Jesus known. We pray that you would give us boldness and courage to provide our family, friends, and neighbors with invitations to embrace Jesus as well. Grant us strength to daily live on Jesus’ mission, so we can be both heavenly minded while doing earthly good. In Jesus’ conquering name we pray, amen.

# Vision, *Day 7*

*Eric Peterson*



Underlying our desire for, and experience of, the hope God offers us is an instinct, inspired by God himself, that there is a future for us that stretches beyond the world as we know it. The hope that sustains us is not hope only for today or even tomorrow, but for the redemption of all things and the new world in which God's love is over and under all, filling us to overflowing forever and ever.

Praise God, everybody!  
Applaud God, all people!  
His love has taken over our lives;  
God's faithful ways are eternal.  
Psalm 117:1-2

Because when all is said and done,  
the last word is Immanuel—God-  
With-Us.  
Isaiah 8:10

## **A Prayer of Vision**

Almighty God,

As people who are bound by human constraints and flawed in our perceptions, we turn to you, the one who knows all and sees all, asking that you remove our blinders, heal our cataracts, and cast a spot light on your presence so that we may see beyond ourselves, beyond this time and place. Grant that we may be captivated by a vision as vast as your coming kingdom, and grow in our determination to see it through. This we pray in the name of Jesus, the one who was, who is, and who is to come. Amen.

# Benediction

*A Word from Eugene H. Peterson*

If there is anything distinctive about *The Message*, perhaps it is because the text is shaped by the hand of a working pastor. For most of my adult life I have been given a primary responsibility for getting the message of the Bible into the lives of the men and women with whom I have worked. I did it from pulpit and lectern, in home Bible studies and at mountain retreats, through conversations in hospitals and nursing homes, over coffee in kitchens, and while strolling on an ocean beach. *The Message* grew from the soil of forty years of pastoral work.

\* \* \*

The Bible is— among other things, but there at the heart of it— a message of hope. We read in the Bible that God offers us eternal hope— hope that reaches well beyond our circumstances, even well beyond our imagination. The same God who made the universe made you. The same God who causes the sun to rise and set is keeping track of you and wants to care for you.

So as passages stick with you, consider sticking with them. Commit them to memory so you can return to them when you need them. You may find that they return to you without prompting. Keep in mind that the Author of the text is God himself. And Jesus Christ, the Son of God, assures his followers,

“You’re my dearest friends!

The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself”

Luke 12:29-32

# Contributors

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