

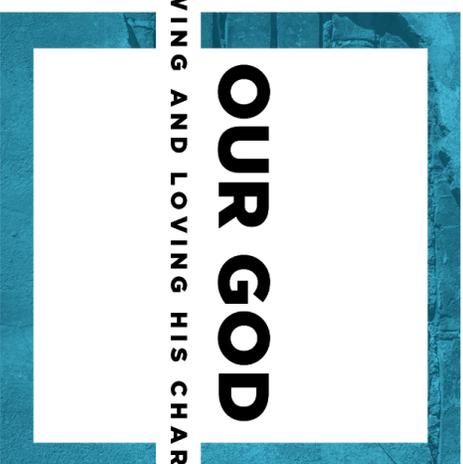
OUR GOD

KNOWING AND LOVING HIS CHARACTER

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A GUIDE FOR YOUR TIMES WITH THE LORD

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

STEP 1: **Read.** Begin your "Quiet Time" by reading a passage of Scripture. Some days it will be a few verses or a whole chapter. We suggest using an inexpensive Bible for your quiet time. As you read passages, mark words and ideas that stand out to you. Make note of repeated words, phrases or ideas. We would encourage you to read your passage two or three times.

The goal for this guide is for you to be consistent at least 4 out of 7 days. Please note that this guide is not designed to be a comprehensive Bible study. Rather, it is designed to help you connect with Christ on a regular, personal basis in His Word.

STEP 2: **Record.** Once you have read the passage a few times, write down the verse or phrase that most stands out to you. Write these verses out, word for word in the book. Writing it out will help you focus your thoughts and listen to God.

STEP 3: **Reflect.** Stop and think about what God is saying to you from the verse or verses that you just recorded. You can ask "what, why, how, or when" type questions. As you reflect, write down your ideas and thoughts on the journal page. Shoot for 3 to 5 observations per day.

STEP 4: **Respond.** Once you have reflected on God's Word, write out a short 1-2 sentence response that captures how you are going to apply what you have read during your Quiet Time. Be practical, make it measurable, and apply it today. Then, ask for God's help!

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SAMPLE

READ: John 15:1-8

RECORD:

"I am the vine and you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5)

REFLECT:

- Jesus is like a vine and the source of nutrients. He is the spiritual source and is to be the very foundation of my life. I am like a branch that needs to be connected continually to that divine source of spiritual life.
- Fruit, spiritual fruit, can only come if I remain in Christ. What does "remain" mean in practical terms? At the very least, it means that I need to be regularly aware of Jesus throughout the day.
- Jesus is leaving no middle ground... it seems, it is either fruit or nothing.
- I cannot bear fruit on my own. My will power or good intentions will not produce the fruit that Jesus is talking about. Remaining in the vine is something that I am to do. It must involve keeping my heart and mind listening to and aware of God's presence throughout my day.
- Jesus saved me by His grace and He also sustains me by His grace. This is my power for remaining in Him.

RESPOND:

Father, I want to remain in you today not just at the beginning of the day but all-day long. Help me to see You in the routine events of my day. Today, I will pray at every meal and ask for You to make me aware of Your presence throughout my day.

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OUR GOD IS POWERFUL OVER ALL

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

"God's omnipotence means that God is able to do all His holy will. The word *omnipotence*... means 'all-powerful'... God's omnipotence has reference to his own power to do what He decides. This power is frequently mentioned in Scripture. God is, 'The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!' (Ps. 24:8). The rhetorical question, 'Is anything too hard for the Lord?' (Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:27) certainly implies that nothing is too hard for the Lord. In fact, Jeremiah says to God, 'nothing is too hard for you' (Jer. 32:17)... These passages indicate that God's power is infinite."

In times of turmoil and trouble, it is easy to doubt that God is in control. Some well-meaning people even think that they can help God's reputation by suggesting that there are things outside of God's control. But, all throughout the Bible, God's sovereign power is a great comfort for His people.

God's power means at least four precious things for us:

1. Our God is in control when we are not. We might not be in control but we know the One who is. Like a child in the arms of his father, we are in the arms of the One who is sovereign over everything. We might feel powerless in the face of many things, but our God is powerless in the face of nothing and no one.
2. Our object of worship is bigger than our source of fears. We might be afraid of any number of things but our God is afraid of nothing and no one.
3. Our prayers matter. When we pray, we are not sending "thoughts" into the great beyond. We are bringing our requests before the One who is the King of everything. God's sovereign power should lead us to run to Him over and over again.
4. Our hope is found in God not our circumstances. Even in the darkest moments and situations, there is hope. That hope doesn't come from us but from our God who reigns.

There is great beauty in God's power. He wants us to feel that power in a fresh way this week.

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RECORD:

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RECORD:

REFLECT:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

RESPOND:

READ: Isaiah 61:8

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Isaiah 61:8

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Luke 8:22-56

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Luke 8:22-56

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Revelation 4

RECORD:

READ: Revelation 4

RECORD:

REFLECT:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

RESPOND:

Our God is powerful over all.

"A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing;
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work his woe;
His craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing,
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth is his name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

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OUR GOD IS UNCHANGING IN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

Jen Wilkin, *None Like Him*, emphasis added

"The Scriptures speak of a God who does not change. Like the tallest mountain peak on the horizon, from generation to generation, God stands unchanging, immutable, anchoring the landscape of human existence as all else around him ebbs and flows, blossoms and withers, waxes and wanes. The Rock of our salvation endures. The sunshine and shadows of human circumstance may reveal certain contours of his character one day and different ones the next, but his character remains firm. In an ever changing world he is the unchanging reference point upon which the inner eye fixes to determine the direction that leads to home... None of his attributes can increase or decrease because each is unchangingly infinite. His knowledge cannot increase or decrease. His faithfulness cannot increase or decrease. Our actions, good or bad, can neither add nor diminish his glory. He cannot become more holy or less steadfast. He simply is these things to the utmost- forever."

Think of memorable moments in your life. Seasons of joy and of sorrow. At some point, we have all experienced these seasons. The same is true of our relationship with God. There are moments where we see him clearly and experience his goodness firsthand, and there are moments where it is hard to see him and trust his character.

We live in a world acquainted with change, but we worship a God who does not change. Isaiah 40 says, "the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever". We were made to know and love a God whose character does not wither nor fade. Psalm 102 says, "the heavens are the work of your hands, they will perish but you will remain... you are the same and your years have no end". We believe in a God that is exactly as good and powerful now as he was when he spoke the universe into being at the beginning of time. If we believe in an unchanging God, then we believe in a God who is as good today as he was yesterday, and He will be good forevermore. In seasons of joy and sorrow, he remains infinitely and exactly the same.

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RECORD:

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RECORD:

REFLECT:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

RESPOND:

READ: Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:46-49

RECORD:

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RECORD:

REFLECT:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

RESPOND:

READ: Hebrews 1:1-12:13:8

RECORD:

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RECORD:

REFLECT:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

RESPOND:

READ: James 1:2-18

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: James 1:2-18

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

Our God is unchanging in our circumstances.

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus' name
On Christ the solid rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand"

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OUR GOD IS A REFUGE FOR US

Paul Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*

"Life in this fallen world is wearisome. Sometimes your marriage is just exhausting... Sometimes it's just plain tiring to be a parent, particularly on those days when it seems that your children have conspired together to be corporately rebellious. Sometimes you don't feel like being nice to that neighbor who seems to be able to look at everything and find a reason to complain... When you're weary and feeling weak, run to the Psalms, there's grace to be had there... First, we are not in this battle alone. We have a Keeper, and our safety is His commitment. Second, the One who is our Keeper never, ever takes a break. His keeping care is 24/7 forever and ever. The inexhaustible Keeper is your help and strength; when weary, run to Him."

Have you ever had one of those moments where it feels like your whole world has turned upside down? When the pandemic hits, when the diagnosis comes, when the stock market crashes, when your marriage is hanging on by a thread, when the darkness closes in, and when the temptation is overwhelming... what should we do?

What we need in these moments is not seven steps to freedom. We don't need false optimism or crushing cynicism. We don't need big events or bigger conferences. In these sorts of moments, we need to meet with the God who is there. And, the good news of the entire Bible is that the God we meet in moments like these is a great refuge for those who seek protection in Him.

A refuge is a place of safety and shelter in the midst of danger and trouble. God is exactly that for His people.

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RECORD:

READ: Psalm 23

RECORD:

REFLECT:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

RESPOND:

READ: Psalm 34

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Psalm 34

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Psalm 46

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Psalm 46

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Psalm 91

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Psalm 91

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

Our God is a refuge for us.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and power.

Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace:
Foul, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

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OUR GOD IS FAITHFUL TO US

Arthur Pink, *The Attributes of God*

"God is true. His word of Promise is sure. In all his relations with his people God is faithful. He may be safely relied upon... We find this precious truth expressed almost everywhere in the Scriptures, for his people need to know that faithfulness is an essential part of the Divine character. This is the basis of our confidence in him... There are seasons in the lives of all when it is not easy, no not even for the Christians, to believe that God is faithful. Our faith is sorely tried, our eyes bedimmed with tears, and we can no longer trace the outworkings of his love... But He who has cared for his child through all the years will not forsake him in his old age. He who has heard your prayers in the past will not refuse to supply your need in the present emergency;"

The story of God's faithfulness rings true throughout all of Scripture. God always does what He says he will do. He promised Moses that he would deliver Israel from slavery to freedom. He promised Israel he would provide for them in the wilderness and lead them into the Promised Land. Each of these promises came to pass. God's fulfillment of his promises would be a sign to his people that he would be faithful. Time after time, Israel saw God fulfill multiple miraculous promises, but they quickly forgot.

We are like the Israelites. We quickly forget the character of God and His promises to us. God promised the coming of a Savior that would defeat sin and death, and it came to pass. In fact, the Gospel reverberates with this beautiful truth- it is by His grace that we have been saved. And, if He saves us by His grace, He is faithful to keep us and protect us by His grace, too. This is good news: His faithfulness does not waver because of our doubts, for "if we are faithless, he remains faithful" (2 Timothy 2:13).

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RESPOND:

READ: Psalm 89:1-14

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

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RECORD:

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RESPOND:

READ: Lamentations 3:19-33

RECORD:

REFLECT:

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REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Hebrews 10:19-23

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Hebrews 10:19-23

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

Our God is faithful.

"Great is Thy faithfulness, " O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.
"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
"Great is Thy faithfulness, " Lord, unto me!"

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OUR GOD IS NEAR TO US

Robert Thune and Will Walker, *The Gospel-Centered Life*, 30

"Adoption is the biblical truth that God has welcomed us into his family as his own sons and daughters by virtue of our union with Jesus. Part of the work of the Holy Spirit is to confirm this adoption within us: 'For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself testifies with our Spirit that we are God's children' (Romans 8:15-16). Galatians 4:7 says the same thing... 'So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.'"

Two thousands years ago, something astounding happened. The God of the universe added humanity to His divinity and came crashing into our world. Jesus did not remain distant from the human condition. He stepped into the human condition to redeem us from our sinful condition. He lived the perfect life that they should have lived. He died the death that they deserved to die. And, He rose from the grave triumphing over Satan, sin, and death. Jesus did all of this so that those who were far off might be brought near by His grace. Jesus did all of this so that those who were enemies of God might be reconciled to God by His grace. Jesus did all this so that those were outside of the house of God might be adopted into the family of God by His grace.

Jesus drew near to us so that He might draw us near to our heavenly Father. At the moment you surrender in faith to Jesus, God Himself takes up residence in your heart. He is with you and for you forever. There is not a single moment in a Christian's life where God Himself is not near.

God sees, hears, and knows the afflictions of his people (Exodus 3:7), and chooses to draw near to us. All of this means that God is near to us in moments of chaos and of peace. He is near to us in moments of fear and of joy. He is near to us in moments of failure and of success. He is near to us in moments of mourning and of happiness. He is near to us in moments of loneliness and of connection.

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READ: Romans 8:1-16

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

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RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Romans 8:17-39

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Romans 8:17-39

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: Galatians 3:23-4:7

RECORD:

READ: Galatians 3:23-4:7

RECORD:

REFLECT:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

RESPOND:

READ: John 14:15-21

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: John 14:15-21

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

Our God is near to us.

In the darkness, we were waiting
Without hope, without light
Till from Heaven You came running
There was mercy in Your eyes
To fulfill the law and prophets
To a virgin came the Word
From a throne of endless glory
To a cradle in the dirt.

Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings

Our God is near to us.

In the darkness, we were waiting
Without hope, without light
Till from Heaven You came running
There was mercy in Your eyes
To fulfill the law and prophets
To a virgin came the Word
From a throne of endless glory
To a cradle in the dirt.

Praise the Father, praise the Son
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OUR GOD CARES FOR US

Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*

"Christianity alone among the world religions claims that God became uniquely and fully human in Jesus Christ and therefore knows firsthand despair, rejection, loneliness, poverty, bereavement, torture, and imprisonment. On the cross he went beyond even the worst human suffering and experienced cosmic rejection and pain that exceeds ours as infinitely as his knowledge and power exceeds ours. In his death, God suffers in love, identifying with the abandoned and godforsaken. Why did He do it? The Bible says that Jesus came on a rescue mission for creation. He had to pay for our sins so that someday he can end evil and suffering without ending us."

Let's see where this has brought us. If we again ask the question: 'Why does God allow evil and suffering to continue?' and we look at the cross of Jesus, we still do not know what the answer is. However, we now know what the answer isn't. It can't be that He doesn't love us. It can't be that He is indifferent or detached from our condition."

There might be many things that you doubt about God. But when you see God become a man and walk our planet, or when you see God grieve because the creation He loves repeatedly mocks and sins against Him, when you see God endure the searing pain of being crucified, or when you see God suffer to bear the penalty of your sins- when you see God doing all of this, you cannot doubt His love. God becomes a man, grieves, endures, and suffers because He loves you.

Jesus Storybook Bible

"When you see Jesus on the cross, it proves at least one thing. The God who is powerful and unchanging, the God who is faithful and a refuge, that God loves His people with a never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love."

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READ: John 3:16-36

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: John 3:16-36

RECORD:

REFLECT:

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READ: John 10:1-18

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: John 10:1-18

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: John 15:1-17

RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

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RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

READ: John 19:16-30

RECORD:

REFLECT:

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RECORD:

REFLECT:

RESPOND:

Our God cares for us.

In tenderness he sought me, weary and sick with sin
And on His shoulders brought me, back to His fold again
While angels in His presence sang, until the courts of heaven rang.

Oh, the love that sought me!
Oh, the blood that brought me!
Oh, the grace that brought me to the fold of God
Grace that brought me to the fold of God.

He died for me while I was sinning, needy and poor and blind
He whispered to assure me: "I've found thee; thou art Mine!"
I never heard a sweeter voice, it made my aching heart rejoice.
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