

A photograph of a forest path covered in bluebells. The path is a narrow dirt trail winding through a dense forest of tall, thin trees with vibrant green foliage. The ground is covered in a thick carpet of small, purple-blue flowers. The lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a sunny day. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

# How to Live for Eternity

14 Keys for the Journey

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# DAY 1

## SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE

### THE ETERNAL WORD:

**COLOSSIANS 3:1-4:** *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”*

### PONDER THE TRUTH:

From the moment you wake up in the morning, you likely have a list of things in your mind that you have to do today. Most of these “to-dos” are very practical: do the laundry, put out the trash, make the breakfast, drive to work...”

It’s easy to merely get up each day and go through the motions that are set before us. *While God has set responsibilities before each one of us, He desires that we invite Him into all that we do, asking for a heavenly perspective of our work.*

We have a choice to make each day – we can set our minds on the stuff of this earth without thinking of Christ at all or we can invite Christ to guide and direct our day, asking Him to help us see where He is at work in our midst.

### PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:

*Lord, I lay my life before you today. All I am and all that I have is yours. I pray that you would open my eyes to see where you are at work all around me. May you be intimately involved in all that I do – my work, my play, my interactions with others.. Help me to set my mind on you and Your Kingdom rather than the noise, selfishness, and confusion of this world.*

# DAY 2

## PERSEVERE LIKE MOSES

### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

**HEBREWS 11:24-27:** *“By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.”*

### *PONDER THE TRUTH:*

Moses grew up with all the advantages and privileges of a son of Pharaoh. He had everything this world could offer. And yet He chose reproach and mistreatment with God's people rather than partying it up with the Egyptians.

Moses took time to consider what we may often forget: the eternal reward for his labor. He knew that living like a king in Egypt would mean nothing once he was gone, but living for God's purposes (and for the good of His people) would reap an eternal reward.

How did he pass up these tempting pleasures? He endured by seeing Him who is invisible. When we focus on Christ and His divine attributes such as His beauty, love, holiness, humility, and mercy, we are fueled with the strength of mind to say “no” to fleeting sinful pleasures and “yes” to Christ.

### *PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:*

*Father, I want to see you today. Help me to focus on your attributes – your mercy, grace, love, kindness, faithfulness, justice, and holiness. May my character, conversation, and commitments be dictated by Your Spirit and not by my flesh. Help me to keep my eyes on you when temptations come my way. Help me to live for my eternal reward and in the joy of your friendship and love for me.*

## DAY 3

### DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD

#### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

1 JOHN 2:15-17: *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”*

#### *PONDER THE TRUTH:*

All around us voices call out from television and computer screens, billboards and bumper stickers: You need more! You deserve better! Our culture feeds an insatiable craving for everything in super-sized quantities: more stuff, more friends, more pleasure, more leisure.

When will it ever be enough? While this world is where we temporarily live, this world is not our eternal home. We should not let the worldviews and priorities of this world dictate our own. Instead, we should look only to Christ and His Word for wisdom on our priorities.

And in this passage of Scripture, the wisdom is clear: Do NOT love the world. This doesn't mean we shouldn't love the people in the world (for Jesus died for such as these!). Instead, as we are told that the world lies under the sway of the evil one (Satan) and we should not yield to the evil, disregard of God, and self-centeredness that runs pervasive throughout it.

*PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:* Father, this world is not my home. My eternal home is with you in Heaven. Help me to discern the corruptive influences within my culture and be on guard against them. Help me to be a shining light in this world. May I find my identity in you alone – not power, popularity, success, or possessions. Please show me any areas of my life where I have followed the ways of this world rather than the ways of your Kingdom that I might be set free.

# DAY 4

## PONDER THE BREVITY OF LIFE

### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

**PSALM 90:3-6, 10 & 12:** *"You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!" For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers. The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom."*

### *PONDER THE TRUTH:*

Wherever you are right now, take a few moments to stop everything and listen to your own breathing. Take a deep breath and then exhale. Then repeat.

We breathe in and out all day long without thinking of how we do it; our mind simply instructs our lungs to breathe in and out all day long. Our lives are just like this – one day passes into the next and before we know it a full year has gone by. It seems to just fly away from us.

We often take for granted the breath in our lungs and the days in our life. Minor disruptions, annoyances and difficulties can rob us of the sense of pulsing awareness and awe at this gift of life. Make a choice today to stand in awe of God and the great life He has given you today.

### *PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:*

Father God, I know that my days are but a hand breath; that life is brief and before I know it, another year will pass by. Help me, Lord, to number my days – to slow down and steady myself to focus within and upon the present moment as a gift from you. May I grow in wisdom as I contemplate the brevity of my life, releasing control of my future into your sovereign, loving arms. I trust you with all my days but especially with today – thank you for this gift.

# DAY 5

## BUILD ON A SURE FOUNDATION

### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

**1 CORINTHIANS 3:9-14:** *“For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.”*

### *PONDER THE TRUTH:*

Jesus Christ tells us in His Word, “Apart from me, you can do nothing.” Therefore it behooves us to take a good long look at our complete spiritual bankruptcy apart from Christ. We have nothing of goodness to offer Him that He has not first wrought in us.

The death and resurrection of Christ is our only sure foundation. With what shall we build on this solid foundation? Just as we wouldn't buy an expensive new wooden table and pour water over it, so we should be thoughtful that our building materials match the foundation.

As John Gill says of the “precious stones”, “these are the great, momentous, and valuable truths of the Gospel, which agree with and are suitable to the foundation they are built upon.”

***PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:*** Lord Jesus, thank you for the work that you did on the cross that has given me a sure foundation. Please grant me discernment through your Holy Spirit that I remove those elements of “wood, hay, and straw” from my life that they might not impede your Spirit's work. Sanctify me by your truth and help me to grow in the knowledge of your Word and ways that I might become one with you and your purposes.

## DAY 6

### MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR TIME

#### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

**EPHESIANS 5: 15-17:** *“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”*

**PONDER THE TRUTH:** Missionary C.T. Studd wrote a remarkable poem called *“Only One Life, Twill Soon Be Past.”* Here is one stanza:

*Only one life, the still small voice,  
Gently pleads for a better choice  
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,  
And to God’s holy will to cleave;  
Only one life, ’twill soon be past,  
Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

When it comes to time management for the Christian, the call from Scripture is clear. God calls us to a thoughtful, wise, intentional use of our time for His glory and the furtherance of His kingdom. Just as we tell our children to “watch where you step” when climbing up a stony path, so we ought to consider the world we walk upon as full of stones and slippery places.

What hinders your walk with Christ, fellow traveler? What impedes your smooth pace or distracts you from your journey and destination? Take some time today to consider what your daily planner speaks about your commitment to Christ.

**A PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:** Lord, I confess that I can easily squander the precious time you have entrusted to me. Please help me to be sensitive to your Holy Spirit and to ask myself the question, *“is this the best way I can spend my time?”* *“How can I best glorify God and shine the light of Christ today?”*



# DAY 7

## CHOOSE THE WAY OF LOVE

### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13: 1-3, 8&13:** *“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing...Love never ends...So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”*

### *PONDER THE TRUTH:*

There is a lot to be said for attempting great things for God. In fact, the great missionary William Carey once said, *“Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.”* All human beings long for accomplishment, fulfillment, and success; things get twisted up, however, when we keep doing great things for God but our motivation changes.

Love is the fuel to all great Kingdom work. As Jesus walked the earth, He was moved with compassion to touch and heal the sick or raise the dead. What moved Him to work should be the same thing that moves us: Love. God loved us so much He died for us – and He calls us to love others as well.

### *A PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:*

Lord, I long to be filled with the compassion and love that I see demonstrated in your work on the cross. Show me where my works are birthed from something other than love that I might not strive towards empty goals and finish lines. Unite me with your love and may I abide there. Help me to see people through your eyes – eyes of compassion and love and truth.

# DAY 8

## LIVE SACRIFICIALLY

### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

**ROMANS 12:1:** *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”*

### *PONDER THE TRUTH:*

I love how the Message Version of the Bible translates these verses! Romans 12:1 reads, *“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.”*

Sometimes the idea of sacrifice can seem larger than life in our minds. We may picture Abraham sacrificing Isaac on the altar, missionaries who sell their house and possessions and move overseas, or the best picture of sacrifice: Christ on the Cross.

But these larger acts of sacrifice and dying to self are usually spread out between long stretches of daily, consistent, hidden acts of faithful sacrifice: giving up your seat for another on the train, serving others at a meal before yourself, choosing to give up your weekly latte money to buy some food for a homeless person. Whether your sacrifice is big or little, if it comes from a heart bent on worshipping Him, God is well pleased!

***A PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:*** Father God, grant me a heart that is willing to place my life, my family, my home, my future in your hands but also my daily desires, choices, wants, and pleasures. Help me to be sensitive to the leading of your Holy Spirit today. Help me to consider others and their needs before I think of my own and to choose the path of sacrifice as I ponder your incredible mercy. When I consider all that you have done for me, I cannot help but wish to offer all of my life back to you – do with me as you please.

## DAY 9

### INVITE TRANSFORMATION

#### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

**ROMANS 12:2:** *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

**PONDER THE TRUTH:** To conform to something means to “be similar in form or type; agree.” When we choose to follow Christ, we most definitely choose a way contrary to this world. While this world will teach us to “look out for #1,” live for riches and pleasure, not make too many waves or be different (among other things), Christ tells us to come out from among them and be separate.

God wants us to look to His Word and not popular culture as the source of Truth. The question really comes down to “Who (or what) do we worship?” As Tim Keller says in his book *Counterfeit Gods*, “**What is an idol?** *It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give...*

*An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, “If I have that, then I’ll feel my life has meaning, then I’ll know I have value, then I’ll feel significant and secure.” There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is worship.*

**A PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:** Lord, I know that there are many ways I have allowed myself to conform to this world’s ways without even realizing it. Please open the eyes of my heart so that I can see these areas and allow your Word to lead me into all Truth. Show me the idols of my own heart and of the culture that surrounds me so that I can be on guard against them. I choose to worship you alone and ask for your grace and strength to do so. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

# DAY 10

## WATCH AND PRAY

### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

**MATTHEW 26:40-42:** *“And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”*”

**PONDER THE TRUTH:** I have always sympathized with the disciples when I read this passage of Scripture. It is, after all, bedtime and well, they are tired! I have also read in different commentaries that they “fell asleep from sorrow.”

Regardless of why they fell asleep, they slept when they should have been watching and praying. Jesus makes this clear when He rebukes them, *“So, could you not watch with me one hour?”* What is it about prayer that is so difficult for us? Jesus tells us the answer to this when He says, *“The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”*

Make a choice today to draw near to God and commune with Him in prayer. Talking with God is perhaps one of the more important things you can do with your time.

**A PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:** Lord, you say that we have not because we ask not. Lord, I draw near to you through the blood of Christ alone and I pray:

~Give thanks to God for specific works He has done in your life recently

~Praise Him for His mighty, enduring character!

~Petition Him for the souls of those you know who have yet to encounter His grace and truth.

# DAY 11

## INVEST LONG TERM

### THE ETERNAL WORD:

LUKE 12:15 – 21: “*And he said to them, “**Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**” And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods...But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ **So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.**”*”

*PONDER THE TRUTH:* When is enough enough? In America today, commercials on television bombard us with items that we are told we ‘need’ and ‘deserve’ for working hard – that we need something *more* to be happy. But do we?

If we get that new car or job, are we really going to be happier? Perhaps temporarily, but then our heart will fixate on something else that we think we need and the cycle only repeats itself.

Paul told us, “*But if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content*” (1 Timothy 6:8). More money doesn’t increase our happiness. Finding contentment as our basic needs are met and seeking to store up riches in heaven (where they will endure) rather than on earth (where they will be destroyed) is the key to enduring happiness.

*A PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:* Lord, forgive me when I have coveted what others have. Thank you for supplying what I really need. Show me where I have believed the lie that I need “more” to be happy. I only need more of you. Help me to purge the excess “stuff” from my life and focus on building towards that which will endure for eternity.

# DAY 12

## HELP THE NEEDY

### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

**MATTHEW 25:37-40:** *“Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’*

**PONDER THE TRUTH:** It’s a sobering reminder to read this full passage in context (verses 31-46) and realize that in the Final Judgment, it matters greatly to God how we responded to the needs of the hungry, poor, sick, and imprisoned.

Jesus says that when we serve and care for those in these conditions, it is like we are feeding, clothing, and visiting Christ Himself. Do we take this responsibility seriously or do we say, “mercy ministry isn’t really my gift,” or, “I don’t feel comfortable around those types of people.”

Christ never called us to be comfortable. He called us to be compassionate and generous. He calls us to remember that we were poor, wretched, and blind ourselves; And how He reached down and pulled us out of the pit that we had jumped into headlong.

If we do not care about the poor and needy, we need to confess our sin to God and ask that God would break our hearts for those that break His own heart. We need to open our eyes and really see those in need physically and those who are emotionally and spiritually bankrupt – and point them to Christ.

**A PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:** Lord, thank you for the reminder in your Word that you care deeply for the poor, needy, and imprisoned. Forgive me where I have been apathetic or even acted with disgust towards these precious people. Show me ways that I can reach out to those in my community who desperately need food, clothing, encouragement, and love. Birth in me your own heart of compassion.

# DAY 13

## STEWARD YOUR TALENTS

### THE ETERNAL WORD:

**MATTHEW 25:20-21:** *“And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’”*

**PONDER THE TRUTH:** Take a few minutes to read the full Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Something different tends to stick out to me each time I read this parable. One thing I noticed today is how it didn’t matter to the master how many talents the servants had – only that they had been faithful and fruitful with what he had given them.

What talents and treasures has God entrusted to you? What spiritual and natural abilities has He equipped you with to serve His body and this world? Take a personal inventory. Ask God to show you where you have been faithful and where you have “buried your talent” out of fear, greed, or just laziness.

This parable shows us that God cares very much about the talents He has given us. He wants us to use them, to invest them, to steward them well. When we do, we will hear those glorious words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

**A PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:** Lord, there is nothing that I want more than to hear you say, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord.” Thank you for the many blessings, talents, and gifts that you have given to me. Show me where I have been a faithful steward and where I have not. I want to be faithful and fruitful in the work you have called me to do. Empower me with your Holy Spirit and show me day by day how I can be the best steward with what you have given to me.

# DAY 14

## EMBRACE BROKENNESS

### *THE ETERNAL WORD:*

**2 CORINTHIANS 4:7, 16-18:** *“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. So we do not lose heart...For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”*

**PONDER THE TRUTH:** One of my husband’s favorite stories is the tale of the cracked pots. In summary, the story is told of a woman who carries two pots each day to a stream, where she fills the pots with water. One pot is perfect and the other one is cracked. The cracked pot is ashamed that it is only to deliver “half its load” once the journey has been completed, because water had leaked out.

The woman tells the pot that she used the water that fell through its cracks to grow a lovely trail of flowers along the path. This story shows how God uses imperfect people, “cracked pots,” “jars of clay,” to further His kingdom. Even with all our imperfections, we should not lose heart – God can use even our weaknesses to glorify Himself!

As you face life’s current difficulties or wrestle with persistent sin issues, take heart – God is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory! Choose today not to become overly focused on your problems, but on Christ and His promises – the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

**A PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE:** Lord, I know that I am a broken vessel, full of cracks and weaknesses. I humbly bring myself to you just as I am and pray that you would fill me and pour your grace through my weakness by the power of your Holy Spirit. Help me to lift my eyes off my flaws and up to you and your beauty. Your promises are “Yes and Amen.”





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