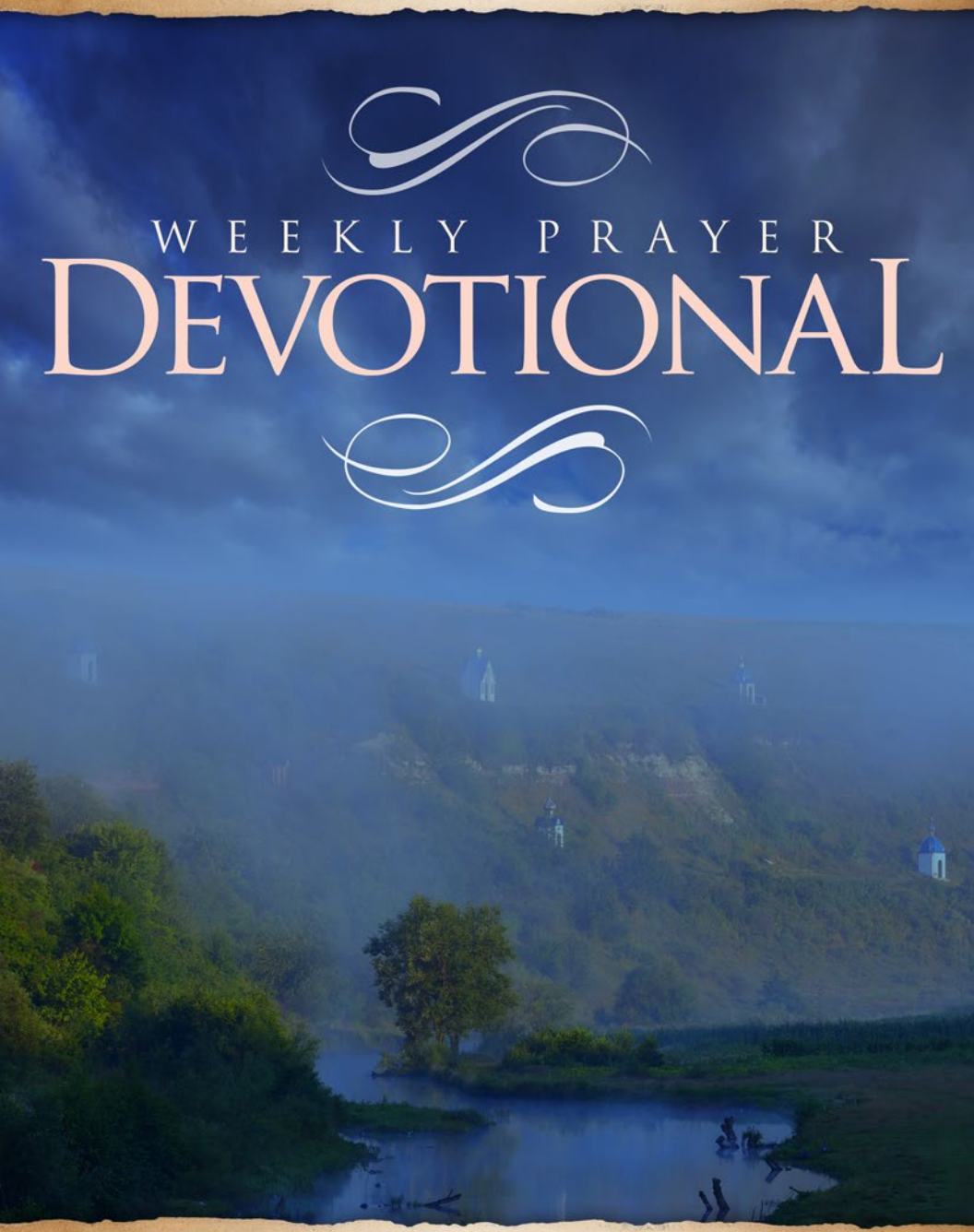
WEEKLY PRAYER

DEVOTIONAL



beliefnet®

Inspiration. Spirituality. Faith.

"God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble."

Psalm 46:1

For as long as I can remember, my mother instilled in me that God has a plan for all of us and if we stay true to Him and follow His path, we will overcome any obstacle we face.

"It may not always be easy, and the light may be dim at times," she would say to me, but "He will always cast a light to show you the right way."

When my mother passed away years ago, I can honestly say I've struggled a few times and even questioned His plan for me. But I always thought of her words and stayed true to what she taught me.

While my mother lived a great long life, I miss her every day and wish she were still with me. Even to this day, I miss her kind face, her great words of wisdom and my heart is still heavy over her loss.

But throughout the years, I've found renewed strength in the Christian values she raised me with and I remember her more vividly because of the faith we shared. And because of our shared faith, I know she is still with me.

That's why I'm so excited to share many of our favorite Biblical readings and devotions with you in the 2014 Beliefnet Devotional.

We hope this devotional serves as a reminder for us all to stay true to God and on His chosen path for us.

And no matter what obstacles, struggles, losses or other issues you may face, remember He is "…always ready to help in times in trouble."

With Blessings,

Steve Halliday

Steve Halliday
President and CEO

† Express gratitude for what you have. Gratitude, or thankfulness, is encouraged throughout Scripture. Just a verse espousing this attitude include: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thess. 5:18)

† Followers of Christ are meant to be selfless, other-focused, and God-focused, not wrapped up in our own temporary discontentment. Noticing the blessings we do have, and expressing gratitude for them, helps us remember the big picture: we have already been given the ultimate gift of life through Christ! "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (Phil. 4:6)

† The most important thing the Bible tells us about ourselves is that our identity in Christ, and our status as God's creations and children, should underscore everything we do. Do you think of yourself as a slave to sin, or to a static, humdrum life? "Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." (Romans 8:17)

† "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" (Matthew 6:25-26)

Reflection: Are you stubbornly intolerant of joyless Christianity in your own life? What would happen if you woke up tomorrow morning and everything concerning the reality and work of the Holy Spirit, and everything concerning prayer were removed from the Bible? Not just ignored, but actually cut out… How much difference would it make in the way that you live? How can you grow to become a greater source of spiritual help for others?

FURTHER READING: JOHN 6:68 | EPHESIANS 4:17-24 | EPHESIANS 5:18-21 | MATTHEW 6 | ISAIAH 29

✝ Loving deeper. "Love does not seek its own…" (1 Corinthians 13:5)

✝ Speaking Sweeter. "If I could speak in any language in heaven or on earth but didn't love others, I would only be making meaningless noise like a loud gong or a clanging cymbal…" (1 Corinthians 13:1)

✝ Giving Forgiveness. "Love does not take into account a wrong suffered…" (1 Corinthians 13:5)

✝ The power of words. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit." (Proverbs 18:21)

Reflection: Let us strive to remember the power of our words and their impact on those who hear them. Think twice before making a negative statement, and instead find a way to pass along an encouraging word today.

FURTHER READING: 1 PETER 3:10 | COLOSSIANS 3:8 | PROVERBS 15

✝ "The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return home and tell how much God has done for you.' So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him." (Luke 8:38-39)

✝ You'll make mistakes; you'll blow it; you'll say dumb things. But it doesn't depend on you. You know enough because you know Christ. Keep growing and share from where you are.

✝ Are you depending on your own energy, cleverness, persistence, charisma and talents to present the Christian life as attractive to your lost friends and family members? By faith (Hebrews 11:6), gaze upon Christ—His atonement, perfections and promises.

✝ C.S. Lewis wrote, "Courage is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means at the point of highest reality." When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? (Psalms 56:3-4)

Reflection: Here's the secret – none of us will ever be adequate for sharing our faith, for discipling others, or for preaching God's Word. We just aren't. You could study your entire life and not be. So, shake that monkey off your spine and say, "Enough already!" You have enough to *start*.

FURTHER READING: LUKE 8:26-39 | COLOSSIANS 2 | 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

✝ Is it possible that we can extend love and forgiveness if we don't understand how much Christ has shown us? Take your own "beach trip" and survey the vastness of God's incredible forgiveness that covers incredible sin. "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven – for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." (Luke 7:47, ESV)

✝ Seeking God for the right reasons. "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1: 21)

✝ Knowing that your life is beautiful and brief, have you made yourself available to God for him to work in and through you as you walk by faith? List one reason that causes you to "be glad" today, because of the new life the Father has prepared in advance for you. (Eph. 2:1-10)

✝ Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute… dwell on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

Reflection: This month, do something for God without expecting any reward or blessing in return.

✝ "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." (Luke 22:31-32)

✝ Take a moment to consider where you are being tempted. "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." (Genesis 4:7)

✝ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:1)

✝ Refocus today on your present walk with Christ. If your fellowship with the Lord is broken, let 1 John 1:1 illuminate the path.

Reflection: Sifting stinks, and we'd all prefer that God would just snap His mighty fingers and make us the man or woman He wants us to be. But if He did, we would miss the blessing that comes from being refined in the fire. Yes, blessing, a big blessing—even if it doesn't feel that way at the time.

FURTHER READING: LUKE 22 | JOHN 21

✝ "He gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" (James 4:1)

✝ We ultimately display what's in our hearts right on our faces. Moses experienced this everyday truth in a supernatural way every time he spoke with God (Exodus 34:29-35), when everyone could tell just by looking at his "radiant" face that he had met with God. After his heart had been fully focused on God, his face reflected it. When people look at your face, what do they see? Are you building attitudes and character traits today that you want reflected on your face in a few years time?

✝ May this Father's Day bring you many blessings and remind you of the many you already possess. "Hear, my son, your father's instruction". (Prov. 1:8)

✝ And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (Matthew 6:12)

Reflection: In what situations are you tempted to harbor unforgiveness? Is there a situation in your life today in which you can apply "gospel forgiving?" How does God look upon unforgiveness?

FURTHER READING: ACTS 4:13 | PROVERBS 15:13 | MATTHEW 6:15

✝ "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?" (Exodus 4:11)

✝ "Awake, my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn!" (Ps. 57:8)

✝ "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit." (Proverbs 18:21)

✝ "If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell." (Matthew 5:30)

Reflection: Usually, sin doesn't appear to us as an ugly, painful boulder that crushes us against a rock wall. What are the pleasures of sin that tend to pin you down? What is it that keeps you from treasuring God above all things? Ask God for grace and strength to amputate sin—today and every day.

FURTHER READING: ROMANS 8:10 | COLOSSIANS 3:5 | MATTHEW 5:30

† Do not withhold your mercy from me, O LORD; may your love and your truth always protect me. (Hebrews 12:1-3, NIV)

† Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." (John 3:3)

† In his heart, a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps. (Proverbs 16:9, NIV)

† Are you wrestling with God, as Jacob did at Peniel (Gen. 32)? It is God—not you—who holds your destiny in his hands. Ask him to help you take one day at a time as you trust in him and his plan and timetable for your life.

Reflection: No matter your age, make a list of what's behind you and what you think or hope lies ahead. Admit the concepts with which you struggle, and the bedrock that does not move, and find the place they meet for you. And move forward from there.

FURTHER READING: JOHN 18:37-38 | LUKE 18:9

✝ I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me. (John 14:6)

✝ And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." (Acts 2:12-13)

✝ "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:13-14)

✝ "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of Life has set me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8: 1-2)

Reflection: As Christians, our address has changed—and with that changes our whole way of putting value on things. If there's nothing beyond this world, then by all means we should live to pile up accolades and plaudits. We have nothing else to live for. But if we're focused on Christ and His kingdom, everything else just fades out. We're no longer running for the things we can see.

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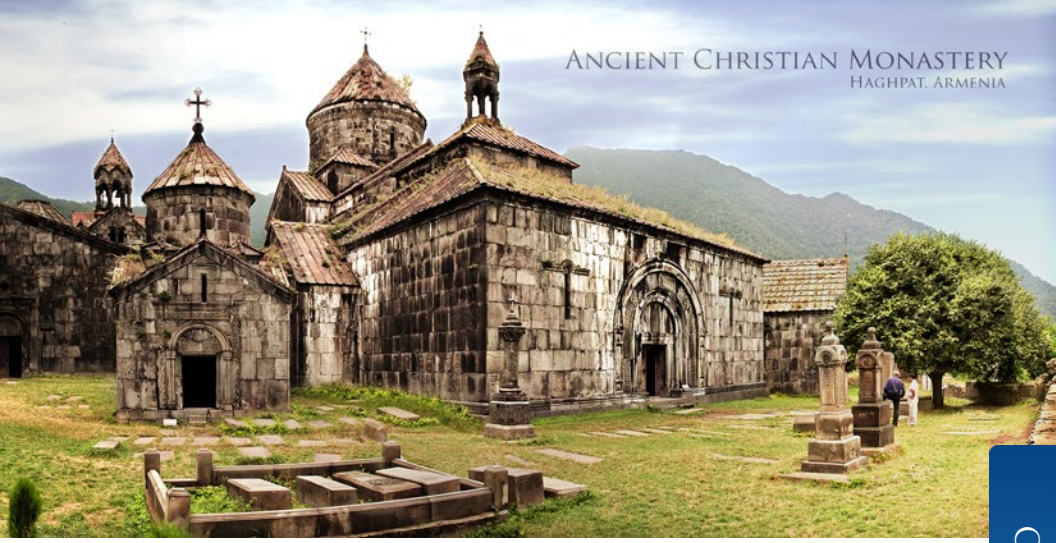

✝ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:9, ESV)

✝ "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless." (James 1:26)

✝ "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2)

✝ "Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship The Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" (Matthew 4:10)

Reflection: Jesus brushes all that aside in a single sentence: Blessed and happy and satisfied are those who seek peace with God and peace with others. This isn't a condemnation of competition, but it is a blunt reminder of the point of our lives. We're not here to see who's the best at sword swallowing or chicken juggling. God calls us children when we seek the good of other people above our own good.

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✝ Right now, thank God for several people you know who are a blessing to you. Ask the Lord to bless them and encourage them – and then take a minute to let them know personally.

✝ John 1:14 says that "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." How are others seeing this "glory of the One and Only" in you today as you dwell among them?

✝ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

✝ The Bible is full of reminders, of God's faithfulness to believers, and the stories all end with God being glorified for their reliance on Him. "In the end, it's when we are weak that He makes us strong." (2 Cor. 12:10)

Reflection: Have you been avoiding the call to do more with your faith? Consider where and how you can serve, and start at the very next opportunity.

FURTHER READING: ROMANS 1:8 | PSALM 13:6 | HEBREWS 13:15 | MARK 12:30-31 NIV | PHIL. 2:3-4 NIV

✝ "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." (Philippians 4:12)

✝ "Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun-all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 9:9)

✝ "Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God." (Revelation 19:9)

✝ "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:13-14)

Reflection: Now here's a challenge -- but it's straight from the mouth of Christ: the next time you are wronged, hurt, or had something taken from you... can you give the person responsible even more of what they took? And believe you'll somehow be blessed for it? And if not, why not?

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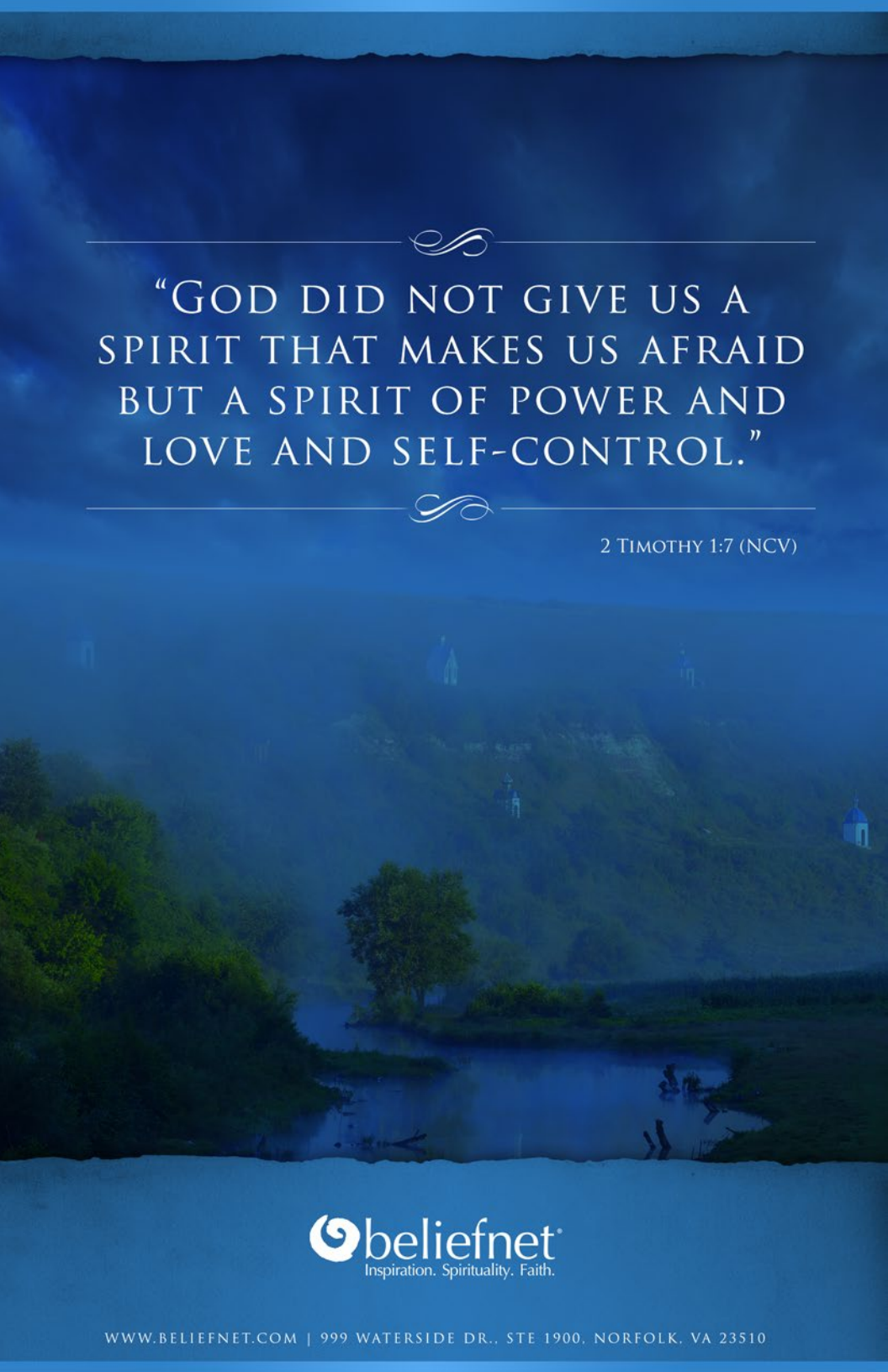
Personal Prayer Journal

THE LORD IS NEAR TO ALL WHO CALL ON HIM, TO ALL WHO CALL ON HIM IN TRUTH.
PSALM 145:18

Prayers of Need

Answered Prayers


"God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid but a spirit of power and love and self-control."
2 Timothy 1:7 (NCV)
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