

# PHILIPPIANS COLOSSIANS & 2 THESSALONIANS

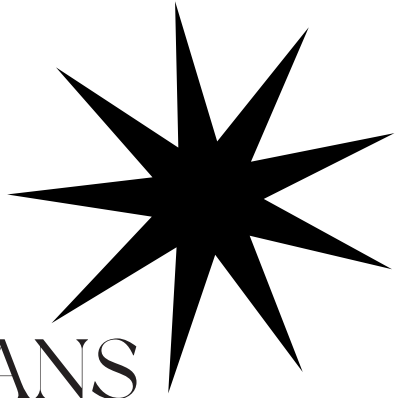


LIVING IN THE WORD

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PHILIPPIANS  
COLOSSIANS  
1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

LIVING IN THE WORD



NEW LIFE  
CHURCH



## Key Verse:

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### **PHILIPPIANS 1:6 (NIV)**

“Being confident of this,  
that he who began a good work in  
you will carry it on to completion  
until the day of Christ Jesus.”

# How to Use this Book


We are so excited that you're starting your journey through the books of Philippians, Colossians, and 1 & 2 Thessalonians with us! You may have gotten this journal because living in the Word daily is difficult for you. Or, maybe this discipline comes naturally for you, but you simply want to take a different approach in your study of scripture.

Regardless of where you may fall in this aspect of your walk with God, our prayer is that you would see scripture in an entirely new way in the next few weeks.

The goal of this journal is simple: we want it to be a tool for you. Each weekday, there will be a short reading out of one of the books. We recommend that you start your time with prayer, then slowly read through that day's passage. You may even want to read it multiple times; something new could stand out with each read! Write down what stands out to you in the lines. After completing the reading, finish out with that day's reflection questions and pray about what you took away from your time in the Word.

Weekends look a little different in this journal. On Saturdays, you will find a short devotional and guided prayer that covers a takeaway from what you read that week. On Sundays, we encourage you to use the blank notes page to take sermon notes at church.

We hope your time in the books of Philippians, Colossians, and 1 & 2 Thessalonians is reflective, fruitful, and eye-opening for you!



# AUTHOR'S BIO

Saul was born in Tarsus, in the Roman province of Cilicia (in modern day Turkey), around 5 AD. He was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin and a Pharisee, trained as a tentmaker. Saul spent much of his early life persecuting Christians, but had a radical conversion when the resurrected Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus (see Acts 9). From that point on, he dedicated his life to spreading the Gospel, beginning in Antioch with his mentor, Barnabas, then continuing further into the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean, Asia Minor, and parts of Europe. Here, he helped establish Christian communities and wrote letters of encouragement and correction to them. Known as the Epistles, these letters account for over twenty percent of the New Testament.

Later in the Book of Acts, Luke writes that Saul was also known as Paul (see Acts 13). He also singly refers to himself as “Paul” in his letters to the church, so why the change? Perhaps the name “Paul” was more familiar to the people in the Greco-Roman world that he was reaching with the Gospel than his given Jewish name, “Saul.” Throughout his missionary journeys, Paul experienced numerous challenges, including persecution, imprisonment, and opposition from both Jewish and Gentile communities. In fact, many of his letters were written while he was in prison.

The early church fathers concur that Paul, faithful to the end, was executed as a martyr for Christ during the reign of Emperor Nero.

# READING PLAN

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A detailed still life painting featuring a variety of natural elements. On the left, a large, textured white pumpkin sits prominently. To its right, a large cluster of green grapes is the central focus. In the foreground, a vibrant red dahlia flower with intricate petal patterns is in full bloom. Above the pumpkin, a butterfly with white wings and red markings is perched on a stem. The background is dark, making the colors of the subjects stand out. The overall style is characteristic of 17th-century Dutch still life painting, with fine detail and a focus on naturalistic representation.

# PHILIPPANS

# OVERVIEW

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During Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-40), he established a church in Philippi, which became a significant partner in his ministry. Years later, while in prison, Paul penned what many call the "Epistle of Joy" as a letter of thanksgiving to the church.

This letter focuses on humility, the unity of believers, and the value of knowing and imitating Christ in godly living. Paul encourages the Philippians to stand firm in their faith and focus on what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and commendable.

Paul gives insight into his personal experiences, including his ability to be content in both abundance and lack. Throughout this letter, you can see his heart for people and his example of selflessness as he appeals for the church to remain in unity in Christ. His appeal rings true and is relevant for the church today.

## SECTION BREAK DOWN

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### **THANKSGIVING AND ENCOURAGEMENT**

Philippians 1

### **CHRISTLIKENESS**

Philippians 2

### **PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Philippians 3 & 4



## LOCATION

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Philippi, situated in modern-day Greece near the Aegean Sea, was a significant Roman colony. Named after Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, Philippi held strategic importance within the Roman Empire. It grew rapidly due to nearby gold and silver mines, then it evolved into a bustling commercial center, even after the mines were depleted. Positioned at the sole mountain pass linking Europe and Asia, Philippi emerged as a pivotal city for trade routes. Notably, it became the site of a decisive battle where Antony defeated Brutus and Cassius, altering the course of the Roman Empire.

# WHO ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

## READING:

Philippians 1:1-11

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*I thank my God every time I remember you.*

Philippians 1:3

## REFLECTION:

We are created to be in community with others, and every now and then, the Lord puts people in our lives who bring great joy! Sometimes it's our family, but often it's people who enter our lives in the most unexpected places. Paul smiles when he thinks about his friends in Philippi. He thinks of them often, and he doesn't miss a chance to give thanks for them.

1. Who are the people in your life that bring you great joy?

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2. Do you see them regularly, or just every now and again?

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3. When was the last time you told them how grateful you are for them?

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4. It's a good practice to begin your time of prayer in gratitude, giving thanks to the Lord before petitioning Him for needs. Spend some time today focusing on who you're thankful for. Write down their names.

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TUESDAY

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# MY ACTIONS ARE NOT DEPENDENT ON MY SURROUNDINGS

## READING:

Philippians 1:12-30

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.*

Philippians 1:27

## REFLECTION:

It's easy to wait for the perfect situation to do the right thing. What's more difficult is to do the right thing knowing that the perfect situation may never come. Paul encourages us to behave in a way that honors the Lord, no matter the situation, no matter the cost, no matter our surroundings.

1. Is there a move you're wanting to make, but you're unsure because the timing or situation isn't perfect?

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# SERVE ONE ANOTHER

## **READING:**

Philippians 2:1-11

## **VERSE OF THE DAY:**

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

Philippians 2:3-4

## **REFLECTION:**

Have you ever noticed that when you do something nice for someone else, you walk away with a sense of peace and satisfaction? Conversely, have you noticed that when you focus on yourself, neglecting the thoughts and feelings of others, you may feel immediate joy, but no lasting fulfillment? This is because God has designed us to live in unity, serving one another.

1. Write down a time when you could have blessed someone, but chose not to.

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# SAY LESS

## READING:

Philippians 2:12-30

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*Do everything without grumbling or arguing...*

Philippians 2:14

## REFLECTION:

There aren't many who truly enjoy being around negative people, at least for any length of time. When we are surrounded by those who complain about everything, it begins to wear on our souls. Paul doesn't say, "complain less." He says, "Do EVERYTHING without grumbling and arguing." That's a tall order, but here's why: verses 15-16 of today's passage say, "*so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.*" Is this hard? Sure. Is it attainable? Absolutely!

1. What are the things in your life that consistently bother you?

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2. Do you complain about them regularly?

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3. How could a change in your attitude about those things alter your mental well-being?

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# THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS

## READING:

Philippians 3:1-14

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.*

Philippians 3:7-8

## REFLECTION:

Based on this verse, Issac Watts penned these lyrics...

*When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.  
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God!*

There are so many things that we do for the approval of others. Social media forces us to give the appearance of looking a certain way or performing at a level that gets noticed. We measure success in “likes” and “subscribes.” But every gain we have equals zero in comparison to the only worth that matters, which is simply knowing Him. Jesus is calling us to know and love Him.

1. Do you know Jesus?

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**SCRIPTURE:**

*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all.*

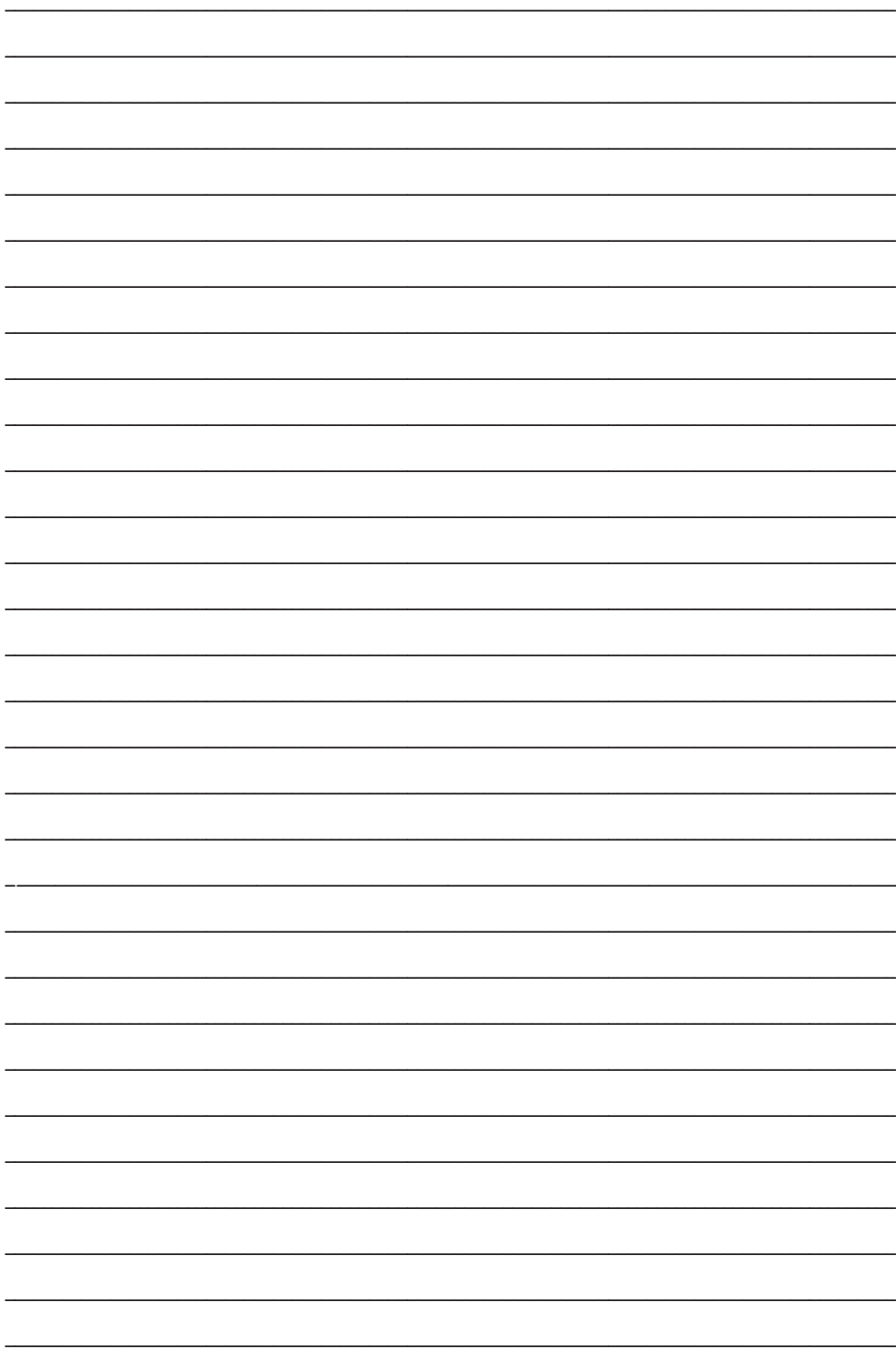
Philippians 1:3-4

**PRAYER DIRECTION:**

The idea that we “deserve” all good things saturates our culture and our own thoughts. Glory is sought after, influence is measured, riches are accumulated, and comfort and ease are expected as givens. And we simply miss the truth. We aren’t inherently good; only God is. Therefore, we don’t deserve all the good things—only He does. Every gift, blessing, and comfort comes from God to us in mercy. Jesus, God’s Son given for us, is the greatest example of our Father’s unwarranted kindness. So, how can we guard against the self-exalting lies of our time? Like Paul, we make a habit of praying in thankfulness and joy often, and we follow Christ’s example of humility. He’s the only One who deserved it all. But instead, He chose to empty Himself and become a servant for our sake that we might truly experience God’s goodness by grace alone.

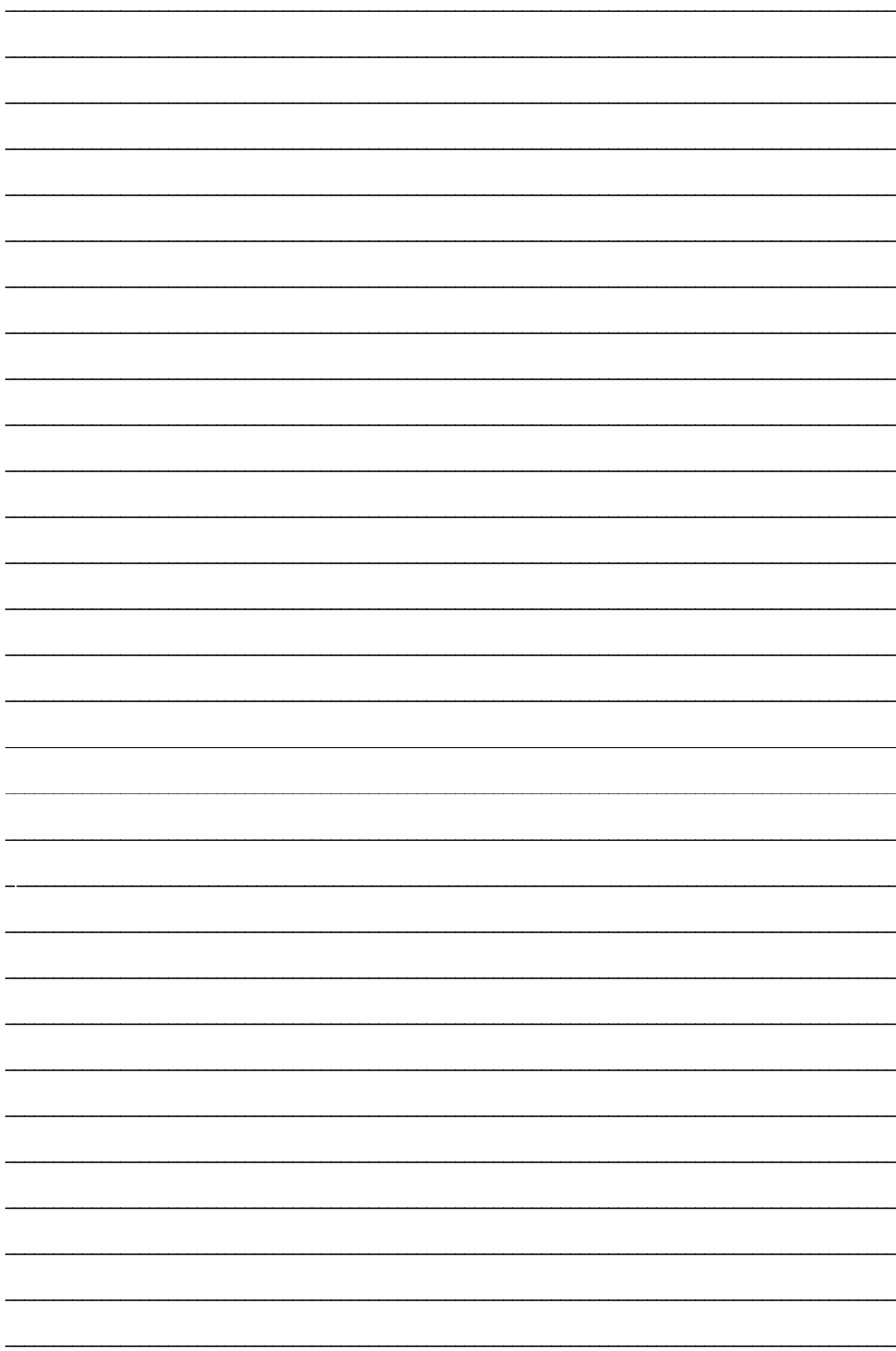
**PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE:**

Father, we thank You for Your unfailing kindness and mercy that is new every morning! We thank You with joy for the amazing people in our lives who love us, encourage us, and help meet our needs. We thank You for our church that lifts up the name of Jesus above all! May You bless our families and church abundantly. We even thank You for the difficulties that are producing Your character in our lives! You alone are good and we give it all back to You. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen!









# THIS IS NOT MY HOME

## READING:

Philippians 3:15-21

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ...*

Philippians 3:20

## REFLECTION:

Our time on earth is but a blip—a blink of an eye in comparison to eternity. We get caught up in the things of this world—our jobs, our hobbies, our education, our family—all good things! But we lose focus on the prize: ETERNITY. If you were going on a vacation to a place you've never been, you would probably study it, read about it, search YouTube for insight on how to have the absolute best time when you reach that destination, not missing a thing. How much more, then, should we have our eyes fixed on Heaven?

1. How much do you know about Heaven?

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# FIX YOUR EYES

## READING:

Philippians 4:1-9

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

Philippians 4:8

## REFLECTION:

What you think about the most determines the direction of your life.

Where you fix your eyes is where you will go! A good rule of thumb when downhill skiing or snowboarding through a wooded area is this: Don't look at the tree! If you look at the tree, there's a good chance you'll hit the tree. Instead, look at the path, focusing on where you're going instead of where you don't want to go. The same is true here. Fix your eyes on the things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and commendable. That's where you want to be! That's where the Lord is.

1. What do you think about the most?

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**WEDNESDAY**

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# THE GOD OF THE POSSIBLE

## **READING:**

Philippians 4:10-23

## **VERSE OF THE DAY:**

*I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

Philippians 4:13

## **REFLECTION:**

This is a promise from God—not that everything will be easy, but that if it is of God, He will give us the strength and ability to see it through.

1. Look back on your life. When was the last time you felt as though you couldn't get through a hard season or situation? Did God give you strength?

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2. What are you going through right now that seems impossible?  
Ask the Lord for strength, wisdom, and the ability to overcome.

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# COLOSSIANS



# OVERVIEW

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During Paul's time in Ephesus, the entire region was evangelized through his influence, including the small town of Colossae in modern-day Turkey. Although he never visited it in person, he sent his fellow-servant, Epaphras, to spread the gospel. Epaphras may have been the founder of the Church in Colossae, or, at the very least, its main minister. From time to time, he would bring reports to Paul, who was in prison, most of which were positive. However, because of the diverse backgrounds and belief systems that were embedded in the community, he thought it appropriate to bring a more sobering report to Paul of a trend he was beginning to see. From Epaphras' reports, Paul wrote a preemptive correction to the church, nipping at the root of what could become a larger problem of heretical (false) teaching.

A central theme of this book is the magnitude and supremacy of Christ, showcasing His sovereignty in the physical and spiritual realms. Paul calls the Colossians to a dependence on Christ alone for salvation, spiritual growth, and victory over sin. He reiterates time and time again that Jesus is entirely sufficient, and that believers can be firmly rooted in Him. Paul wrote so that the Colossian believers would remain grounded in their faith and not lose sight of the centrality of the gospel in the midst of false doctrine.

## SECTION BREAK DOWN

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Colossians 1:1-14

### **THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST**

Colossians 1:15-2:7

### **FREEDOM IN CHRIST**

Colossians 2:8-23

### **LIVING IN CHRIST**

Colossians 3:1-4:18



## LOCATION

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Colossae, an ancient city nestled in the Lycus River Valley of Asia Minor, alongside its counterparts Laodicea and Hierapolis, formed a trio of small cities within close proximity to each other. Historical records paint a vivid picture of its past glory. Colossae was a diverse city, with a mixture of Hellenistic, Jewish, and Anatolian religious traditions, positioned approximately 100 miles from the bustling city of Ephesus.

Colossae thrived primarily in two interconnected industries: wool and dye. The region's fertile volcanic soil provided abundant pastureland, ideal for sheep farming, while the chalky river waters facilitated the dyeing process, making Colossae a prominent center for textile production.

Colossae gradually lost significance and faded into obscurity, to the point where its exact location today remains uncertain.

# A PRAYER FOR OTHERS

## READING:

Colossians 1:1-14

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you.*

Colossians 1:9a

## REFLECTION:

Given that Colossians was written partially for correction, Paul had every opportunity to dive right in and rebuke the false teachings in Colossae from the start. Notice instead how he began his letter by expressing his thanks for them and writing a prayer for their spiritual growth. Before he corrects, he says, "we haven't stopped praying for you." Paul prioritizes encouragement and empowerment.

1. When is the last time you prayed a prayer like Paul's for someone in your life? How can you make that more of a habit in your prayer life?

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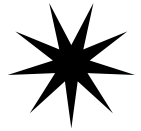
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**SCRIPTURE:**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7

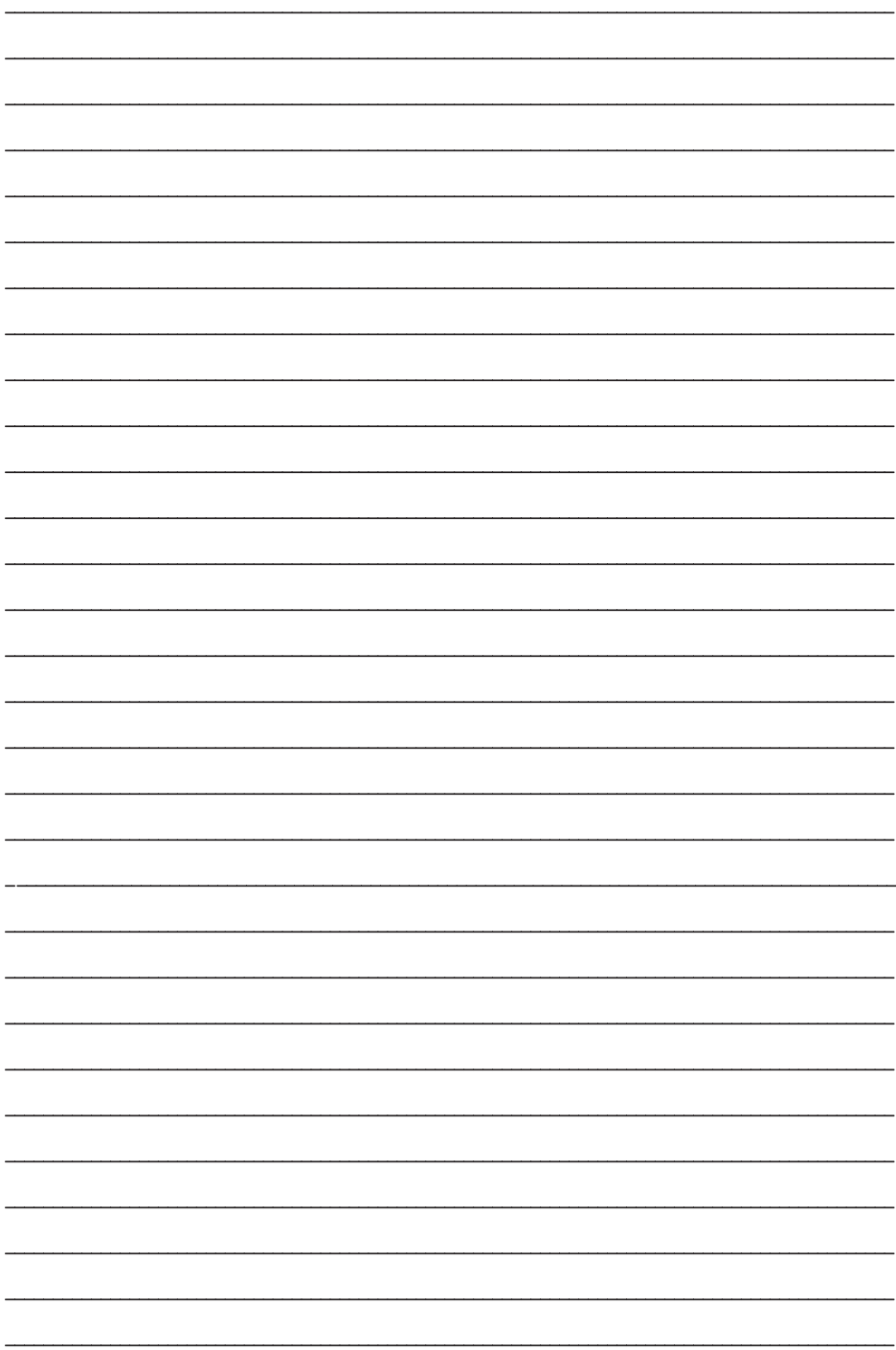
**PRAYER DIRECTION:**

We could always use more of the peace of God in our hearts and lives. And in these verses, Paul teaches us a formula for receiving God's peace! He teaches us to pray about everything and bring our requests to God with thanksgiving. As you bring all of your needs to God today, be intentional to also thank Him for who He is and all He has done. Then, receive the peace that only He can bring!

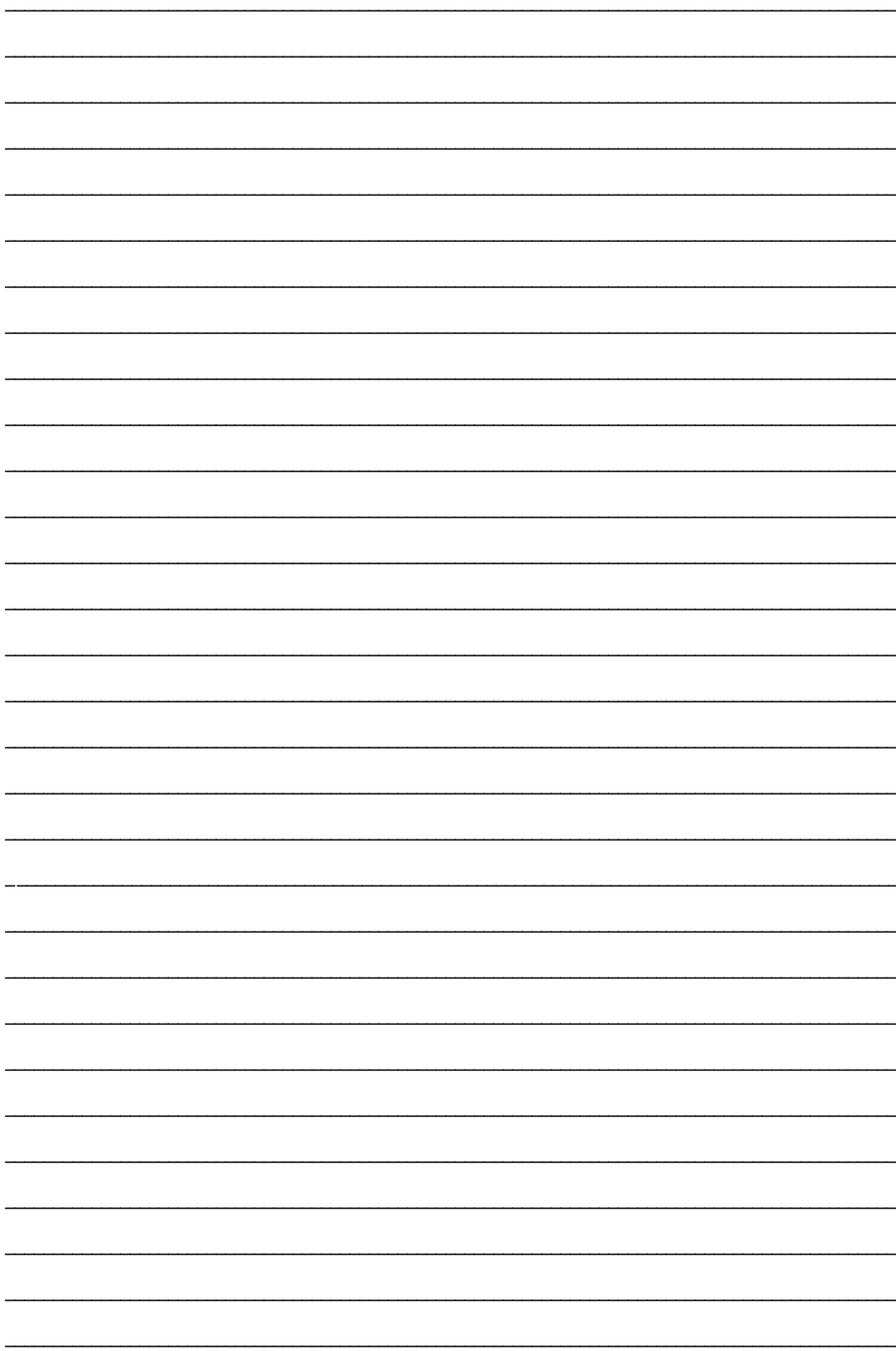
**PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE:**

Thank You, Lord, for who You are. Thank You for taking my place on the cross and giving me eternal life. Thank You for your goodness and faithfulness. Thank You for caring about every detail of my life. I bring my needs and requests to You alone. (Openly share your specific needs with God.) I will not be anxious about these things because I know You are sovereign over them. I place my trust in You. Thank You for Your peace that guards my heart and mind today. Help me to keep my eyes fixed on You!









# OUR CIRCUMSTANCES DON'T INFORM OUR CALLING

## READING:

Colossians 1:24-29

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.*

Colossians 1:24

## REFLECTION:

Regardless of Paul's situation, his mission remained consistent: he strived to help fellow believers mature in their faith and make the Word of God fully known. Even from prison, he knew that the Lord would use it for good, and he rejoiced in his suffering because of this hope. Because of his closeness to the Father, Paul didn't let his circumstances shift his focus from the purpose God gave him.

1. In this present season, what do you believe God is calling you to do?

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# THE ROOTS OF TRUTH

## READING:

Colossians 2:1-15

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

Colossians 2:6-7

## REFLECTION:

In tomorrow's reading, Paul will correct some of the heretical teachings that were spreading through the church at Colossae. Today, however, we see him warning them against letting "hollow and deceptive philosophy" inform their beliefs and reminding them of the true gospel message: Though we were dead in our transgressions, Christ made us alive in Him and erased our debt. This passage specifically says that He nailed our sins and debt to the cross. This is the good news!

1. What deceptive philosophy do you see running rampant in our culture today? What does scripture say instead?

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# A FALSE PATH TO GROWTH

## READING:

Colossians 2:16-23

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*If you died with Christ to the elements of this world, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?*

Colossians 2:20a

## REFLECTION:

There are three main elements that Paul rebukes in this passage: worshipping angels, false humility, and legalism. All three of these practices were common in the church of Colossae as an attempt to become “more spiritual.” These attempts were all in vain, though, and these practices contradict what scripture says. As Paul has already emphasized in previous passages, our only responsibility as believers is to be faithful and obedient to God. Christ did the rest of the work at the cross, so striving to meet a made-up ideal negates what He accomplished for us.

1. It can be easy to try to take matters into our own hands, even when Christ has already accomplished everything we need. Are there things you do in an effort to be “more spiritual” that are not founded in scripture?

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2. Think about the early days of your faith. Are there any false teachings that have informed your way of thinking, even subconsciously? Ask God to reveal any beliefs you have that are not founded on truth.

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# RAISED TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

**READING:**

Colossians 3:1-17

**VERSE OF THE DAY:**

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*

Colossians 3:1-2

**REFLECTION:**

Because we have been made new in Christ, we get the privilege to leave the mess of sin behind us. His resurrection paved the way for our freedom! As Christ followers, we are called to fix our eyes on Jesus, instead of on the patterns of this world.

1. Instead of conforming to the world around us, we are called to be holy and set apart. Which “patterns of the world” from verses 5-9 do you struggle with?

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# FOR THE LORD

**READING:**

Colossians 3:18-4:1

**VERSE OF THE DAY:**

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

Colossians 3:23-24

**REFLECTION:**

Life is busy. It's easy to be consumed by to-do lists, work deadlines, and that one task you always seem to put off until later. Naturally, when we accomplish something, whether big or small, our tendency is to want recognition and praise for our hard work. Paul reminds us that everything we do should be for the Lord, not for others. Instead of letting people-pleasing take up space in our minds, we can rest in the fact that we are promised an inheritance from the Lord.

1. Whose approval do you catch yourself working for?

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2. In this day and age, it's common for people to wear busyness and overworking as a badge of honor. Have you caught yourself doing this before? If so, when?

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3. In what ways can you slow down? Where can you intentionally build rest and reflection into your calendar?

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Take time in prayer to dedicate your work to the Lord. Whether it be a career, the work of maintaining your home, or even the task list you have to tackle today, we get to offer it all to Him!

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**SCRIPTURE:**

*And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow Him. Let your roots grow down into Him and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught and you will overflow with thankfulness.*

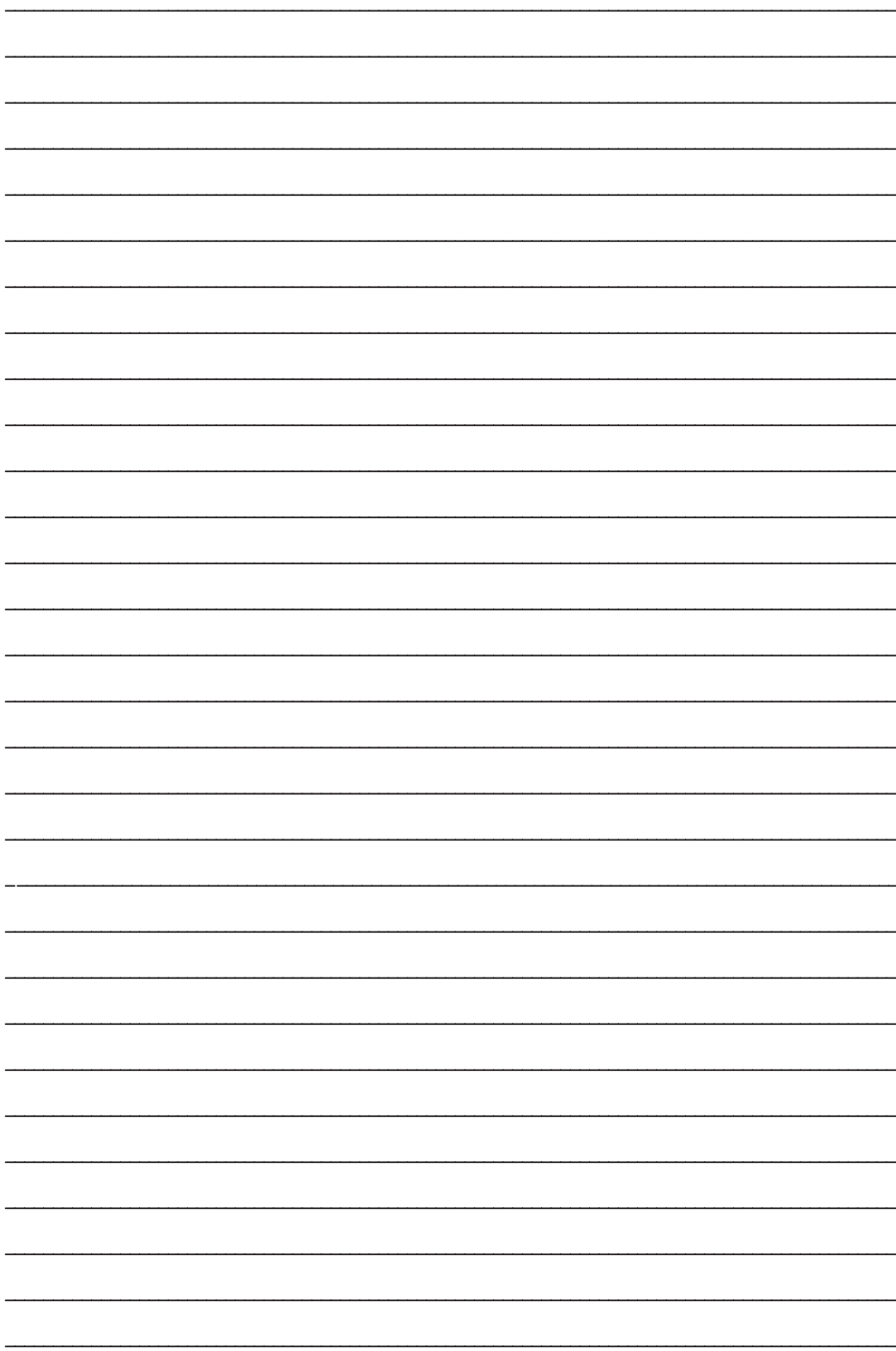
Colossians 2:6-7

**PRAYER DIRECTION:**

In these verses, Paul teaches us that accepting Christ as our Savior is not a mere one-time event; rather, He is the foundation upon which we should continually build our lives. Following Jesus means engaging in a life of continual pursuit with a desire to grow closer to Him. As our roots grow down deep into Him, we know Him in a more intimate way. This deeper relationship increases our faith and causes our lives to naturally overflow with gratitude.

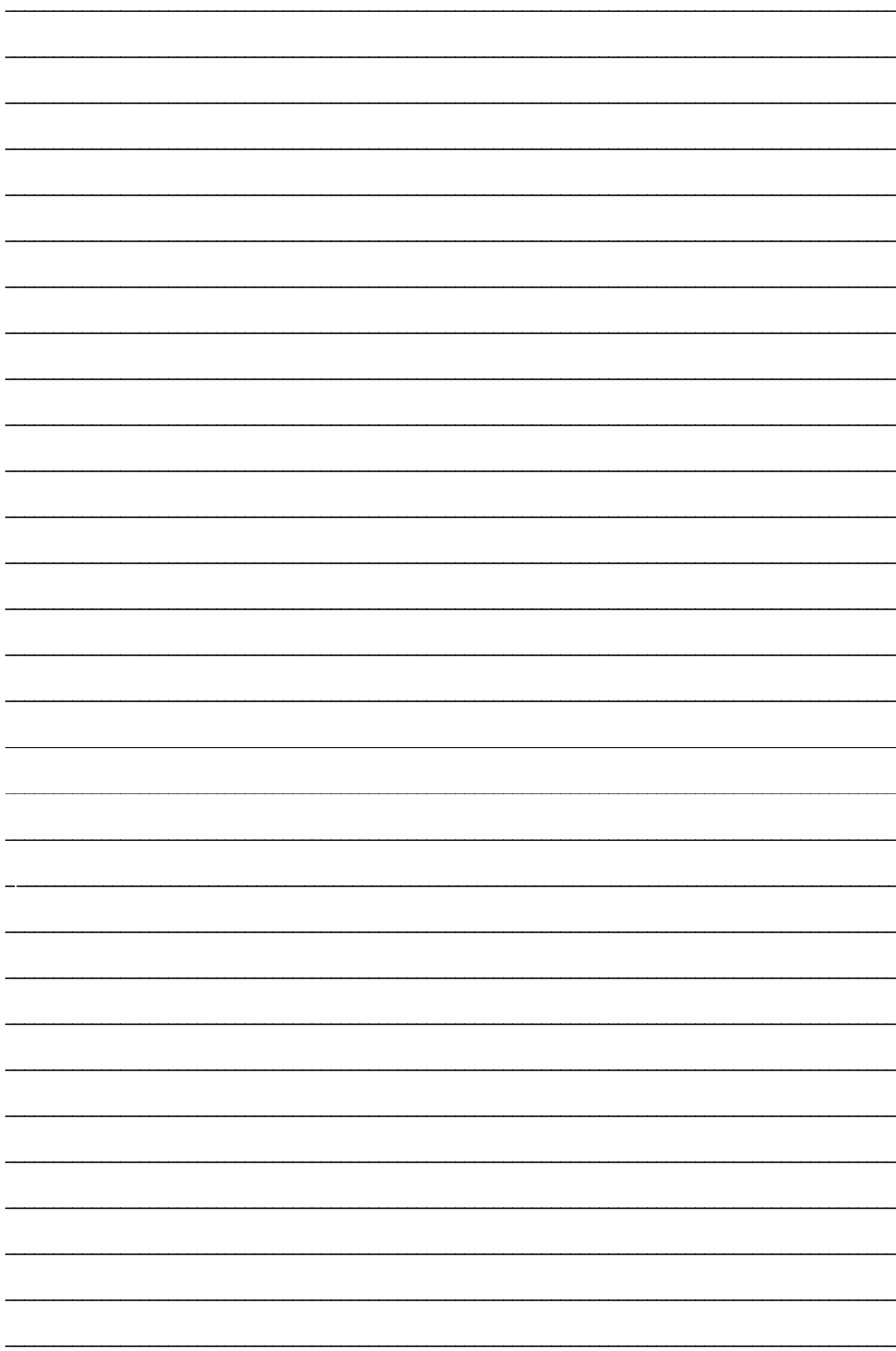
**PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE:**

Thank You, Jesus, for Your love for me. Instill in me a desire to pursue You daily and grow in my knowledge and love for You. Forgive me for the times I have built my life on things other than You. Help me recognize the moments when I stray, and lead me back to Your path where my roots grow deeper in You. Jesus, You are my greatest treasure; it's my heart's desire to know You in a deeper and more intimate way.









# WITNESS WITH YOUR WORDS

## READING:

Colossians 4:2-18

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

Colossians 4:6

## REFLECTION:

In his final remarks to the church in Colossae, Paul is looking toward the greater picture: the message of the gospel being spread. He highlights the importance of prayer, as we can't effectively reach others without our Helper. As believers, we also must be aware of our speech; approaching others with grace and the love of Jesus is often our best witness for Him. Our time on Earth is limited, so it's vital to be very intentional with how we interact with others.

1. There are multiple ways we can use our speech to curse (gossip, anger, unwholesome language, etc.). In which area does the enemy tempt you the most?

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# 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

# OVERVIEW

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In the letters of First and Second Thessalonians, Paul wrote to a very young church in Thessalonica that he spent a few short weeks with while on his second missionary journey (see Acts 17). In that time, many people believed the gospel that Paul shared and became followers of Christ. However, there were also many who were outraged by Paul's teachings, so much so that they formed a mob and chased Paul and his missionary companions out of the city. Paul wrote these letters to honor and congratulate the Christians in Thessalonica for their faith and growth in the face of intense persecution, and to reinforce some essential teachings from the short time he was there.

## SECTION BREAK DOWN

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### **PAUL ENCOURAGES THE CHURCH**

1 Thessalonians 1:1-3:13

### **LIVING TO PLEASE GOD**

1 Thessalonians 4:1-5:28

### **COMFORTING A PERSECUTED CHURCH**

2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

### **REMINDERS ABOUT THE DAY OF THE LORD**

2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

### **CAUTION AGAINST IDLENESS**

2 Thessalonians 3:1-18



## LOCATION

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The city of Thessalonica was an influential and multicultural port city on the Aegean Sea, situated on one of the main highways that connected the Roman Empire. Located in what is modern day Greece, it was the capital of Macedonia at the time Paul visited. Paul wrote these letters from the city of Corinth towards the end of his second missionary journey.



# BE AN EXAMPLE FOR CHRIST

## READING:

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it...*

1 Thessalonians 1:8

## REFLECTION:

Living the way that Jesus taught us to live—in a family of believers—is countercultural. This was true for the church in Thessalonica, and it's true for us today. The world may look at us and see that there's something different about the way that we live. It's because we are not living with our own interest in mind, but with our focus on God's kingdom. This kind of faithfulness is bound to turn heads.

1. The reputation of the church in Thessalonica spread throughout the entire region. What example do you want to set for your community?

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# THE WORD AT WORK IN US

## READING:

1 Thessalonians 2:1-20

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.*

1 Thessalonians 2:13

## REFLECTION:

When we realize that the Word of God is divinely written, alive, and active, we read it differently. The good news of Jesus isn't just a headline in a news feed. It's an incredible invitation to a different kind of life with God. It's a watershed moment in our lives that brings both new light and healing to everything that has come before in our story, and it changes everything else that comes afterwards.

1. Remember back to when you first encountered the good news of Jesus. How has He changed you since that moment?

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# A LOVE THAT OVERFLOWS

## READING:

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.*

1 Thessalonians 3:12

## REFLECTION:

As followers of Christ, we have been shown incredible mercy. Jesus stands in the gap for us, counting us worthy of salvation when, by ourselves, we could never measure up. As we live our lives every day in light of the mercy we have received, it shapes us into people of love. We learn to love others out of the overflow of love that Jesus has given us.

1. Reflect on the relationships in your life. Consider whether you are extending to others the mercy and love that Jesus has extended to you.

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# A QUIET LIFE

## READING:

1 Thessalonians 4:1-18

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

## REFLECTION:

Sometimes it seems impossible to live anything resembling a quiet life today. The world tells us to be ambitious, to climb the ladder, to do more, say yes to more, and acquire more. However, Paul is urging the church in Thessalonica (and us) to aim at something different: a quiet life. A life that isn't measured by how much we fit into our days, or how fast paced they are, but rather a life that moves at His pace and reflects at all times on the truth that our security is in Him.

1. What comes to mind when you think about leading a quiet life?

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2. Do you consistently make time for God in your daily life?

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3. The world wants us to be distracted from the things of God. Are there things in your life right now that are keeping you from having a deep and personal relationship with Jesus?

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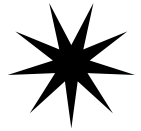
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## SCRIPTURE:

*Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains so that I may make it known as I should. Act wisely towards outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person...I, Paul, am writing this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.*

Colossians 4:2-6, 4:18

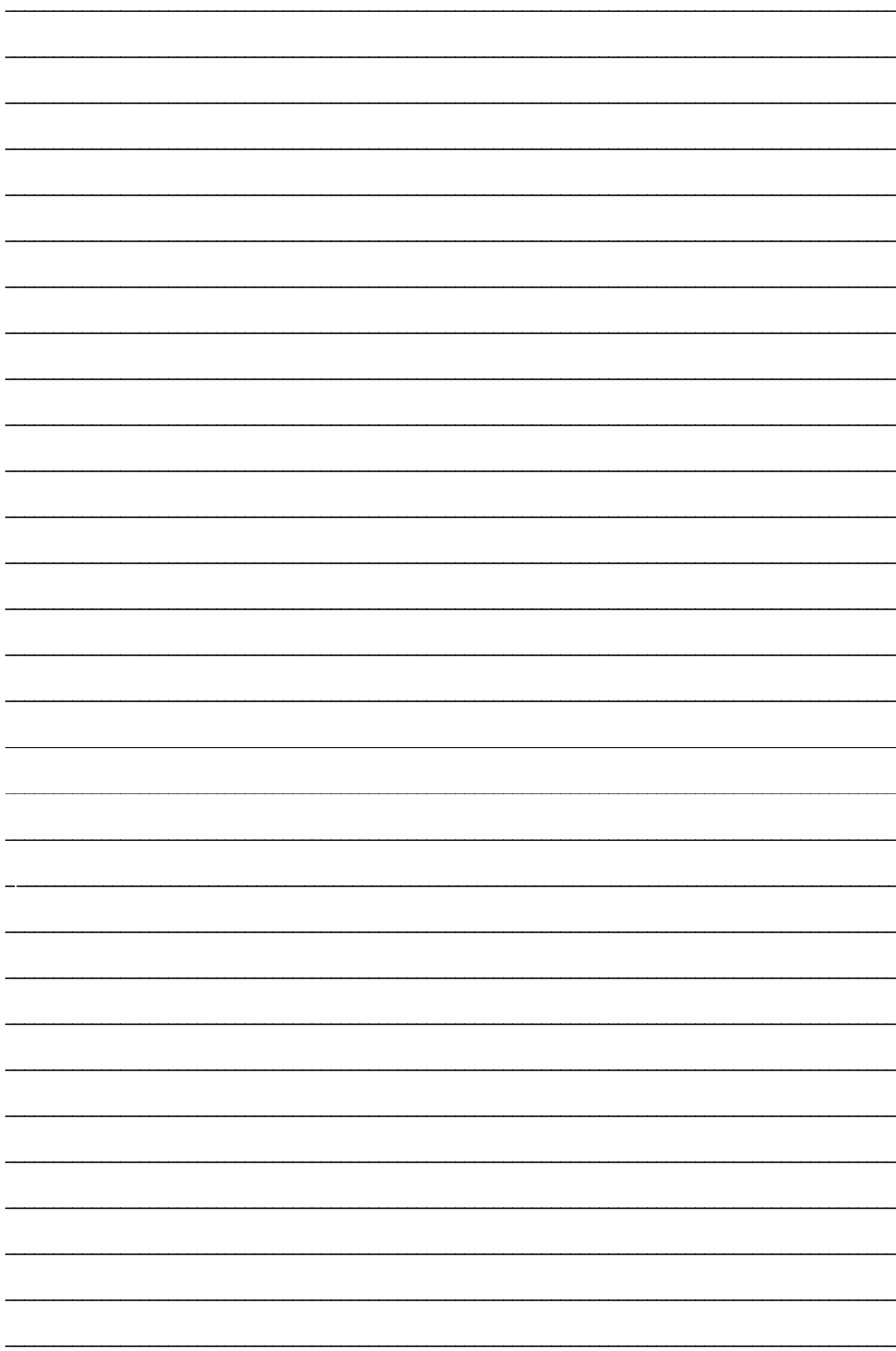
## PRAYER DIRECTION:

Oftentimes, we read the word “devote” and it already seems unattainable. Paul’s encouragement to the church demystifies the charge completely. Ultimately, without prayer, we wouldn’t last long. Prayer encourages us, it keeps us alert, and thankfulness becomes our posture. When we devote ourselves to prayer, we will have opportunities to share the gospel—the good news—to people that the Lord has intentionally placed in our lives. You, through prayer, will be able to see your situation, big or small, and still display His glory and truth by the way you live for His kingdom.

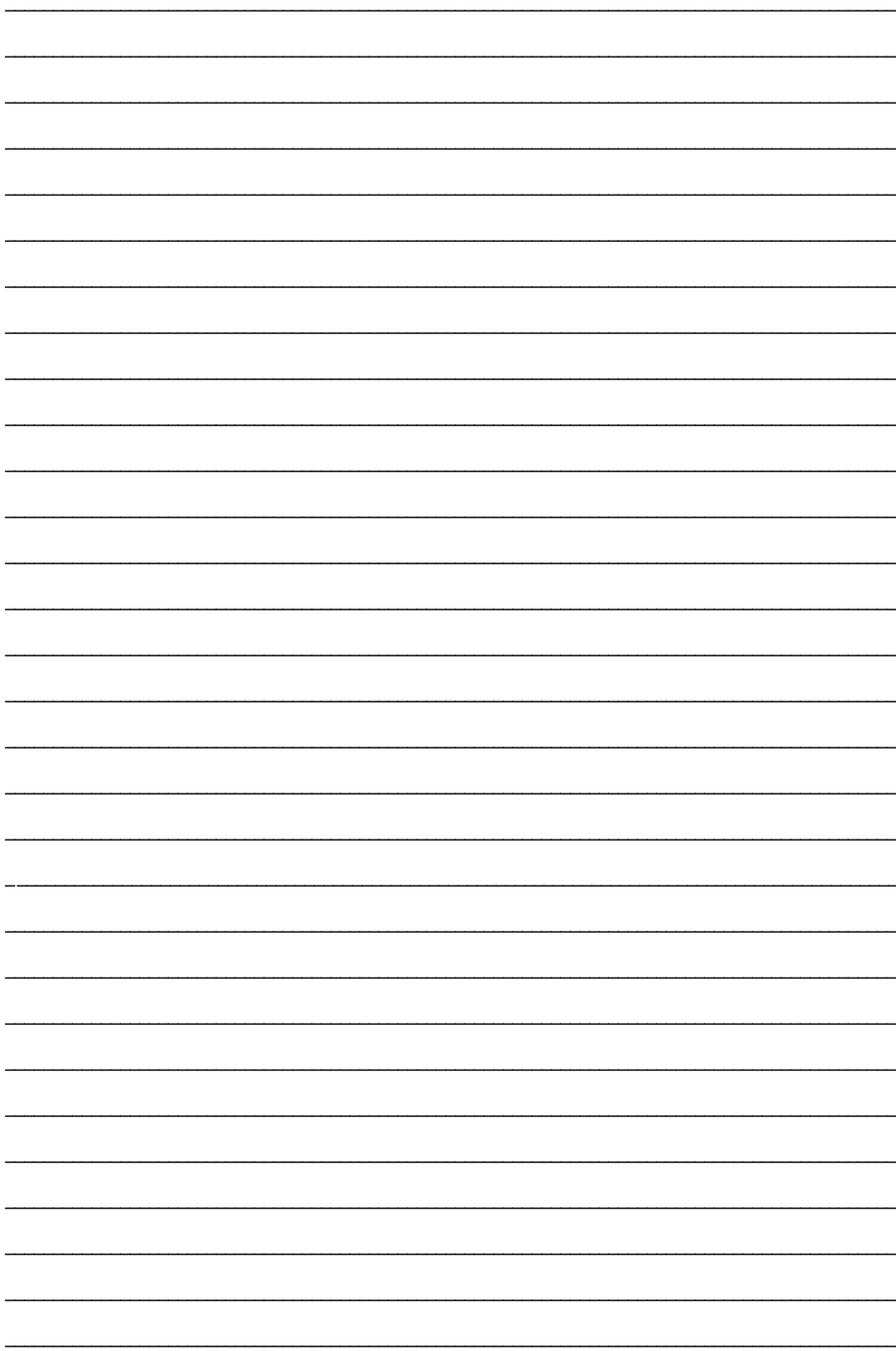
## PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE:

Lord, I thank You for Your word. Thank You that through the encouragement of scripture, I am not limited by my circumstances to share the good news! Forgive me for times I have shrunk back out of fear or insecurity. I don’t want to waste an opportunity to tell someone about how much You love them. Thank You for using me and allowing me to share the truth so that someone might be saved. Holy Spirit, would You lead me in conversations and season it perfectly to be received? I devote myself to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.









# CHILDREN OF THE DAY

## READING:

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober.*

1 Thessalonians 5:6

## REFLECTION:

Have you ever heard the saying, “Stay ready, so you don’t have to get ready”? That’s the idea that Paul is trying to get across to the believers in Thessalonica who are worried about the day of the Lord. If we are living the way that Jesus has called us to live, by the example that He set for us, it shouldn’t make any difference when He returns. Paul goes on to say in verse 9, “for God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1. Do you resonate with the fears that some of the believers in Thessalonica had about Jesus’ return? If so, take a moment to reflect on why that is.

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# GOD'S WILL FOR YOU

## READING:

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.*

1 Thessalonians 5:15

## REFLECTION:

We live in a world of divisions. Differing ideas about how to achieve a good life separate us from each other and set us in active opposition to those who think differently. The world and our culture encourage these divisions and continually attempt to drive the wedge between us deeper and deeper, so that our hatred for our neighbors grows larger and larger.

But Jesus calls us to do something radically different, something countercultural: to love our neighbors despite our differences. Remember that Paul is talking to a church that is under extreme persecution from other members of their community for what they believe about Jesus. He is reminding them to show love in the face of hatred and to seek unity instead of division.

1. Take a moment to reflect on the difficult relationships in your life. Is the way that you treat those people encouraging unity or division?

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# LIVING WITH ENDURANCE

## READING:

2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.*

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

## REFLECTION:

How could it be that people who are hated and persecuted by their neighbors are flourishing in their faith? Endurance. Just like an athlete trains their body by putting it through increasingly strenuous exercises, we too grow spiritually through the hard things that we endure. Endurance is not a passive survival of the things that life throws our way. Endurance is the active repurposing of the trials we face to strengthen us and grow us in Christ. Yes, life for the church in Thessalonica was hard, but their devotion to the kingdom of God and their faith in the midst of trials drew them closer to God and to each other.

1. When you go through hard things in life, is your tendency to draw closer to God or not?

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# THE POWER OF OUR GOD

## READING:

2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

## VERSE OF THE DAY:

*And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.*

2 Thessalonians 2:8

## REFLECTION:

This passage of scripture contains some difficult topics and imagery, but it should also bring us an incredible amount of comfort. The Thessalonian church is concerned again about having possibly missed the return of Jesus. Paul reminds them of what he has already taught them about the man of lawlessness and the struggles that will precede Jesus' return. He then says that the man of lawlessness, the most formidable adversary the church will ever face, will be brought to nothing by Jesus, simply with the breath of His mouth. It's hard to imagine a more comforting thought than knowing that Christ, who has that much power over the darkness of the world, stepped down from heaven and chose to have an individual relationship with each of us.

1. Do you live your daily life with an active awareness of the awesome power that Jesus has?

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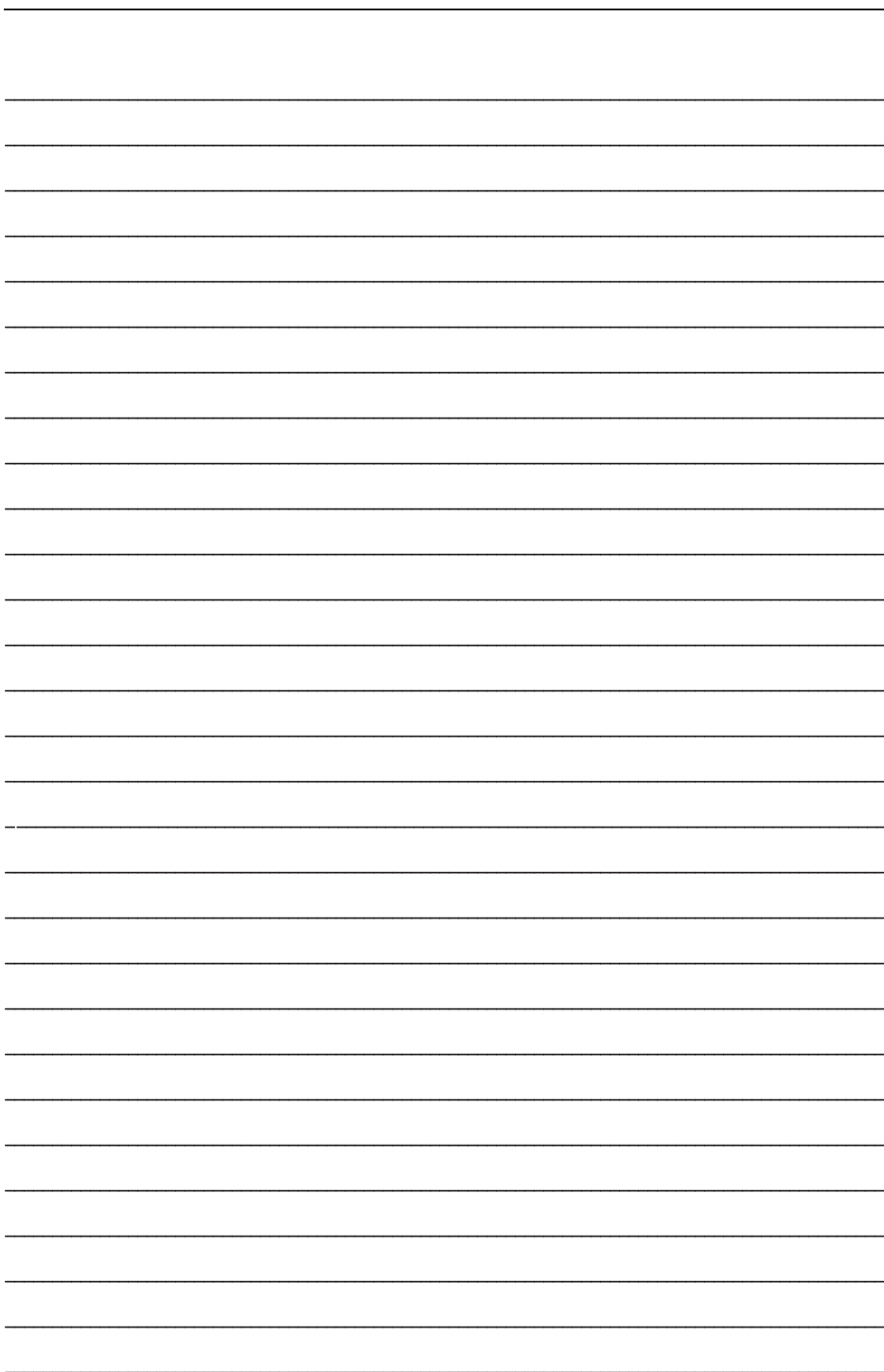
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## SCRIPTURE:

*When He comes on that day, He will receive glory from His holy people—praise from all who believe...May He give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live and you will be honored with Him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

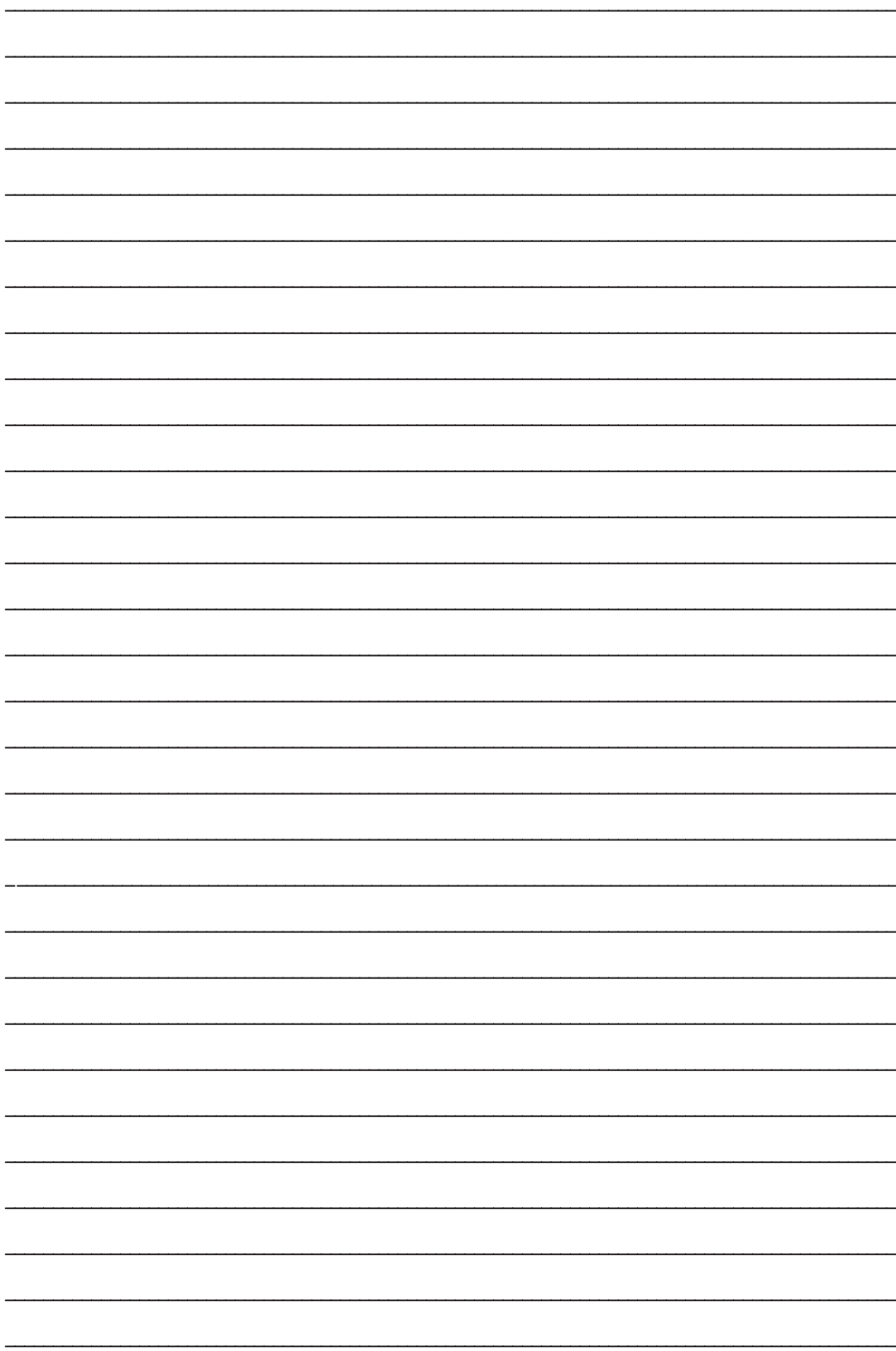
2 Thessalonians 1:10-12

## PRAYER DIRECTION:

Each chapter in 1 & 2 Thessalonians mentions the return of Jesus. Many in the early Church had walked with Jesus personally, so they longed to see Him again and introduce others to Him. As we walk with Jesus and regularly encounter His Holy Spirit, our desire for Him grows. However, the further away we move from direct encounter, the greater the chances that we undervalue the Holy Spirit's presence and Jesus' return. Fresh encounter leads to refreshed desire, value, vision, mission, resolve, and strength. If you need a refresh, it's time to be filled with the Holy Spirit again; to sit with Him, worship, read His Word, and listen to Him. The King is coming—we cannot un-know this. It must fuel us with excitement and undeterred resolve to reach the many who still do not know King Jesus.

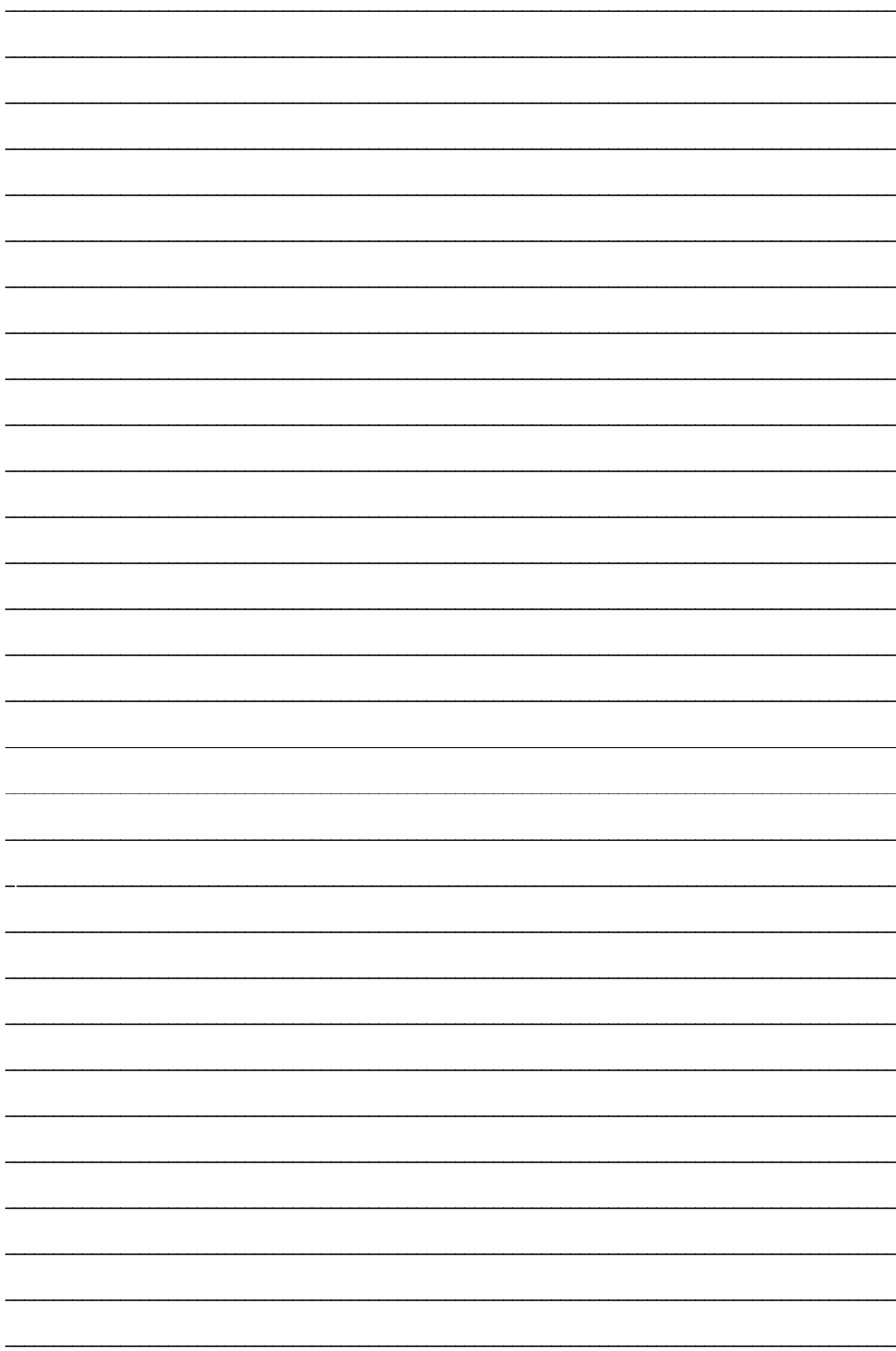
## PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE:

Lord Jesus, we love You. We are awaiting Your return and our hearts long to be with You. We recognize that the days are few, so we ask to be filled with Your Holy Spirit until we overflow so that we can finish Your ministry in our homes, cities, nation, and the earth. Help us to keep our eyes on You, especially as hardship increases. May Your light shine through us so that everyone around us will see and give glory to King Jesus. May our hearts burn with love for You. Holy Spirit, would You breathe on those of us who feel dry and disconnected and fan us back into flame? We want to run until you come! We ask that the population of heaven would increase more and more each day, until we see you face to face. In Jesus' name, Amen.













**NEW LIFE  
CHURCH**