



1 & 2
SAMUEL

LIVING IN THE WORD

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1 & 2
SAMUEL

LIVING IN THE WORD

NLC NEW LIFE
CHURCH



KEY VERSE:

1 SAMUEL 2:2

“There is no one holy like the Lord;
there is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.”



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

We are so excited that you're starting your journey through 1 & 2 Samuel 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.

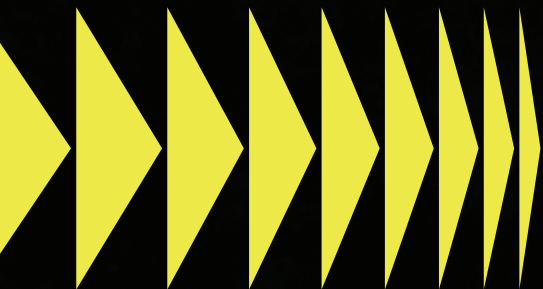
We hope your time in the books of 1 & 2 Samuel is reflective, fruitful, and eye-opening for you!

ABOUT SAMUEL

A man had two wives, one of whom had many children. The other wife was barren, desperate to have children. Her name was Hannah. She could have chosen bitterness and anger toward God for her condition (because God's Word clearly says, "the Lord closed her womb"). Instead, she prayed, pouring out her soul to the Lord, begging Him for a child.

One day, the priest, Eli, saw her praying and blessed her after a moment of confusion: "May God give you what you have asked for!" And from that blessing, Samuel was born.

The Bible says that once Hannah weaned Samuel, she returned Samuel to Eli and dedicated him to serve at the Lord's house. This place would have been the Tabernacle at Shiloh, not Jerusalem, since the Temple had not yet been built. The Tabernacle, including the Ark of the Covenant, had been located at Shiloh, a city in Ephraim, for about 270 years! Interestingly, the word Shiloh means "place of rest." So, in Samuel's day, the Word of God and the Presence of God were found at a place called rest.



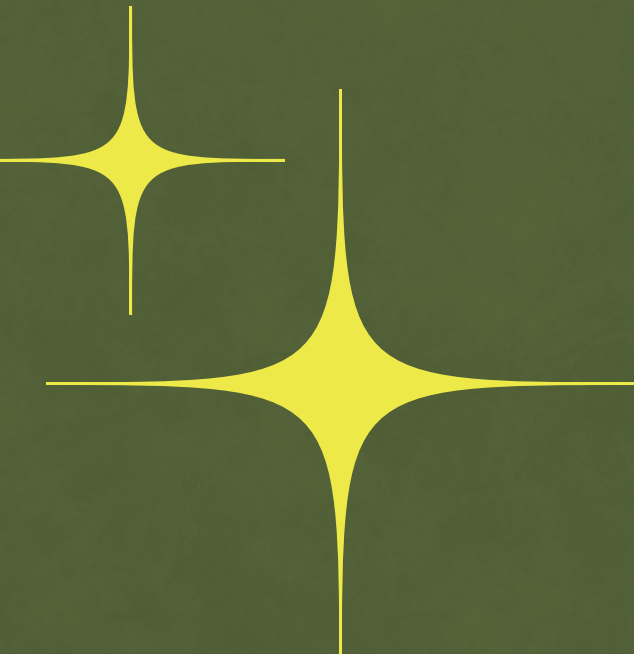
READING PLAN

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| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Samuel 2:1-36 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Samuel 2:1-32 |
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OVERVIEW

Samuel was the last of the judges of Israel and the first of its prophets.

The historical books of 1 & 2 Samuel covered 1105-971 BC, a season of relative calm on the international stage. These two books were originally one book written by a few unknown authors. The books chronicle the early rise of Israel from 12 tribes to a fledgling nation in the central highlands of modern-day Israel. The first book covers the call of Samuel as a prophet of God and judge of the nation, who constantly refocused the nation's gaze on the true God until they demanded a king. The rest of 1 Samuel covers the rise and fall of King Saul and the rise of David, ending with Saul's suicide at battle. The second book continues the story of King David until his final breath.



SECTION BREAK DOWN

1 SAMUEL

THE BIRTH AND CALL OF SAMUEL

1 Samuel 1-3

THE ARK NARRATIVE

1 Samuel 4-7

THE DEMAND FOR A KING

1 Samuel 8-12

THE REIGN OF SAUL

1 Samuel 13-15

THE RISE OF DAVID

1 Samuel 16-31

2 SAMUEL

DAVID'S REIGN IN HEBRON

2 Samuel 1-4

DAVID'S REIGN AS KING OVER ISRAEL

2 Samuel 5-10

DAVID'S SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

2 Samuel 11-12

REBELLION AND INTRIGUE

2 Samuel 13-20

DAVID'S LATER YEARS AND FINAL ACTS

2 Samuel 21-24



LOCATIONS

Shiloh, Bethlehem, Gibeah, Hebron, and Jerusalem

SHILOH

Shiloh means “place of rest.” Ancient Shiloh is located in what is now the West Bank, about 19 miles north of Jerusalem. The Tabernacle, with the Ark of the Covenant, remained there from 1375-1104 BC when Israel lost a battle with the Philistines (see 1 Samuel 4). So, the Ark of the Covenant was at rest at Shiloh long-term, and though it was a temporary shelter, this location became the first type of Jerusalem.

BETHLEHEM

The name **Bethlehem** means “house of bread.” The town was first mentioned when Rachel was buried on the side of the road as Jacob and his family were traveling to Ephrath (Bethlehem) from Bethel. Bethlehem is where Samuel went to find the leader the Lord had chosen to replace King Saul. He didn’t know it would be David specifically; he was just obeying God, who had sent him there. David’s connection with Bethlehem is that it is the place where he tended to his father’s sheep.

GIBEAH

Gibeah means “hill.” It is believed to be the same hill where an abandoned structure, meant to be the summer palace for King Hussein of Jordan, currently sits. Jordan conquered Jerusalem after 1948 and annexed the territory. But when Israel recaptured Jerusalem during the Six-Day War of 1967, construction of the palace was halted. It remains unfinished to this day.

HEBRON

Hebron means “association.” It is a city in south Judah, about 20 miles south of Jerusalem and 20 miles north of Beersheba, near where Abraham built an altar to the Lord. Abraham also bought land from Ephron the Hittite at Hebron, the first recorded land purchase for what would eventually become the nation of Israel. This specific plot of land had a cave where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah were buried.

JERUSALEM

Jerusalem means “teaching of peace.” Jerusalem appears many times in the Old Testament. Its first appearance is in Genesis 14, when King Melchizedek, the King of Salem, came out to bless Abraham, bringing him bread and wine (a look forward to communion, perhaps?). Abraham subsequently gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything. The first mention of Jerusalem in the Books of Samuel was in 1 Samuel 17 when David brought the head of Goliath to Jerusalem!

MONDAY

STAYING THANKFUL

READING:

1 Samuel 1:1-28

VERSE OF THE DAY:

“I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life, he will be given over to the Lord.” And he worshiped the Lord there.

1 Samuel 1:27-28

REFLECTION:

It's easy to ask the Lord for many things that we desire. It's harder to properly honor Him when He grants our request. Hannah demonstrated how to do this well. Our human tendency is to move on quickly without much reflection, but Hannah remembered the Lord just as He remembered her.

Hannah named her son Samuel, which means “because I asked the Lord for him.” Surely, each time she said his name, she thanked the Lord. She could have birthed Samuel and forgotten the Lord, keeping him protected under her care his whole life. Instead, joyfully, she returned to the Lord what He gave her, trusting Him to be faithful going forward, just as He had before then.

TUESDAY

A FAITHFUL FEW

READING:

1 Samuel 2:1-36

VERSE OF THE DAY:

I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his priestly house, and they will minister before my anointed one always.

1 Samuel 2:35

REFLECTION:

In the books of 1 & 2 Samuel, you will notice contrasts: Samuel and Eli's sons, David and Saul, and Israel and its enemies. When all seems lost in a generation, God always uses the faithful minority to save the majority. Hannah's legacy was one of thankfulness and faithfulness, which eventually brought blessing and redemption to the people of Israel.

God is faithful in keeping His covenant and chooses those who are faithful to fulfill His ultimate plans. The account of Samuel is a shadow of the true "faithful priest" to come: Jesus, the one who would establish the Kingdom of Heaven, both now and forever.

WEDNESDAY

RESTING IN HIS PRESENCE

READING:

1 Samuel 3:1-4:11

VERSE OF THE DAY:

The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

1 Samuel 3:3

REFLECTION:

This verse mentions two features of the temple: the lamp of God and the ark of the covenant. Both symbolized God's presence. The priests had been carefully instructed to keep a lamp burning in the sanctuary every night. When the Lord chose to speak, He spoke to a faithful son of Israel who was resting in His Presence, keeping the lamp lit. The closer we are to His presence, the clearer the voice of our Shepherd becomes.

RESPONSE:

1. Are you resting in the presence of the Holy Spirit?

2. How do we “keep the lamp lit” in our lives?

THURSDAY

THE TRUE TEMPLE

READING:

1 Samuel 4:12-5:12

VERSE OF THE DAY:

She said, "The Glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

1 Samuel 4:22

REFLECTION:

The loss of the ark of the covenant meant to the Israelites that God had removed His hand from His nation and people. This filled them with terror, as made evident by Eli's reaction to the news. We, who live in the new covenant that Jesus' death and resurrection bought for us, should reflect on what an enormous blessing that truly is.

For those in Christ, God's presence is not dependent upon an ark, a building, or a leader. He made us His temple through the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In any situation or season, we have access to the same power that raised Christ from the dead and shames every idol.

RESPONSE:

1. Thank the Lord for His Holy Spirit dwelling in you.

2. If you have not asked for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, ask Him to fill you and guide you. (Luke 11:13)

3. What idols do you need the Lord to remove from your life?

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

READING:

1 Samuel 6:1-21

VERSE OF THE DAY:

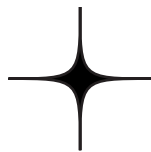
Take the ark of the Lord and put it on the cart, and in a chest beside it put the gold objects you are sending back to him as a guilt offering. Send it on its way.

1 Samuel 6:8

REFLECTION:

Imagine what this scene must have been like for those Israelites in Beth Shemesh. Their conquerors returned the ark to them with guilt offerings, asking to be cleansed. What a measure of faith they must have received at the time to see the power of Yahweh displayed on their behalf!

However, verse 19 shows that they, too, had to take God's holiness seriously and not become too comfortable or proud. We see this described in both Isaiah 6 and Revelation 1. God is holy, and we are not. It is only through Christ's sacrifice that we can stand before God and receive eternal life. We, too, see God's power and mercy displayed on our behalf at Calvary.



SCRIPTURE:

As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, "How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine." "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

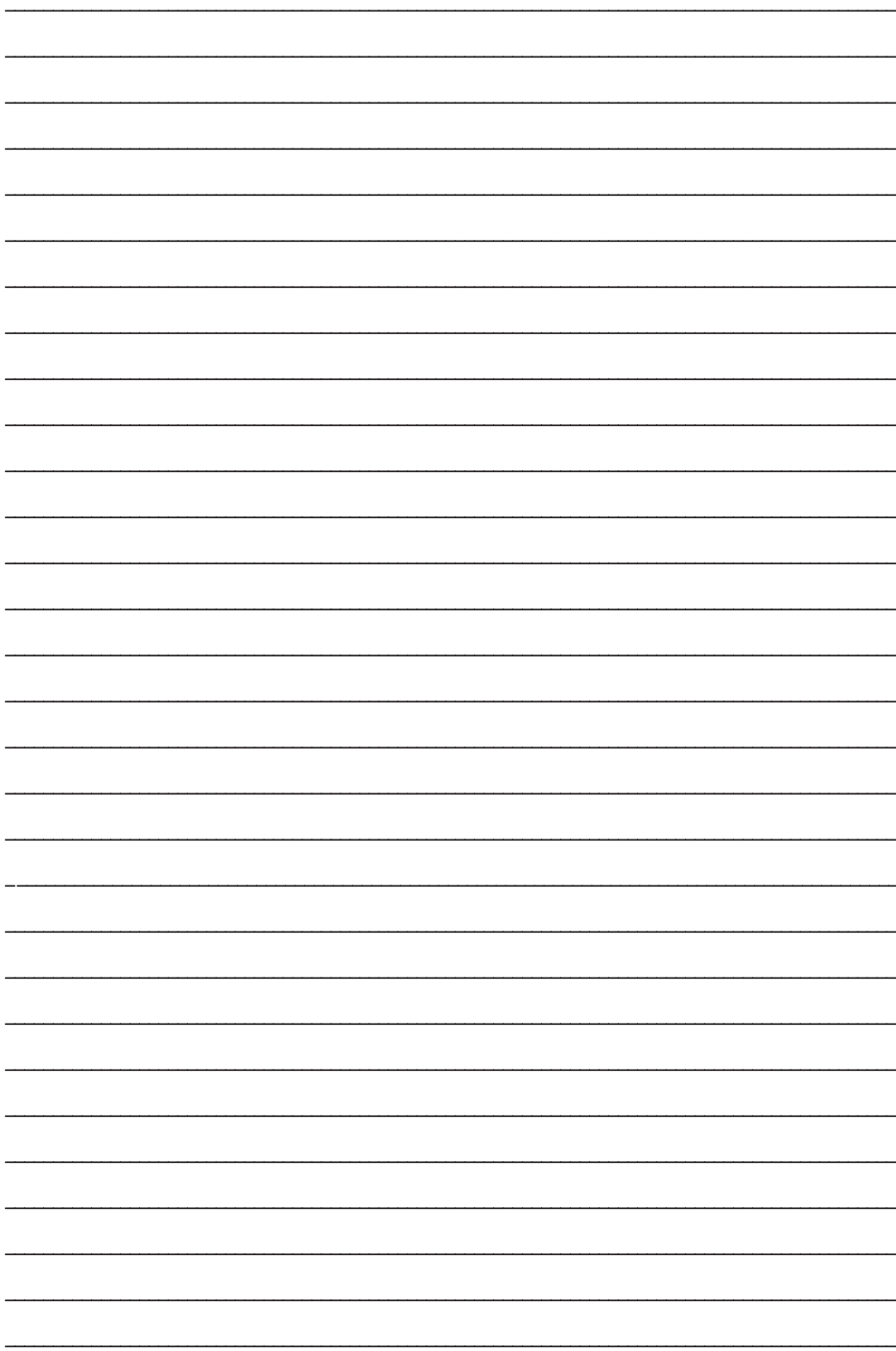
1 Samuel 1:12-18

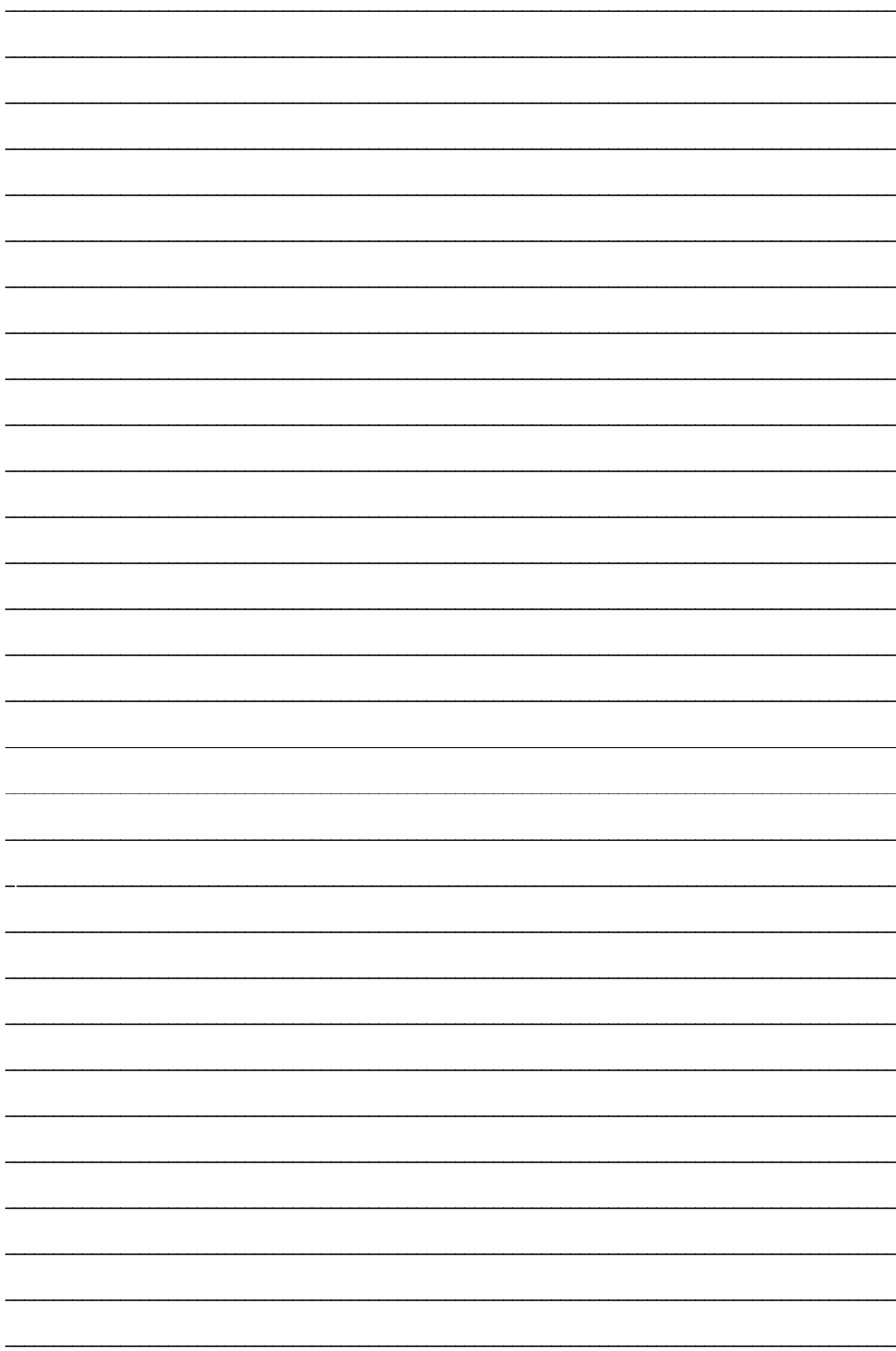
PRAYER DIRECTION:

Hannah was deeply grieved that she was not able to have children, and she took her grief directly to God. She poured out all of her heart to Him in prayer. Take note of verse 18, which says that after Eli's prayer and encouragement, "her face was no longer downcast." She was not yet pregnant, and she did not yet have a baby in her arms. Yet her sadness was lifted after spending time seeking God. Prayer was and still is a powerful way to express our heartache and receive encouragement and peace from the Lord. What is heavy in your heart today? Have you surrendered it to the Lord in prayer?

PRAYER:

Thank You, Lord, for caring about every detail of our lives. Thank You for teaching us that Your yoke is easy and Your burden light. These things are heavy on my heart today (openly express your specific needs and feelings to God). I know that I do not have the strength to carry these difficulties on my own, but nothing is too hard for You. So, I lay them at Your feet. I surrender all of this to You and ask You to do what only You can. Thank You that just as You worked a miracle for Hannah, You are still able and willing to work a miracle for me. I put my faith in You alone, and I receive Your peace today.





TRUST IN GOD

READING:

1 Samuel 7:1-8:22

VERSE OF THE DAY:

But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

1 Samuel 8:19-20

REFLECTION:

The Israelites knew exactly what they wanted: a king. They demanded it. Never mind the fact that in God, they already had the King they were looking for! God led them, God went before them, and God fought their battles. Even so, they wanted things their own way. They wanted to be like everyone else. They wanted to look like the world. Samuel tried to warn the Israelites of the cost that came with an earthly king, but it was too late. Their minds were made up.

The world's ways can be alluring, but it will always end up costing you more than you want to pay. You weren't created to be like everyone else. Trust in God and remain faithful to His plans.

RESPONSE:

1. Have you been seeking God's wisdom for the direction of your life, or are you simply following the world's model?

2. Are there any areas of your life where you need to renew your commitment to following God's plan?

TUESDAY

GOD EQUIPS THE CALLED

READING:

1 Samuel 9:1-27

VERSE OF THE DAY:

Saul answered, "But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin?

Why do you say such a thing to me?"

1 Samuel 9:21

REFLECTION:

Many of us react the same way that Saul did when we get a picture of what God is calling us to do.

"Me? God, are You sure You have the right person? Have You ever been around my family?"

When we feel God is leading us to do something, we start listing all the reasons why we're not the right fit, but God's not worried about the strength of your resume. He knows who you are. He's just looking for your obedience. Whatever He's called you to do, He will equip you to do.

The next time God asks you to do something, don't try to convince Him that He's got the wrong person; just respond with a simple "yes."

WEDNESDAY

TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT

READING:

1 Samuel 10:1-27

VERSE OF THE DAY:

The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person.

1 Samuel 10:6

REFLECTION:

This was a big moment for the soon-to-be King Saul. Samuel told him all the things that were about to happen, culminating with this: “The Spirit of the Lord is going to come powerfully upon you.” The result of this encounter with God’s spirit is two-fold: Saul would be empowered for service, specifically prophecy, and he would be changed into a new person.

When we walk in the Spirit, the same is true for us. We get power and transformation. We are empowered to do the work of the Kingdom, and we are being transformed into a new creation. Purpose every day to walk in the Spirit, and you’ll see the fruit grow.

REMEMBER

READING:

1 Samuel 11:1-12:25

VERSE OF THE DAY:

But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.

1 Samuel 12:24

REFLECTION:

In Samuel's farewell address to Israel, we find this reminder: remain devoted to the Lord and remember all He's done. Remain devoted and remember. All too often, however, it seems like we are doing the exact opposite! Instead of devotion and remembrance, we wander and forget.

The truth is that the two are tied together. When we forget what the Lord has done, our hearts wander from Him. That's why there's such an emphasis on remembering throughout scripture. We're told to remember over 300 times! We remember what He's done and respond with devotion. Make remembering His faithfulness a daily practice in your life!

NOT A FAIR FIGHT

READING:

1 Samuel 13:1-14:14

VERSE OF THE DAY:

Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the Lord will act on our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few."

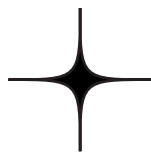
1 Samuel 14:6

REFLECTION:

There was no great plan or brilliant military strategy. Jonathan and his young armor-bearer were set to take on a Philistine outpost. If you were watching from a distance, you wouldn't like the odds. But when you have God on your side, it's never a fair fight. Jonathan's confidence in the Lord gave him confidence in facing his circumstances.

Are you going through a situation where the odds aren't great? Are you up against an enemy that looks to have you outnumbered? We all face them at some point in our lives, that's for sure. But remember: with God on your side, it's never a fair fight. "Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few."

SATURDAY



SCRIPTURE:

As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day.

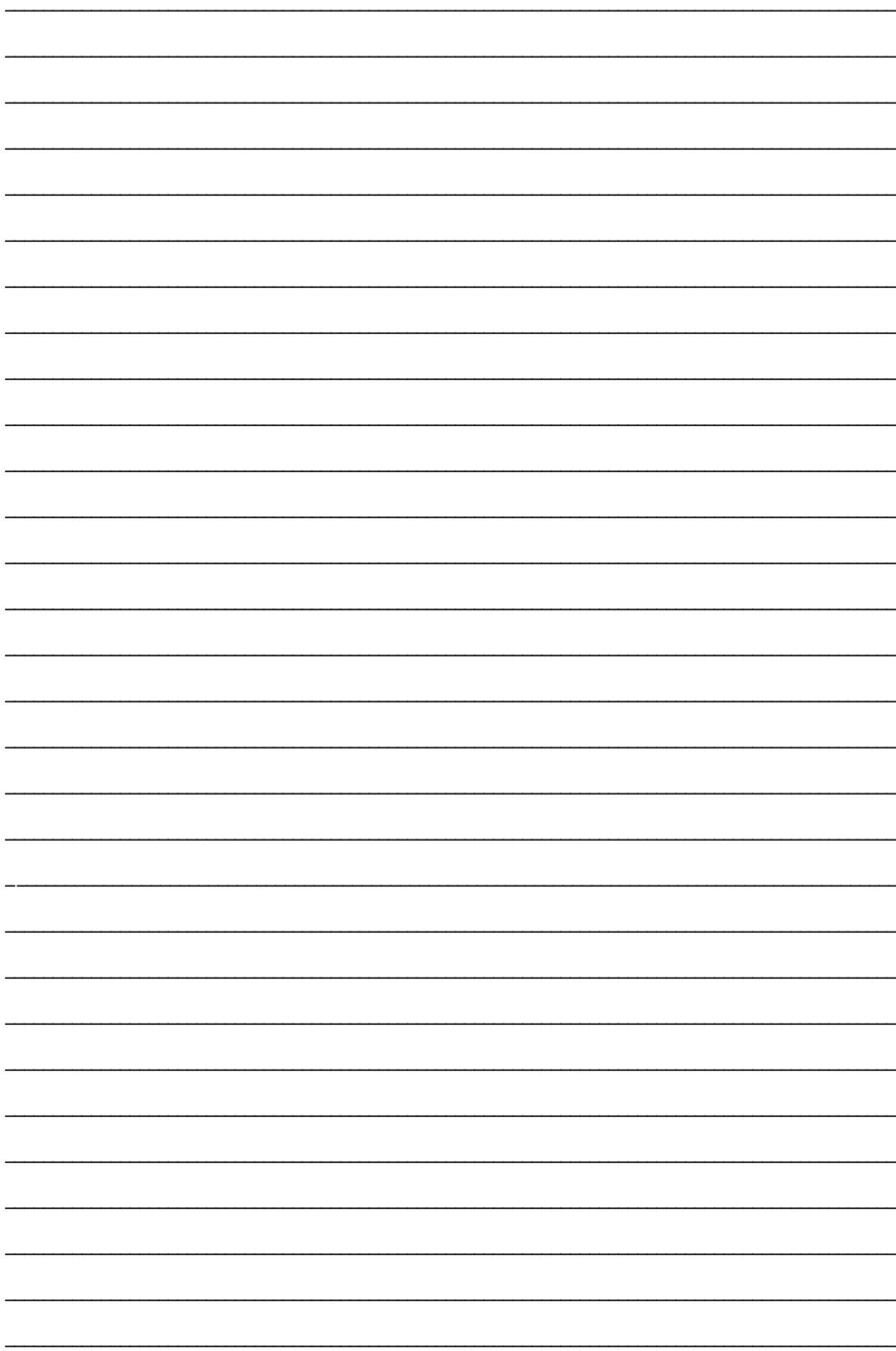
1 Samuel 10:9

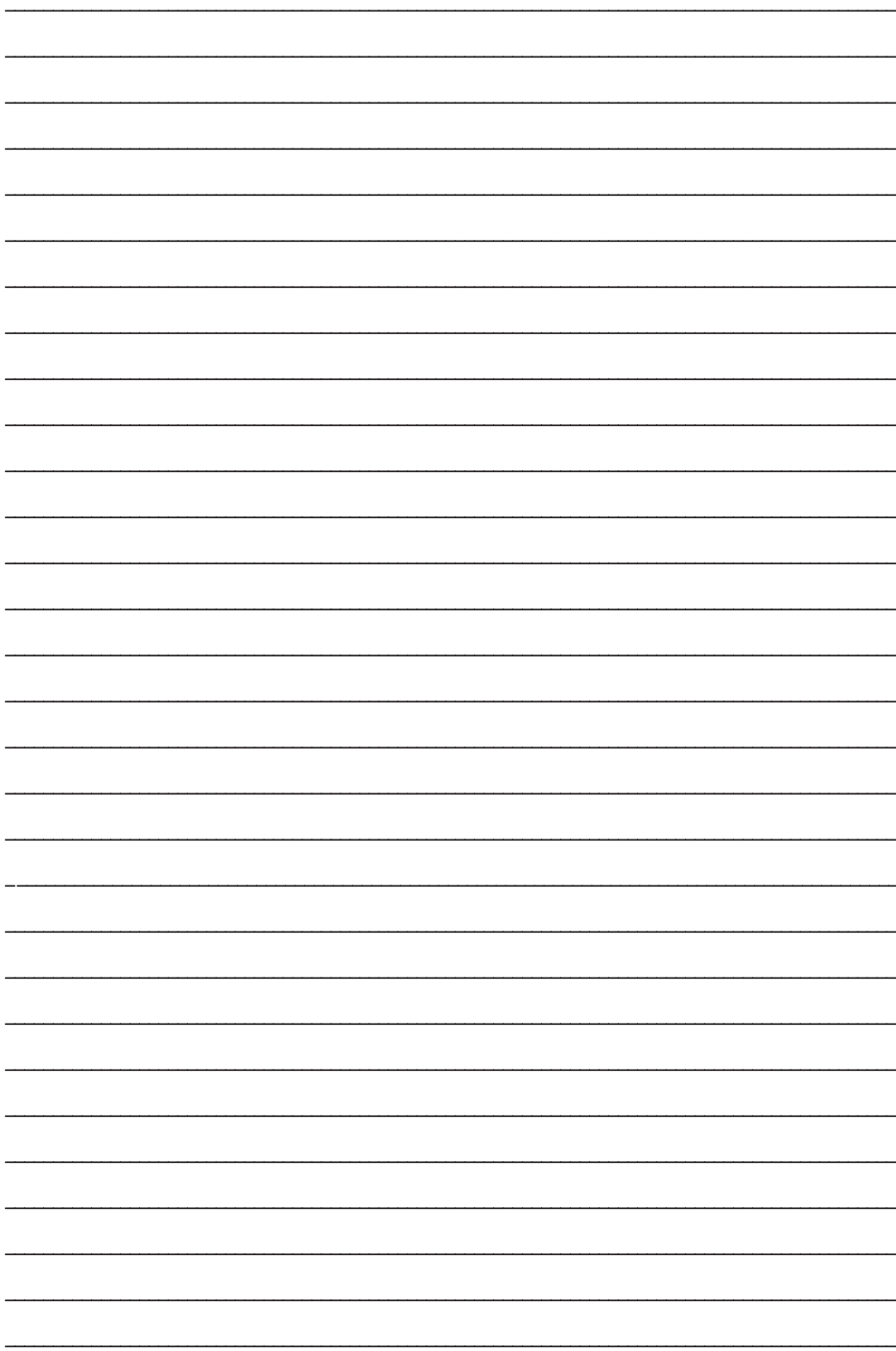
PRAYER DIRECTION:

Notice that as Saul obeyed what God asked him to do, God gave him a new heart and fulfilled the signs promised before. The new heart and fulfilled signs did not come before or after he obeyed; they came as he was obeying. It can be easy to expect God to move in a certain way before we are willing to obey Him, but we should learn from this example in scripture that sometimes God moves *AS* we obey Him. Is there anything He's asking you to do today? Seek Him in prayer and ask Him to give you the courage to obey Him fully and completely!

PRAYER:

Help me, Lord, to obey You even when I don't feel like it. Thank You that just as You changed Saul's heart as he obeyed, You can also change mine. Obedience is not always easy, but You are always worth it. I desire to serve and obey You in every area of my life. Please expose to me any areas where I am not currently doing so, and help me to surrender them to You.





MONDAY

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

READING:

1 Samuel 14:15-52

VERSE OF THE DAY:

Now the Israelites were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, "Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!" So none of the troops tasted food.

1 Samuel 14:24

REFLECTION:

Saul's oath sounded confident. It sounded firm. Saul gathered the troops and said, "No one eats before I defeat my enemies." Oaths were a big deal; they impressed people. God even took them seriously when He wouldn't speak through the priests because somebody broke the oath. How did Saul respond? By making another oath, "Whoever did it will die!" In the end, no one died because Saul feared the people.

Sometimes, we use our words to try to sound powerful or look impressive rather than simply to communicate with people and make a connection. Jesus said it this way: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No.'"

RESPONSE:

1. Where do you use your words to impress or coerce people to do what you want them to do?

2. How can you use words to communicate and make a connection instead?

LISTEN AND OBEY

READING:

1 Samuel 15:1-35

VERSE OF THE DAY:

But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."

1 Samuel 15:22

REFLECTION:

What brightens God's day? What brings a smile to His face? Saul thought God was satisfied with partial obedience and "close enough," and it cost him the kingdom. "To obey" actually carries a double meaning of listening and obeying. "To heed" in the original language means "to prick up the ears."

God desires us to wake up daily longing to hear His Word for our day and then to walk in the confidence, joy, and peace that comes from obedience. He has given us the gift of scripture that allows us to hear clearly from Him.

RESPONSE:

1. Do you make a daily (or even more regular) routine of reading the scriptures to heed God's direction?

2. Where do you partially follow God's guidance in your life?

3. What portion of scripture have you ignored because it's "too difficult to understand"? What steps could you take to approach it anew to better understand it?

WEDNESDAY

THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART

READING:

1 Samuel 16:1-23

VERSE OF THE DAY:

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7

REFLECTION:

How does God pick His person? What does He look at as He makes that decision? Samuel saw Eliab and was convinced that this was God’s man, as he was tall and handsome, like Saul.

God, instead, looks at the heart. Today, we would use the word “mind,” the inner person, the place where thoughts live and decisions are made. David cultivated his heart by living in obedience and tending the sheep, where he became both a warrior and a worshiper.

RESPONSE:

1. How's your heart? What would God see as He peers into your inner life? Take some time and repent where necessary.

2. What are you doing to cultivate that inner life? How are you meditating on scripture, worshiping the Lord, and changing your thought patterns? What is one discipline you could add?

THURSDAY

WHOSE BATTLE ARE YOU FIGHTING?

READING:

1 Samuel 17:1-58

VERSE OF THE DAY:

This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.

1 Samuel 17:46

REFLECTION:

There was much at stake as the shepherd boy topped the hill to face a Philistine champion. It was evident in David's mind that this was a battle between the Lord and His enemies, not just a national skirmish. As a result, David confidently stepped in because he knew that he fought for the Lord, not Saul. And he knew what was at stake: the glory of the Lord's name among the nations, not his own name. Because of this, a giant fell, and an entire army ran away in fear.

RESPONSE:

1. Think about the battles that rage in your life right now. Whose battles are you fighting? Are you fighting against your enemies for your name's sake, or are you fighting the Lord's battles so He might receive the glory?

2. Take a moment to pray these familiar lines from the Lord's prayer: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Hand over your battles, repenting of anywhere you're trying to get by on your own.

THE MANY FACETS OF GOD'S FAVOR

READING:

1 Samuel 18:1-30

VERSE OF THE DAY:

In everything [David] did he had great success, because the Lord was with him.

1 Samuel 18:14

REFLECTION:

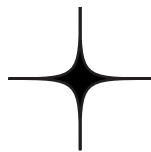
What does God's favor look like? Throughout this chapter, we see the good, the bad, and the ugly of God's favor in David's life. Jonathan handed over his princely garments and identity. Foreign battalions fell before his armies. Crowds sang songs of his triumphs as he returned home. Saul's daughter found him irresistibly attractive inside and out. It's easy to see this and pray, "Lord, show me Your favor. I want Your presence and anointing on my life."

However, we also see that King Saul responded with fear, anger, and attempted murder. People who operate in self-gained, self-protected power will react in fear and ultimately rebel against the favor of God and those who carry it. With that in mind, are you still willing to pray for favor, God's presence, and anointing?

RESPONSE:

1. Settle in your heart whether or not you really want God's favor, presence, and anointing. Let the Lord know what conclusion you come to.

2. Where are you choosing to compromise that might be costing you God's favor in your life? Take a moment and repent. Come up with a plan of how to bring that area of your life back in line with God's plan.

**SCRIPTURE:**

Then David said, "The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine."

1 Samuel 17:37

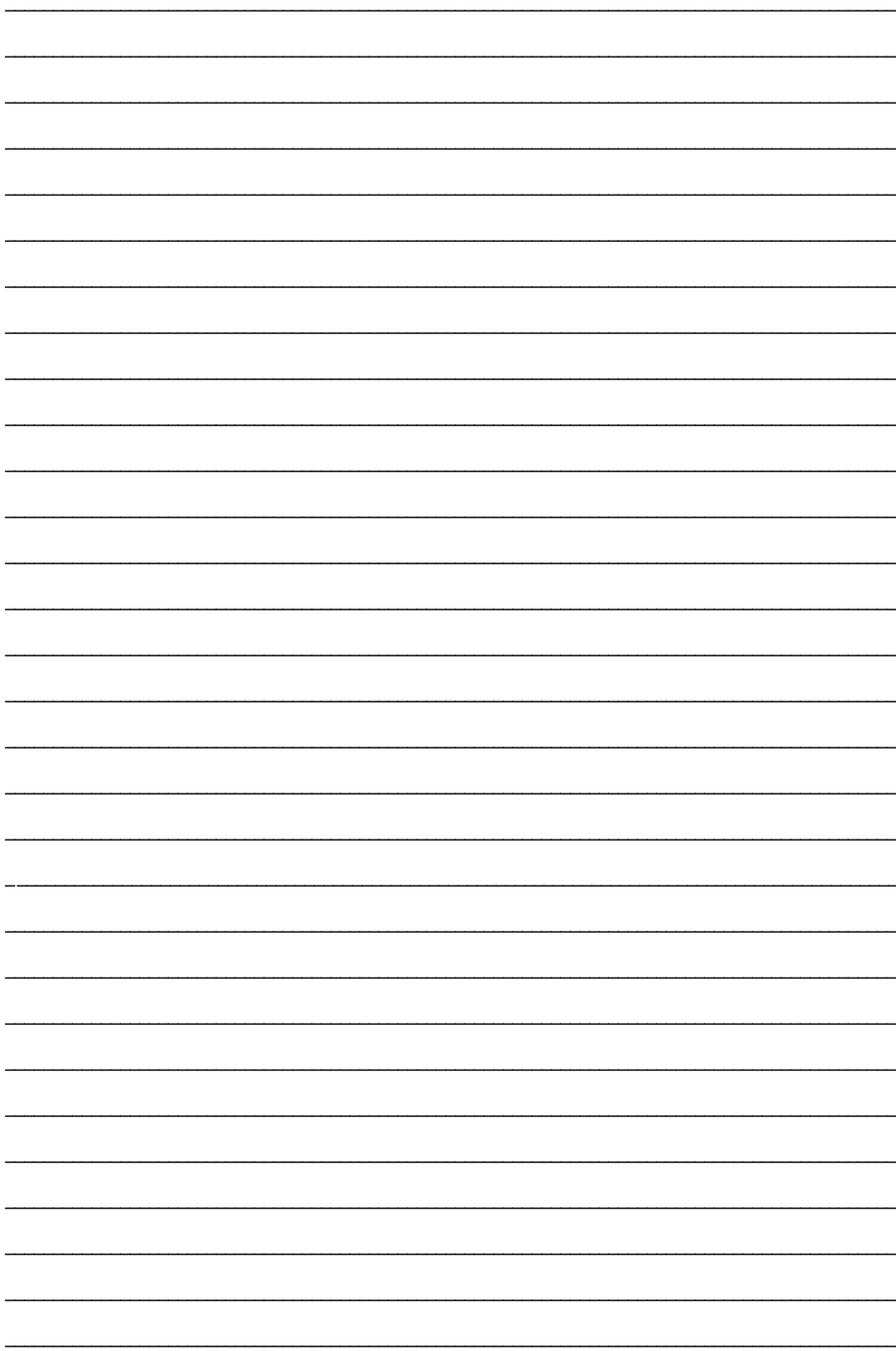
PRAYER DIRECTION:

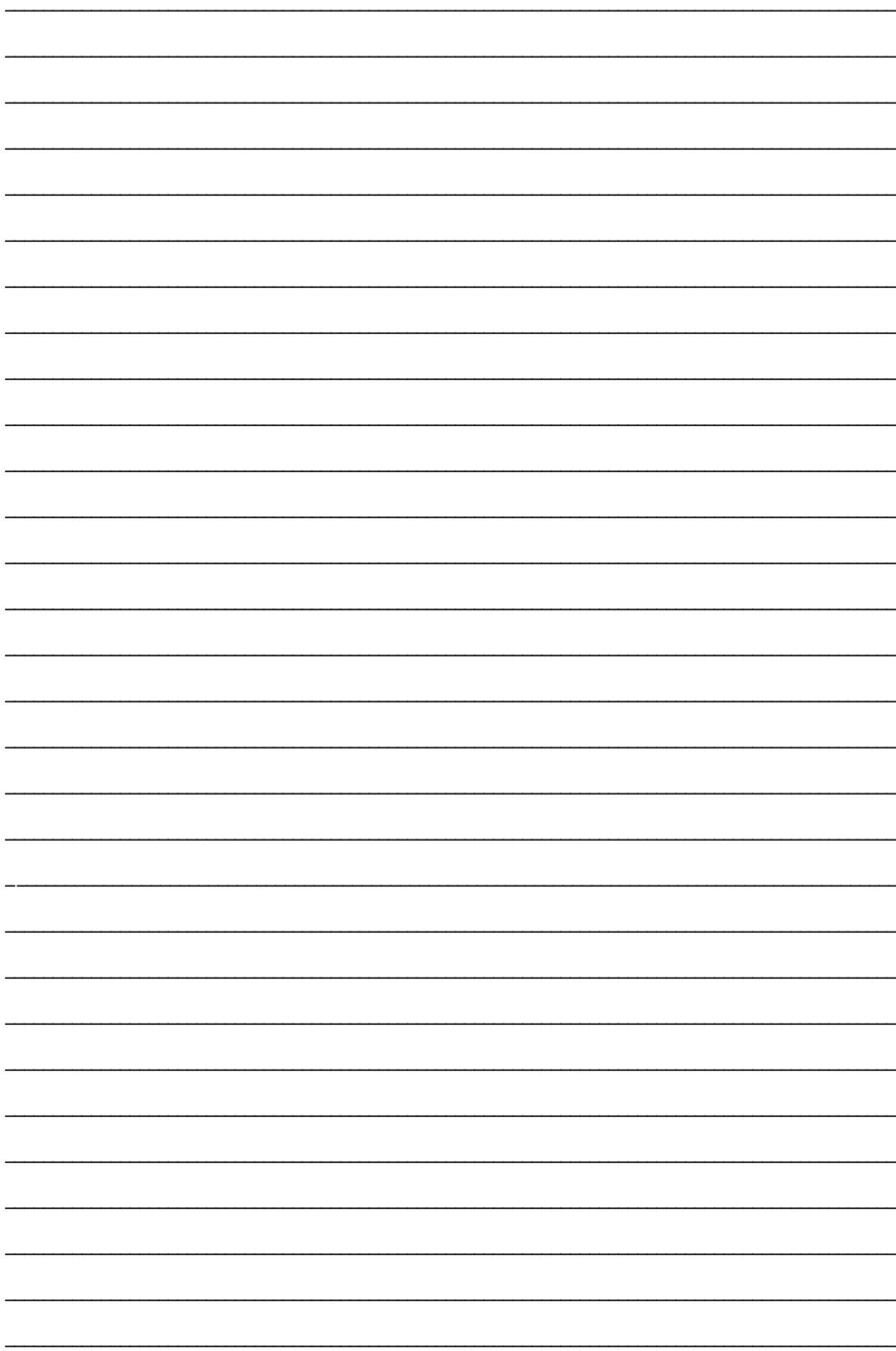
In 1 Samuel 17:33, Saul doubted David's ability to defeat Goliath, pointing out his young age compared to the seasoned warrior. However, David, unwavering by Saul's lack of confidence, recalled the time God empowered him to defeat both a lion and a bear when they threatened his flock. These past victories instilled confidence in David that God would provide the same victory that day against Goliath.

This verse reminds us to remember God's faithfulness. Our current circumstances do not negate His strength. The times He has intervened on our behalf in the past are not just fleeting moments and fading memories. They are a foundation we can confidently stand on, knowing that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. These experiences equip us with the confidence to face any challenge, knowing that with God, we can defeat any giant that may come our way.

PRAYER:

Thank you, Lord, for Your faithfulness in my life and for the countless victories You have won for me, both seen and unseen. As I face my own personal, financial, spiritual, relational, or any other challenges, give me the confidence to trust You completely. Help me to be like David, remembering the times You strengthened and delivered Your greatness.





FLEEING A MAD KING

READING:

1 Samuel 19:1-24

VERSE OF THE DAY:

But an evil spirit from the Lord came on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the lyre, Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape.

1 Samuel 19:9-10

REFLECTION:

Once again, David found himself in danger at the hands of King Saul. The king was flinging spears at him. Saul felt threatened by David. Oftentimes, when a leader is threatened or unsure of the future, they respond by attacking those close to them. Saul did both. However, notice that David did not attack or speak against Saul. He didn't try to band others against the king; he fled. Why? David would not move against the leader God had chosen. We can never be certain of who we are following. Did God put them in this position? Who are we to decide who they are at their heart? They could be having a bad season, or they could be rotten.

TUESDAY

A COVENANT IN CHAOS

READING:

1 Samuel 20:1-42

VERSE OF THE DAY:

So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the Lord call David's enemies to account." And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oathout of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

1 Samuel 20:16-17

REFLECTION:

Yesterday, we looked at how we must choose to trust God with the leaders and authorities He puts in place. In today's reading, we see the sovereign hand of God in motion. King Saul's son, Jonathan, made a covenant with David. This is significant. In the ancient world, thrones were handed down through families. In the event that a ruler came to power from another family, they would kill all of the previous king's descendants to prevent a challenge to their rule. Here, Jonathan recognized David's right to ascend as the next King of Israel, and David promised not to harm Jonathan's descendants when he became king. Jonathan was vowing to serve David as king.

RESPONSE:

1. Is there an area in your life that seems out of control that you need to trust God's hand in? Could it be with the leaders of our own country? A situation in your home or at work?

2. Take time to declare your trust in God's perfect will. What He plans, He will accomplish, however unlikely it may seem.

REMEMBERING WHAT GOD HAS DONE

READING:

1 Samuel 21:1-22:5

VERSE OF THE DAY:

The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one." David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."

1 Samuel 21:9

REFLECTION:

While David was on the run from Saul, he came across what many would view as a coincidence; he was in need of a sword, and what sword did he find? None other than that of Goliath, whom God delivered into his hands when he was a youth. This wasn't luck; it was none other than God's favor! While David was facing a giant of a situation, God reminded him that together they have faced giants before and come out victorious.

RESPONSE:

1. Take time and remember when God has brought you victory in the past. It could be over a past sin, a healed relationship, a time He vindicated you when you were accused, or simply saving you from your sin.

2. Take that confidence from a previous victory, and bring it to a current battle with sin, broken relationships, or stress at work. What God has done before is proof that He can do it again.

THURSDAY

HURT PEOPLE DRAW HURTING PEOPLE

READING:

1 Samuel 22:6-23:29

VERSE OF THE DAY:

All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him.

1 Samuel 22:2

REFLECTION:

Have you ever noticed that when you go through hard things, others who are going through hard times will be drawn to you like a moth to a flame? People in pain are often drawn to others who are going through or have gone through pain. Why? They can relate. Then temptation comes to create a band of brothers around shared bitterness. When people come to you hurting, what will you do with them? Will you gather around your bitterness, or will you gather in trustful worship, reminding each other to have faith in the Lord?

RESPONSE:

1. Reflect on your relationships. Are the talking points generally about how others have wronged you or are missing the mark? Or, conversely, are they life-giving?

2. If you find you are united around bitterness, confess this to the Lord and release it to Him in prayer.

TRUST GOD'S TIMING

READING:

1 Samuel 24:1-25:22

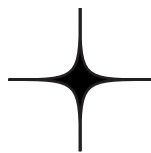
VERSE OF THE DAY:

He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord."

1 Samuel 24:6

REFLECTION:

This is one of the most mind-blowing stories in scripture. David was being hunted by King Saul like a dog, and to his shock, he caught Saul so vulnerable that he could have killed him. It would be easy to say what David's men said: "God has delivered him into your hands! Kill him!" But David didn't; he merely cut the king's robe to show what he could have done, and then his conscience was pierced. He had moved against the Lord's anointed. David had a high view of God's sovereign hand and saw a secret that is rarely uncovered: We never know what is truly in the heart of a leader or in God's timing.

**SCRIPTURE:**

May the Lord judge between you and me, and may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.

1 Samuel 24:12

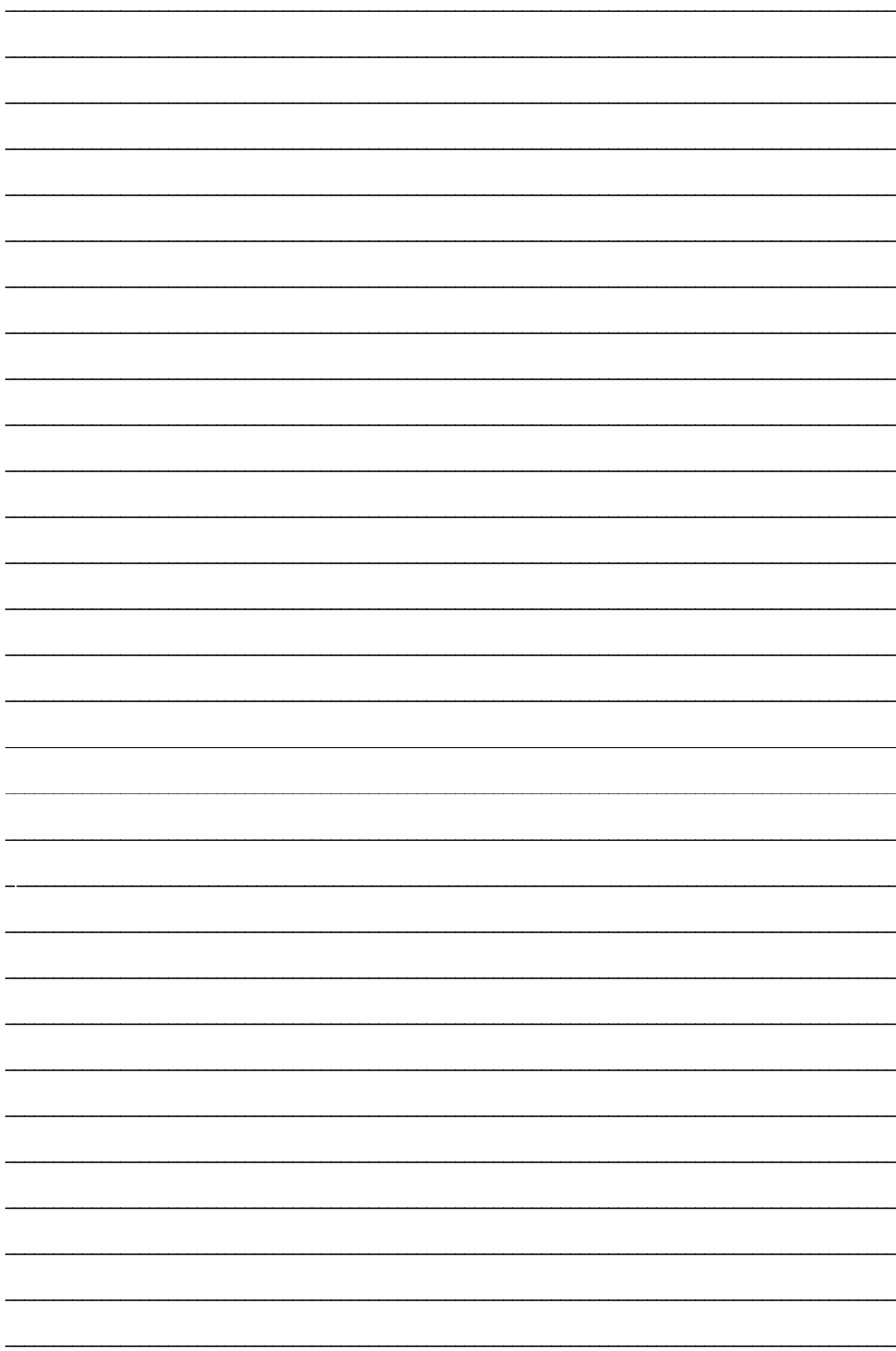
PRAYER DIRECTION:

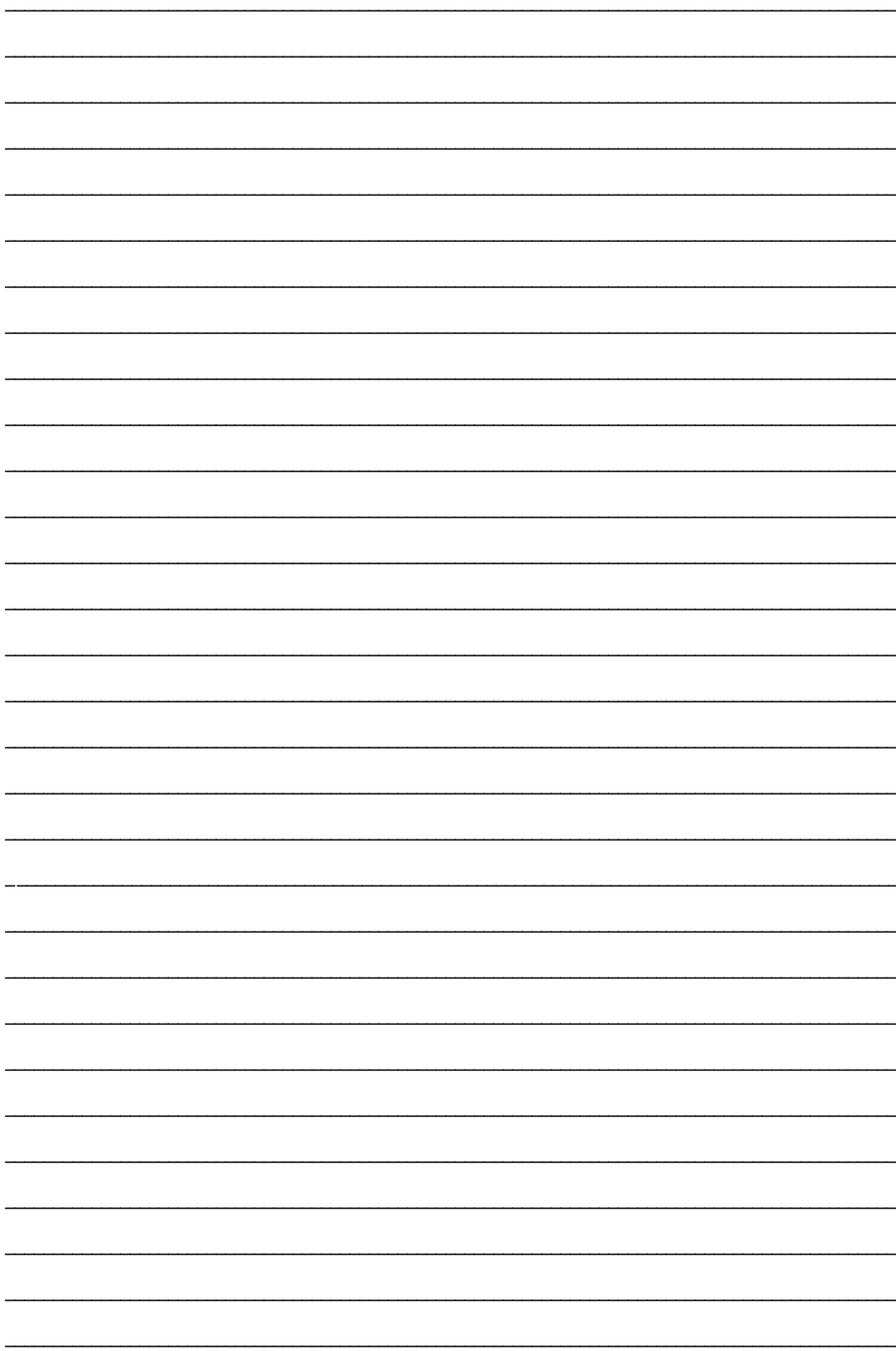
In 1 Samuel 23, Saul pursued David, seeking to end his life without just cause. Fast forward to chapter 24, where David now had the upper hand. He found Saul in a vulnerable position and could have easily retaliated for all the pain Saul had caused him. His companions even suggested that it was a sign from God—an opportunity to eliminate his enemy. But instead of taking advantage of the moment to exact his own revenge, David did something unexpected; he chose compassion and mercy.

Like David, we all face moments when we could get back at someone who has wronged us. It's tempting to gossip, vent on social media, or block their successes. But David's choice encourages us to think twice. He shows us the power of mercy and the importance of trusting God to enact justice in our lives.

PRAYER:

Lord, forgive me for those times I have taken justice into my own hands when others have wronged me. Give me the strength to choose compassion and mercy when my emotions and others around me tell me to retaliate. Remind me that every conflict is an opportunity for me to move closer to You, trusting in Your love and strength for me. Help me to forgive those who have wronged me, and help me to trust that Your judgment is better than my own.





THE VOICES IN OUR LIVES

READING:

1 Samuel 25:23-26:25

VERSE OF THE DAY:

David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands."

1 Samuel 25:32-33

REFLECTION:

The voices that we let influence us matter. People around us can push us toward the will of God for our lives or out of it completely. Twice in today's reading, David had the opportunity to kill for an offense that was done to him, and in both situations, someone stepped in to influence David toward a specific course of action.

Abigail stepped in after her husband offended David, urging him towards mercy. She reminded him of the plan that God had for his life and pleaded with him not to compromise that plan with senseless killing. Later, when David had the opportunity to kill a sleeping King Saul with little to no repercussions, Abishai urged David to kill him and become king himself.

TUESDAY

SEEK HIM FIRST

READING:

1 Samuel 27:1-28:25

VERSE OF THE DAY:

The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart.

1 Samuel 28:4-5

REFLECTION:

When Saul was confronted with the might of the Philistine army that had come to battle him, he consulted a medium. Saul himself had outlawed the sin of witchcraft from Israel, but he had not dealt with that sin in his own heart. When it came down to the fight of his life, Saul's trust was not in God.

What do we run to when the pressure is on? Do we run to God, trusting Him with whatever comes next? Or do we run to the things of this world to try and cope with the pain or to control everything ourselves?

THERE IS A BIGGER PLAN

READING:

1 Samuel 25:23-26:25

VERSE OF THE DAY:

“But what have I done?” asked David. “What have you found against your servant from the day I came to you until now? Why can’t I go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?”

1 Samuel 29:8

REFLECTION:

David was marching alongside his longtime enemies, the Philistines, to battle his own king and people. He had a decision to make. Would he fight against Saul, who was his anointed king, or would he turn on the Philistines who had taken him in and treated him like one of their own?

Then, it turns out that due to suspicions from some of the Philistine leaders, he is sent away from the fight completely. God protected David from even having to make the decision about whose side he would fight on. David surely was angry about being sent away from the battle, but God had bigger plans for him.

RESPONSE:

1. In what areas of your life do you trust God the most?

2. What areas do you trust Him the least?

3. What would your life look like if you trusted God with everything?

DEVOTED TO WHAT?

READING:

1 Samuel 30:16-31:13

VERSE OF THE DAY:

When the Israelites along the valley and those across the Jordan saw that the Israelite army had fled and that Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and fled. And the Philistines came and occupied them.

1 Samuel 31:7

REFLECTION:

Samuel spent his life devoted to God and the people of Israel. Saul spent his life devoted only to himself. There were times when Saul served God, but most of those times were when it was convenient for him or when it advanced his own personal agenda. When it came down to the fight of his life, Saul's concern was only for his own namesake.

Dedication to God is a day-by-day surrender to His will for our lives. The good news is that day one can be today! If you plant a flag in the ground for God's kingdom today, His grace will cover everything that came before in your life.

RESPONSE:

1. What do you see when you look back at Saul's life?

2. Are you living your life fully devoted to Christ?

3. Take a few minutes to pray and reflect.

MOURNING THE KING

READING:

2 Samuel 1:1-27

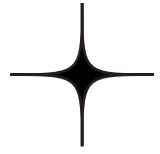
VERSE OF THE DAY:

They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and for the nation of Israel because they had fallen by the sword.

2 Samuel 1:12

REFLECTION:

David could have celebrated Saul's death, but he mourned. He could have thought, "Finally, it's my turn!" But he wept. He was loyal to God's plan and to his anointed king even up to this moment. David could have seen Saul's defeat as his own victory, but he saw it as a great defeat for the people of Israel, who had just lost their first king.

**SCRIPTURE:**

But David said to Abishai, “Don’t destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless? As surely as the Lord lives,” he said, “the Lord himself will strike him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. But the Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord’s anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let’s go.”

1 Samuel 26:9-11

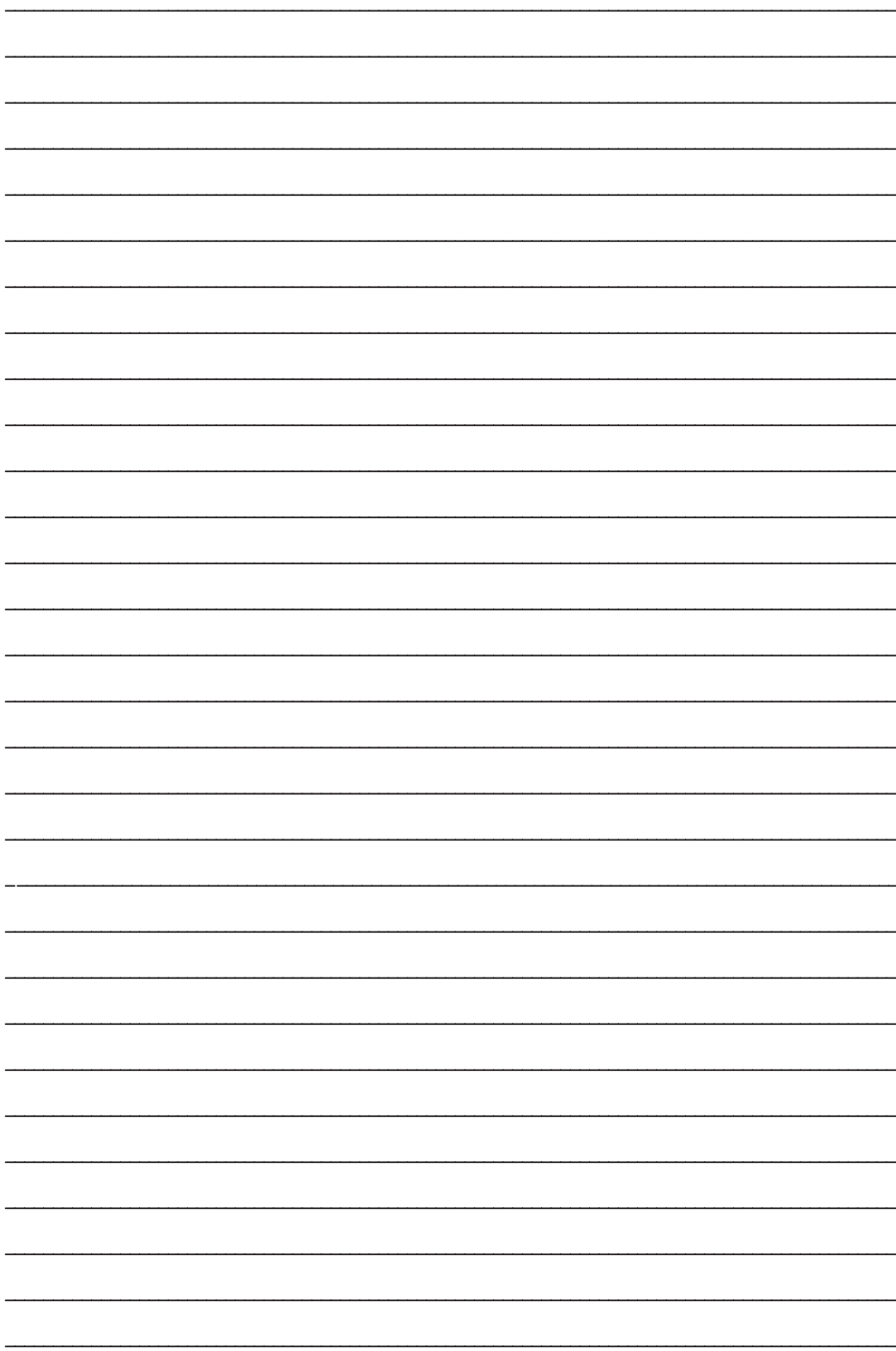
PRAYER DIRECTION:

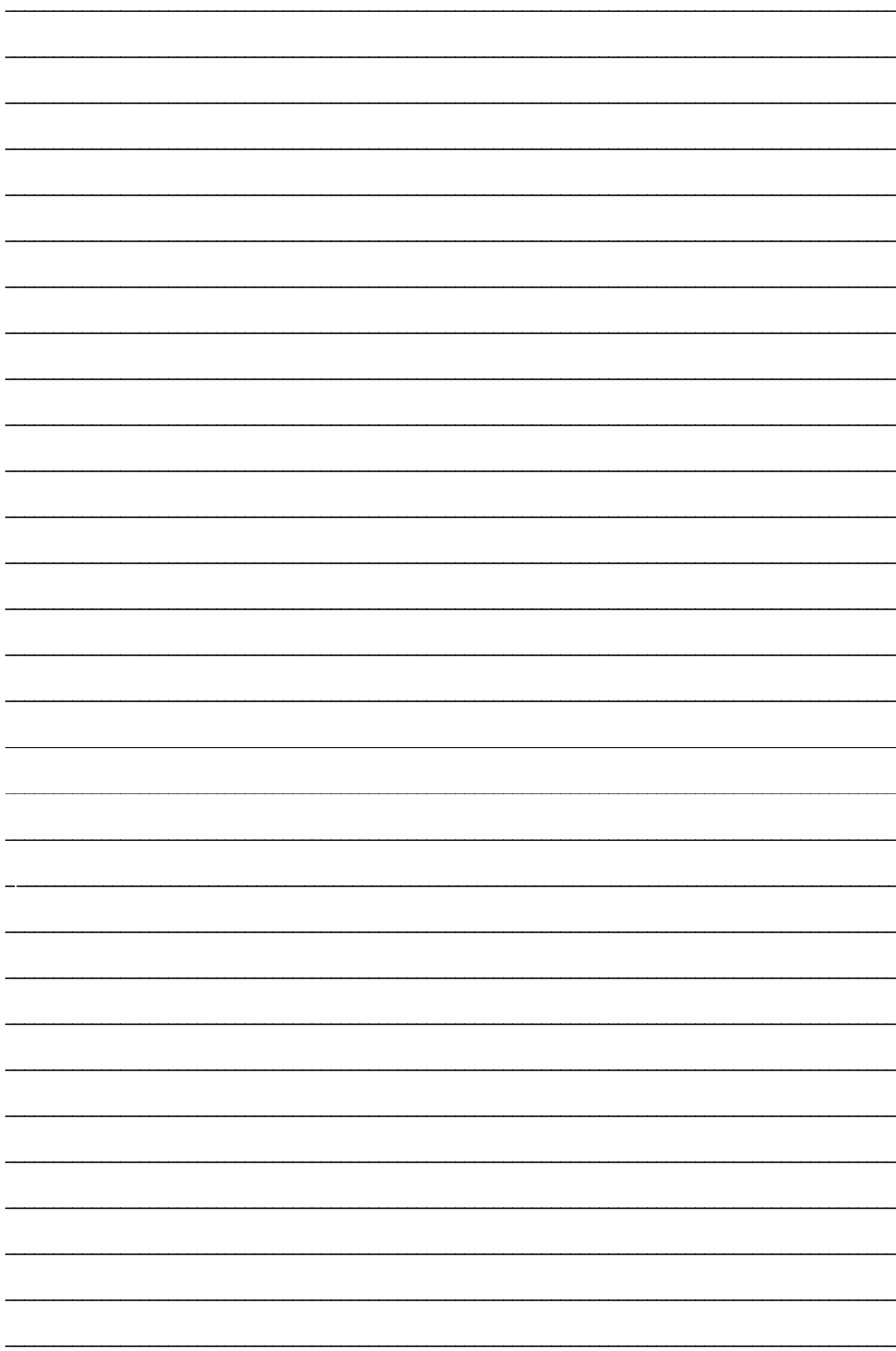
Romans 12:17-19 says, “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

David knew King Saul, and he knew his heart was eroding with sin, but David feared the Lord more. He showed his full trust in the Lord in his restraint to kill King Saul, and also encouraged his men to practice the same humility. A man who was hunted, betrayed, and pushed to limits most of us could not withstand became a beautiful example of “love others more than you love yourself” because of his love for the Lord. David did not allow the spoiled heart of King Saul to poison his own. Instead, in humility, he put Saul in the Lord’s hands, believing fully in the God who created them.

PRAYER:

Lord, how I need Your mercy! Please bring to my mind any moments I have chosen to be the one to avenge myself. I repent of pride. Teach me, Lord, to give thought to my actions so that I can honor You. Holy Spirit, please slow my words, emotions, and actions so I can learn to trust You fully. Show me where I do not fear You the most so that, with humility and reverence, I can better understand the deep love and mercy You have for me. And from that, help me to know how to love and give mercy to those around me. Thank You for Your grace, guidance, and Your Word that speaks to even the hardest places. I believe that You want me free from this task that I have put on myself. I surrender it back to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.





MONDAY

PURSUE PEACE

READING:

2 Samuel 2:1-32

VERSE OF THE DAY:

Abner called out to Joab, “Must the sword devour forever? Don’t you realize that this will end in bitterness? How long before you order your men to stop pursuing their fellow Israelites?”

2 Samuel 2:26

REFLECTION:

Abner pursued the resolution even though he knew that it could risk humiliation. His motive may not have been pure, but we can still learn from it. He cried out, “Must the sword devour forever? Don’t you realize that this will end in bitterness?” Instead of pursuing more conflict and battles, Abner made a decision to pursue peace. He knew that it was pointless to fight among his own people, with bitterness being the end result. Pursue peace no matter the cost.

RESPONSE:

1. Who in your life do you need to pursue peace with?

2. Explain a moment in your life where you risked your reputation to end a battle with someone else. What was that like?

2. What is your biggest takeaway as you have read about a battle not ending in bitterness but boldness?

TUESDAY

SURRENDER IS THE ONLY WAY

READING:

2 Samuel 3:1-39

VERSE OF THE DAY:

The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

2 Samuel 3:1

REFLECTION:

Today's passage—around the weakening of Saul and the strengthening of David—paints an accurate picture of the internal, daily struggle between our flesh and spirit that then plays out in our personal disciplines and relationships with others. Much like Saul, our flesh makes for a bad king. In comparison, David was getting stronger; not only because Saul had died, but because God had chosen him.

At the end of the day, our flesh will grow weaker and weaker as we give attention to the spirit. So today, remember that you are chosen by God, and although your flesh may fail, our God never will.

RESPONSE:

1. When was the moment that you knew you were chosen by God?

2. How do you resist the urges of the flesh while feeding your spirit?

3. As your flesh grows weaker, do you find yourself feeling closer to God?

THE UNFORTUNATE FUMBLE

READING:

2 Samuel 4:1-5:25

VERSE OF THE DAY:

Jonathan, son of Saul, had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became disabled. His name was Mephibosheth.

2 Samuel 4:4

REFLECTION:

Mephibosheth was the last male descendant of Saul and therefore had a legal claim to Saul's throne. However, his life was permanently disrupted due to being dropped at a young age. Because someone else's mistake prevented him from any physical strength, this disability brought shame on him, even though it wasn't at all his fault. His name even meant "scattered shame."

THURSDAY

JOY IN GOD'S PRESENCE

READING:

2 Samuel 6:1-23

VERSE OF THE DAY:

Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

2 Samuel 6:14-15

REFLECTION:

In today's passage, David demonstrated what it looks like to joyfully worship the Lord with no reservation. It's very clear that he was not concerned with anyone else around him. He danced before the Lord with all his might while shouts and trumpets echoed behind him. David modeled for us that the joy of the Lord was his strength, and that we can be reverent without being subdued.

RESPONSE:

1. While listening to worship music, have you ever felt the urge to clap your hands or dance? Explain.

2. How has the opinion of others subdued your worship and praise in the presence of God?

FRIDAY

GOD'S PROMISE TO DAVID

READING:

2 Samuel 7:1-29

VERSE OF THE DAY:

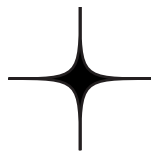
I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now, I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.

2 Samuel 7:9

REFLECTION:

God used Nathan to remind David that He was with him wherever he went. God provided, God delivered him from his enemies, and God kept His word. As you read this chapter, it is vital to understand that God keeps his promises. God cannot lie.

SATURDAY



SCRIPTURE:

Then the men of Judah came to Hebron, and there they anointed David king over the tribe of Judah.

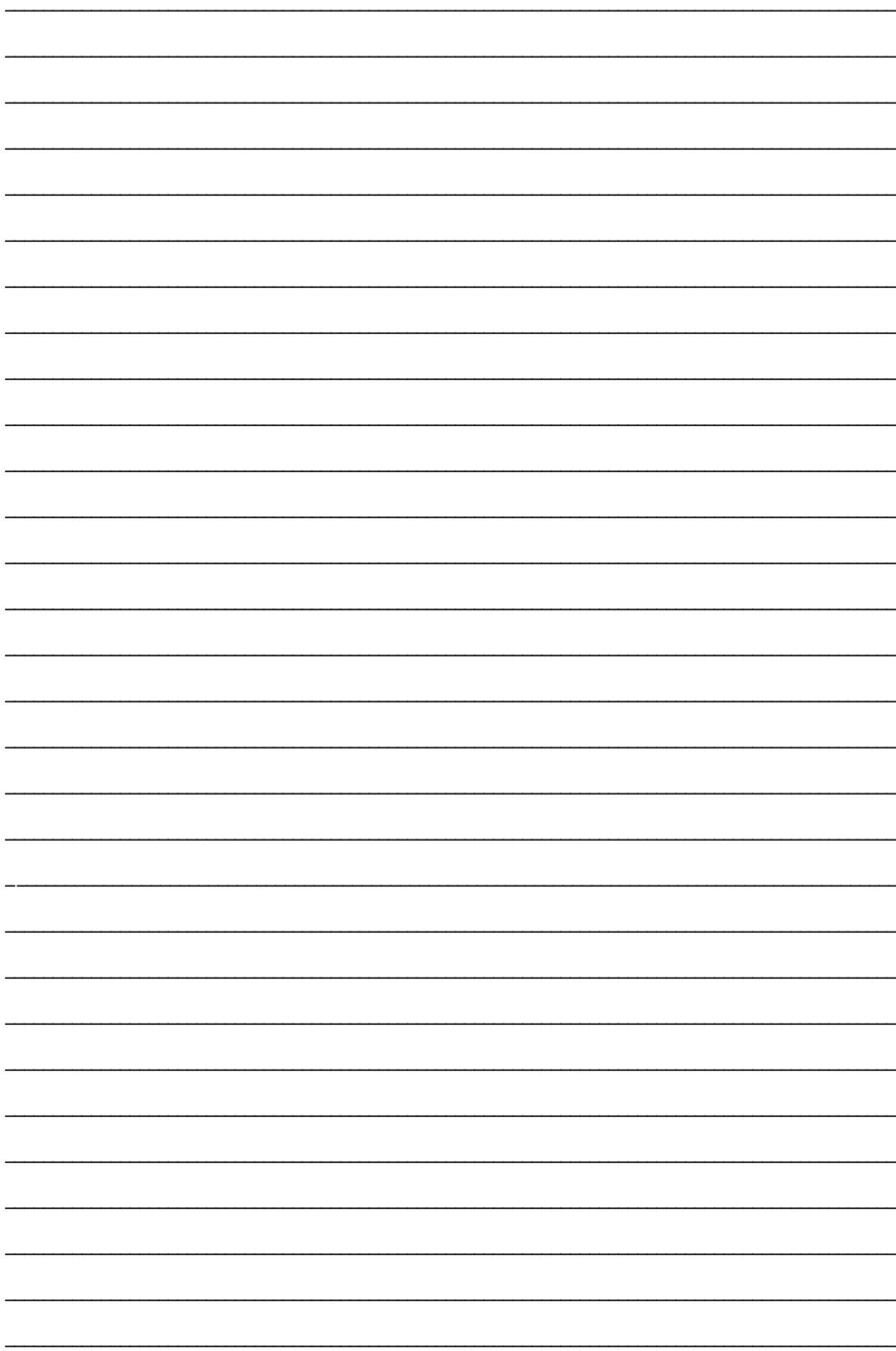
2 Samuel 2:4

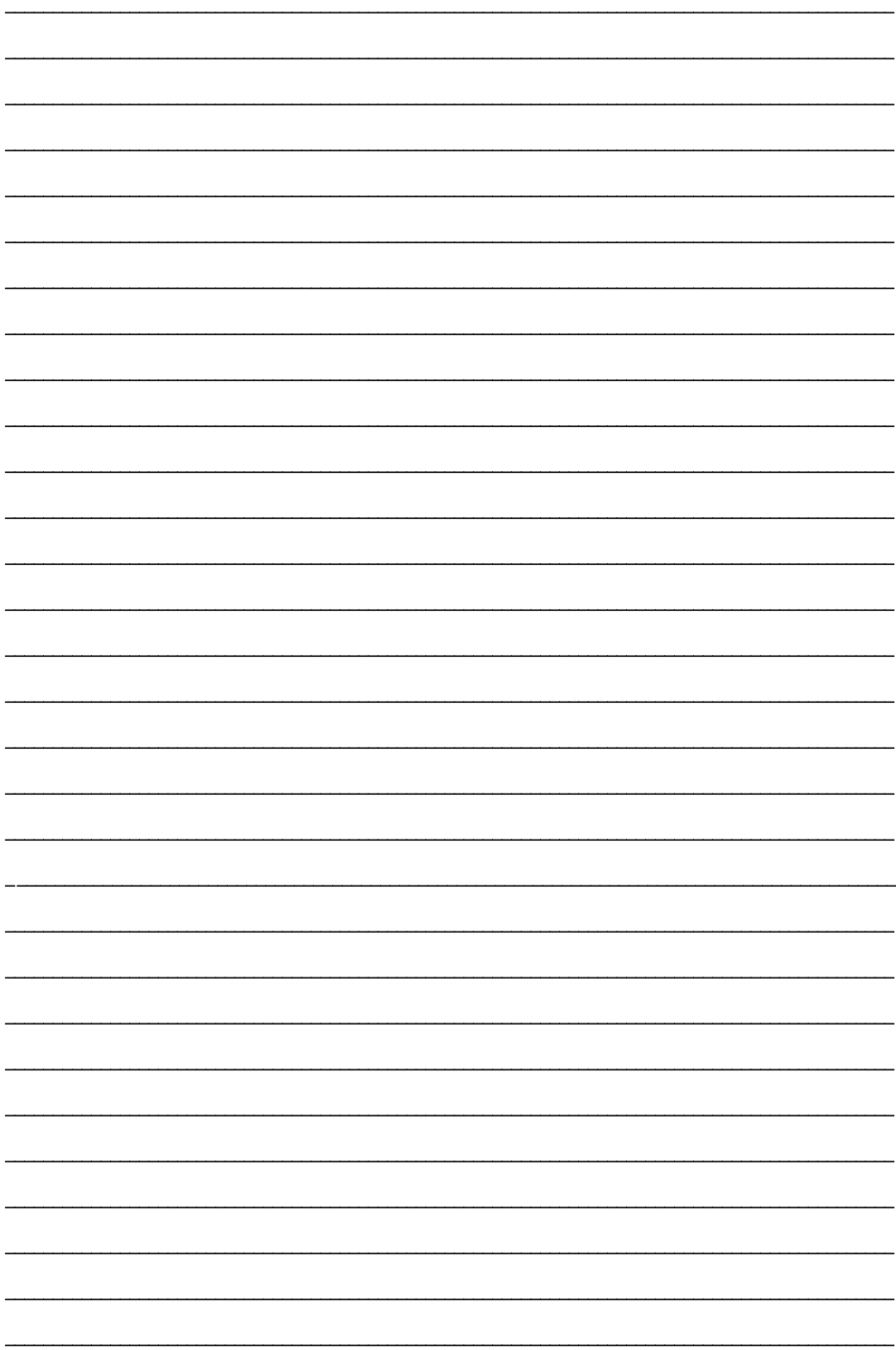
PRAYER DIRECTION:

David was anointed to be king by the prophet Samuel when he was a ruddy teenage boy. But it did not mean he immediately ascended the throne. In fact, he went right back out to tend to and protect stinky, dirty sheep in a field. All the while, he was being trained to shepherd a nation. He would see giants fall and then serve under the insecure and controlling King Saul. David faithfully served while learning what kind of king not to be. He refused to shortcut God's process. He grew in wisdom, and remained strong and humble, gaining the trust of the people. At the point of King Saul's death, David was finally appointed to the kingship he had been anointed for many years earlier.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your kindness to us. Thank You that in Your wisdom, You do not prematurely release us into certain seasons. There is value in the "will be, but not yet." You tell us of things to come, and as we submit to You and lock eyes with You, You are shaping us more into Your image and developing our character to steward new seasons with honor. Help me as I submit to Your timing and Your will. I trust You. I hand my future to You, and I love You. Help me guard my heart in the here and now as I await the promise to come.





MONDAY

IS THERE ANYONE?

READING:

2 Samuel 8:1-9:13

VERSE OF THE DAY:

David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

2 Samuel 9:1

REFLECTION:

Two times in 2 Samuel 8, the Bible says, "The Lord gave David victory wherever he went." The spoil, fame, and honor could have made David selfish and proud, but they did not. David wanted to show kindness to his best friend's family. David wanted to share God's blessings in his life.

RESPONSE:

1. What are some areas in which God has been with you and given you victory and blessing, like King David?

2. When you think about the blessing and favor of God, who have you sought out to share these blessings with?

3. Is there anyone you know who's struggling in the same battles you once faced? Is there anyone you can encourage today with your story?

TUESDAY

OH, BE CAREFUL LITTLE EYES

READING:

2 Samuel 10:1-11:27

VERSE OF THE DAY:

One evening, David got up from his bed and walked around on the palace's roof. From the roof, he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful.

2 Samuel 11:2

REFLECTION:

David should have been with his troops in the field, making war to expand and protect his kingdom. Instead, he stayed home and fell to temptation. In this story, there are many things we can learn about the progression of sin in our lives. The whole mess began with a look. This glance became a thought, and then the thought became an action. As always, sin takes us further than we want to go and costs us more than we want to pay. David attempted to lie and even committed murder in order to cover up his sin.

RESPONSE:

1. We all face unique temptations in life. What areas does Satan try to tempt you?

2. What strategies do you use to defeat temptation before it leads to sin?

3. In Matthew 5:28, Jesus says, "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." How does this verse challenge you based on today's reading?

BE QUICK TO REPENT

READING:

2 Samuel 12:1-31

VERSE OF THE DAY:

Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."

2 Samuel 12:13

REFLECTION:

When the prophet Nathan confronted David with his sin, David's initial response was not denial, excuses, or more lies. In humility, he immediately admitted his sin. This is one example of why King David was referred to as a man after God's own heart. Satan wants our pride to justify our thoughts and actions. David knew he had sinned and openly repented to Nathan.

MATTERS OF THE HEART

READING:

2 Samuel 13:1-39

VERSE OF THE DAY:

And Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

2 Samuel 13:22

REFLECTION:

Today's passage focuses on two strong emotions: lust and anger. Amnon was consumed with lust for his cousin, and Absalom was consumed with anger over Amnon's sin. Notice that in today's reading, we see the same progression of sin that we saw when King David committed adultery with Bathsheba. The progression began with a look, then a thought, and finally an action.

Amnon confided his feelings to Jonadab, and Absalom confided in his men. These counselors either gave bad advice or did not challenge them with the right actions. We all need friends and mentors we can confide in, but we must seek ones to encourage us to do the right things.

RESPONSE:

1. Who can you turn to when you need good advice?

2. When you need advice, are you willing to listen to mentors, or do you only seek advice from friends and outlets that justify your thoughts and emotions?

3. Now think about friends and family whose names and faces come to mind. Who comes to you when they need advice? Do you tell them what they want to hear, or do you challenge them to do the right thing?

FRIDAY

A BURNING MESSAGE

READING:

2 Samuel 14:1-33

VERSE OF THE DAY:

Then he said to his servants, "Look, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

2 Samuel 14:30

REFLECTION:

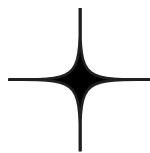
Absalom was thankful for the chance to return to his home country, but he longed to see his father's face. In desperation, he set Joab's field on fire to get his attention. His scheme worked, and at the end of this chapter, Absalom was able to bow before the king and see his father.

RESPONSE:

1. Is there a friend or family member that you long to see?

2. If you are uncomfortable contacting them directly, is there a mutual friend who can act as the intermediary like Joab did between David and Absalom?

3. Is there anyone in your life that you have “exiled,” who needs forgiveness and a second chance?

**SCRIPTURE:**

Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped...

2 Samuel 12:20

Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

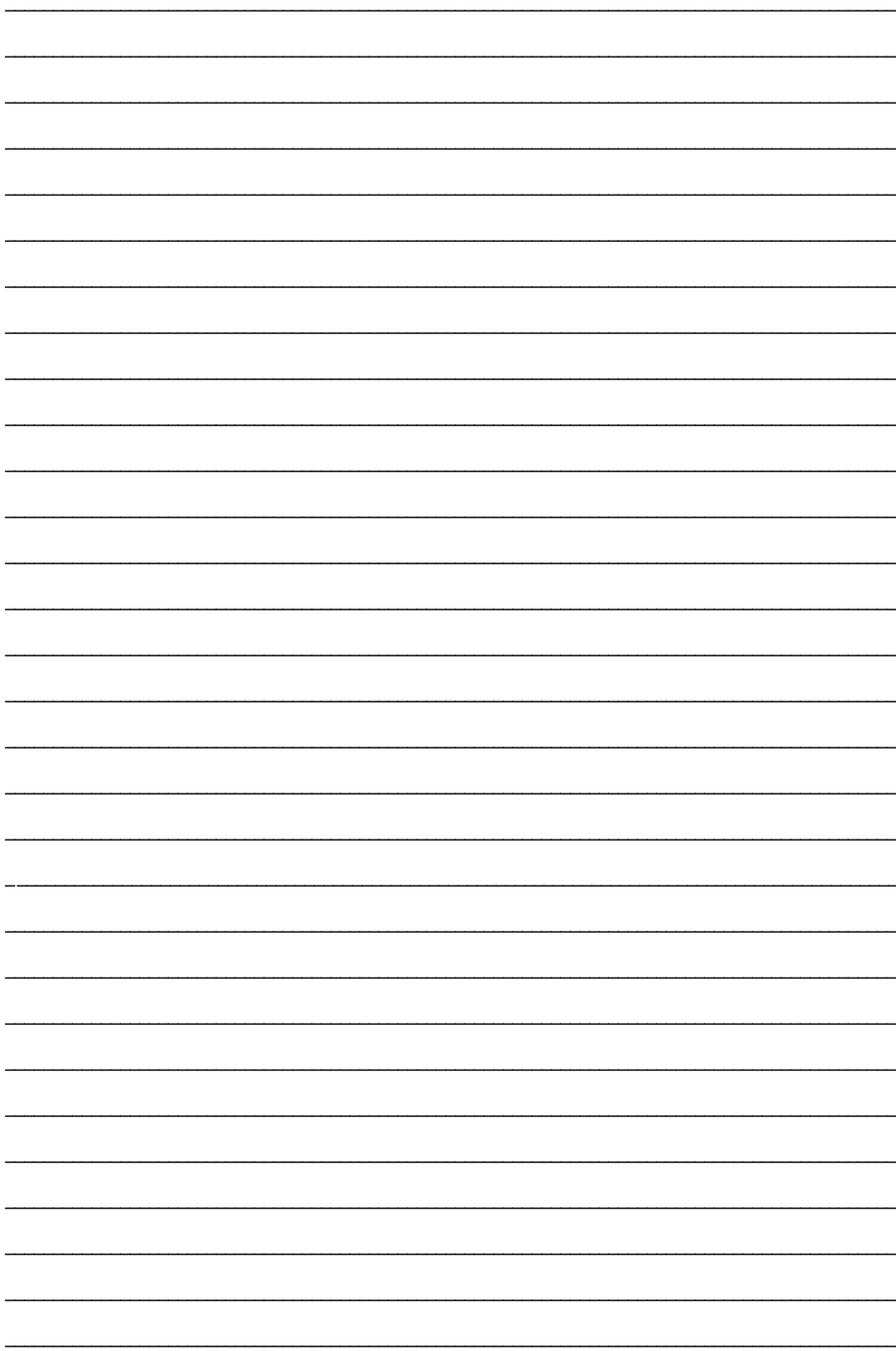
James 1:15

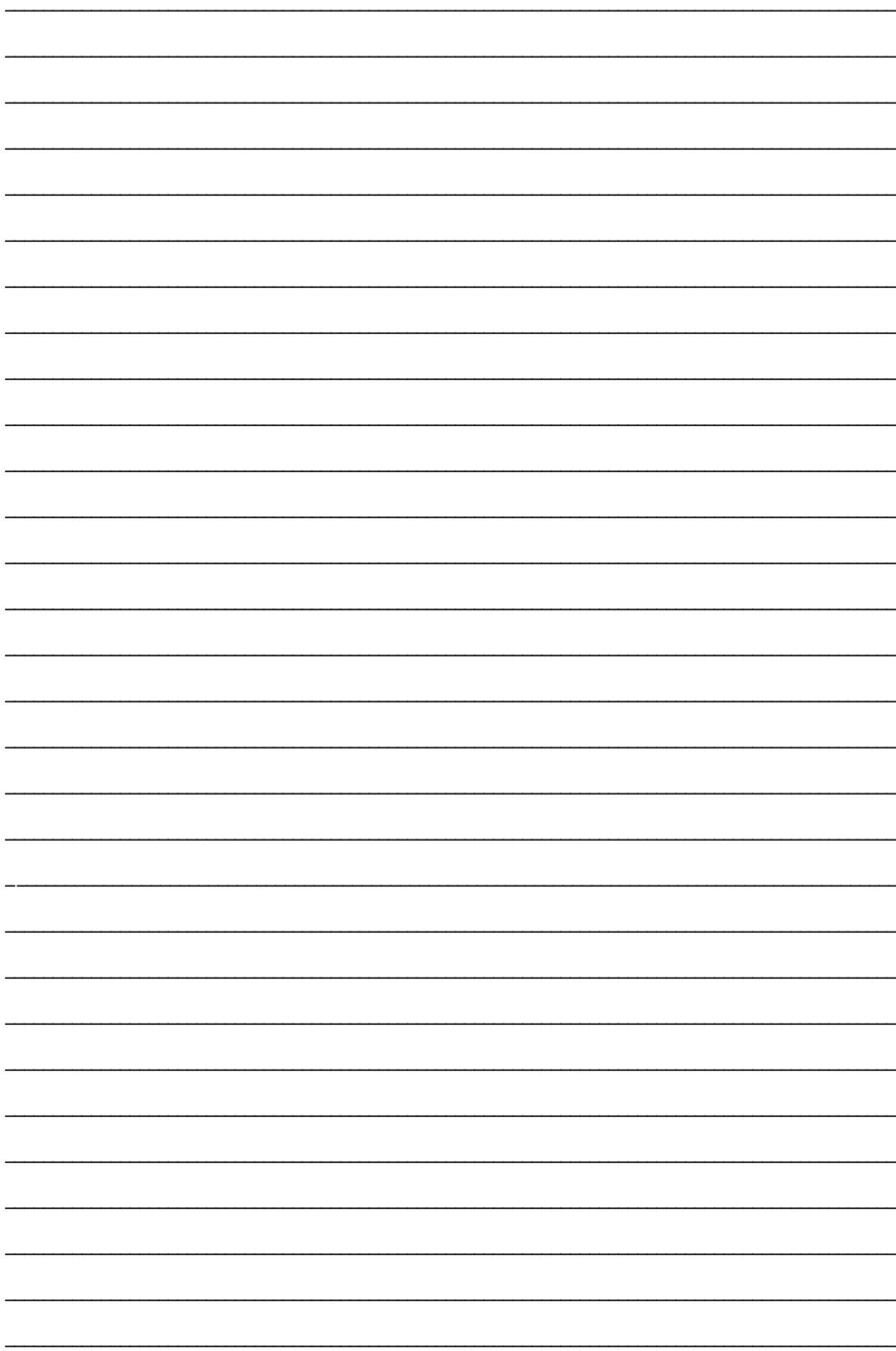
PRAYER DIRECTION:

David had sinned. The man after God's own heart had failed to put on his armor and go to war, but that didn't stop the war from coming to him. David's true enemy, Satan, waited and seized the opportune moment of weakness. With eyes locked on Bathsheba, David gave into desire, and desire gave birth to sin, then sin gave birth to death. When confronted by the Prophet Nathan, David repented, and the Lord forgave him. But it would cost his son's life. David humbled himself, fasted, and sought the Lord for seven days. Upon learning of his son's death, David got up, he washed up, changed his clothes, and went to worship the Lord.

PRAYER:

God, forgive me for when I've taken my eyes off of You and, in moments of weakness, given in to temptation. Cleanse me, Lord. Search my heart and point out any way that offends You. Lord, please guard my life from the plans of the enemy and help me stay alert and sober-minded about his schemes. I desire to live a life of quick repentance. And so, Lord Jesus, I humble myself before You and thank You for mercy. I receive Your forgiveness without shame. I choose to get up and be washed with the water of Your Word, casting off garments of sin and grief and putting on new garments of praise. Lord, I'm coming to worship you!





MONDAY

A CONTRAST IN CHARACTER

READING:

2 Samuel 15:1-37

VERSE OF THE DAY:

He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel." Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you." And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice."

2 Samuel 15:2-4

REFLECTION:

This week, we'll follow the tragic story of King David and his rebellious son, Absalom. In light of David's many failures, Absalom had begun to view himself as a better leader than his father and spent years carefully building his campaign. He staged a political coup to sway the hearts of the people towards himself and overthrow David as Israel's king... and it worked. Absalom's behavior could not have been in more stark contrast with David's response to King Saul when David was in Absalom's position. David was dodging Saul's spears, and yet he refused to lift even one finger against "the Lord's anointed," let alone spin a whole scam to overthrow Saul as king. David refused to fight against what he believed to be the Lord's will. In contrast, Absalom thought he knew better than the Lord.

DAVID DOESN'T DEFEND HIMSELF

READING:

2 Samuel 16:1-23

VERSE OF THE DAY:

David then said to Abishai and all his officials, "My son, my own flesh and blood, is trying to kill me. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. It may be that the Lord will look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today."

2 Samuel 16:11-12

REFLECTION:

In today's passage, David was being cursed by Shemei, a man from the family of the former King Saul. Perhaps due to lingering jealousy, Shemei was clearly waiting for the right opportunity to degrade King David. Now that David was down and out, Shemei pounced. The King's men could have easily had Shemei's head for his offensive outburst, but David let him speak as if the Lord had ordained it. With confidence that God knew exactly what was happening, David didn't defend himself against his accuser. This pointed forward to Jesus' response when He was wrongfully accused and abused during his last days on earth. Jesus had the authority to stop his own death, but the Lord had ordained it, and the only thing Jesus wanted was the will of the Father.

RESPONSE:

1. In what types of conflict are you most tempted to defend yourself and secure your own victory?

2. Are there any problems you are facing in your life today where you need to trust that God sees what's happening? Can you choose to leave the outcome up to Him?

TWO ADVISORS

READING:

2 Samuel 17:1-29

VERSE OF THE DAY:

Absalom and all the men of Israel said, “The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel.” For the Lord had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom.

2 Samuel 17:14

REFLECTION:

Absalom brought in two of David’s former advisors to help him scheme for the throne. Ahithophel’s plan was the better plan by far. And yet it was a miracle—and an answer to David’s prayer in 2 Samuel 15:31—that Absalom even asked Hushai for advice, especially after he had already received such effective counsel from Ahithophel. But if you’ll recall, Hushai had been sent into this very room by David to frustrate Ahithophel’s plan.

The fact that Hushai succeeded shows us two things. Firstly, it is the Lord alone who determines who sits on the throne of Israel. And secondly, the Lord answers prayers that are in line with His will. Absalom may have had the smartest advisor in all of Israel on his side, but Ahithophel’s intelligence was no match for the prayers of David and the will of God.

RESPONSE:

1. Can you remember a time in your life when God answered an unlikely prayer?

2. What prayer needs do you have today that you need to bring before the Lord?

3. Always remember that both the enemy and the Lord have a plan for your future. Take a moment to frustrate the plan of the enemy by praying the will of God into your life and the lives of your friends and family.

THURSDAY

BE GENTLE WITH MY SON

READING:

2 Samuel 18:1-33

VERSE OF THE DAY:

The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!"

2 Samuel 18:33

REFLECTION:

David's response to Absalom's death seemed disproportionate. Didn't Absalom deserve death as the penalty of treason? But David's grief overtook him, as the curse of his own sin claimed the life of yet another one of his children. In his anguish, David cried out, "If only I had died in your place!" David was desperate to take his son's penalty upon himself. And even in his humanity, King David reflected God's heart toward us. Tragically, David didn't have the ability to break the curse and save his son. Generations later, God would send his own Son through David's bloodline to also suffer death. But Jesus, desiring mercy over justice, would have the authority and power to die in our place, rise from the grave, and break sin's curse over men once and for all. Jesus is the better King.

RESPONSE:

1. Some people would say Absalom got what he deserved for betraying his father, even though in a lot of ways he wasn't wrong to be disappointed in David as king. Can you think of a time that you may have done something you really felt was right but were wrong in the way you went about it?

2. Can you remember a time in your life when God had mercy on you, and you didn't get a punishment or a consequence that you deserved?

3. Is there anyone in your life that you hope gets what they deserve for what they've done? Search your heart and repent. We serve a God who desires mercy over justice.

THE KING RETURNS

READING:

2 Samuel 19:1-43

VERSE OF THE DAY:

He won over the hearts of the men of Judah so that they were all of one mind. They sent word to the king, "return, you and all your men."

2 Samuel 19:14

REFLECTION:

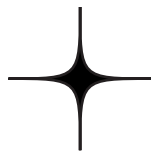
Even though he consistently let the people of Israel down, David is one of the most favored biblical kings. His "superpower" was that he had walked with the Spirit of God since he was a young boy. He knew it was actually God who was in control over his life and his leadership, so he never wielded his own authority. Even after his victory over Absalom, David refused to reclaim his rightful throne in Jerusalem until he was welcomed in by the people. He wanted to know that all hearts were persuaded to receive him again. Much like our God will not force his way into Lordship in our lives, David was patient until he was invited back into Jerusalem. And because the Lord was with David, he won their hearts yet again.

RESPONSE:

1. Sometimes when our circumstances don't align with our expectations of what should happen, we take matters into our own hands and reject the leadership of God. Have you ever been disappointed by an unanswered prayer or unmet desire that caused you to lose trust for God?

2. Have you ever found yourself trying to force or manipulate the results of your life?

3. In what areas of your life could God be patiently waiting for you to grant Him leadership? There could be one or many. Write them down, and ask the Holy Spirit if He is trying to say anything to you about it.

**SCRIPTURE:**

But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up. Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "Lord, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."

2 Samuel 15:30-31

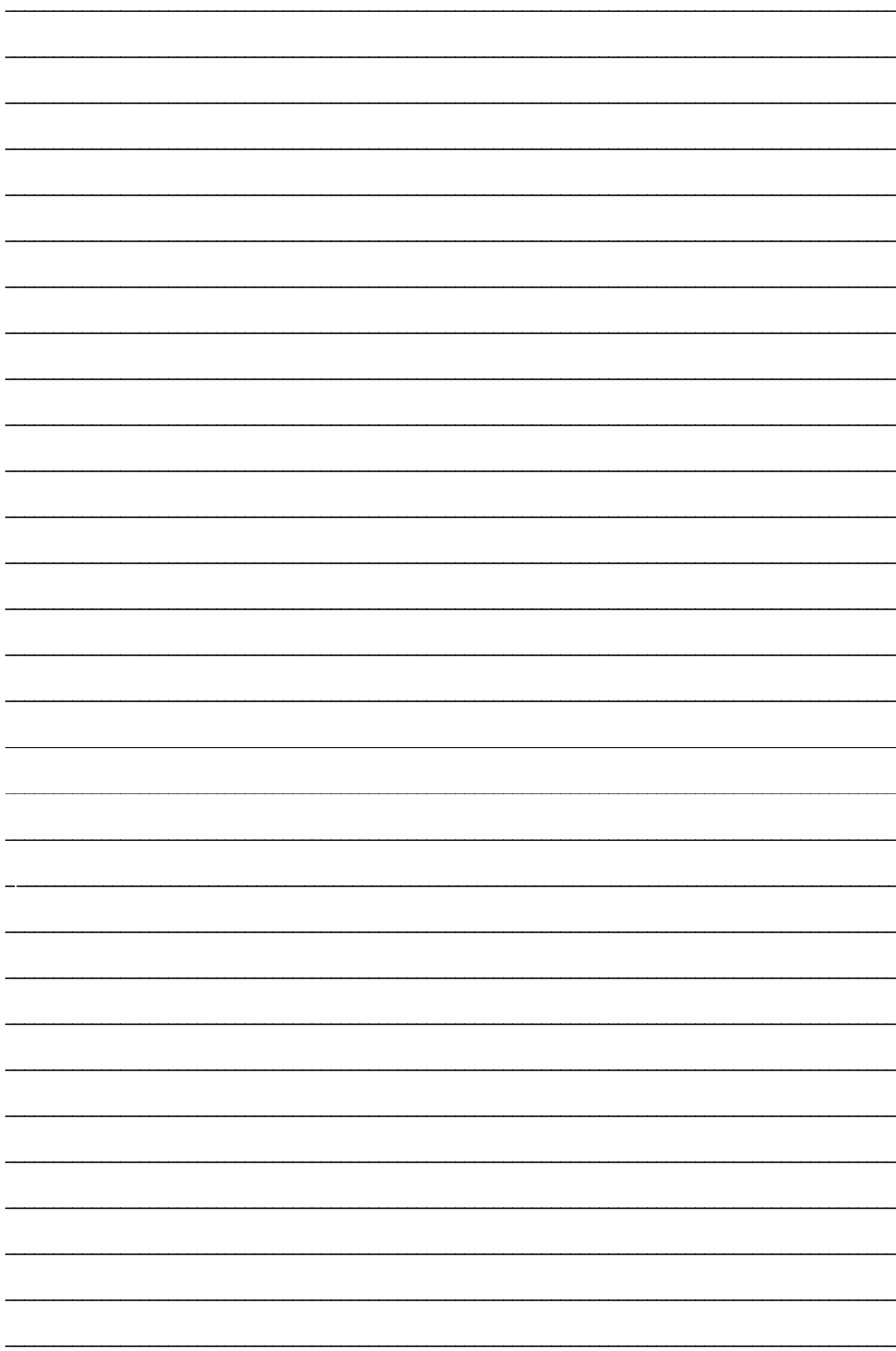
PRAYER DIRECTION:

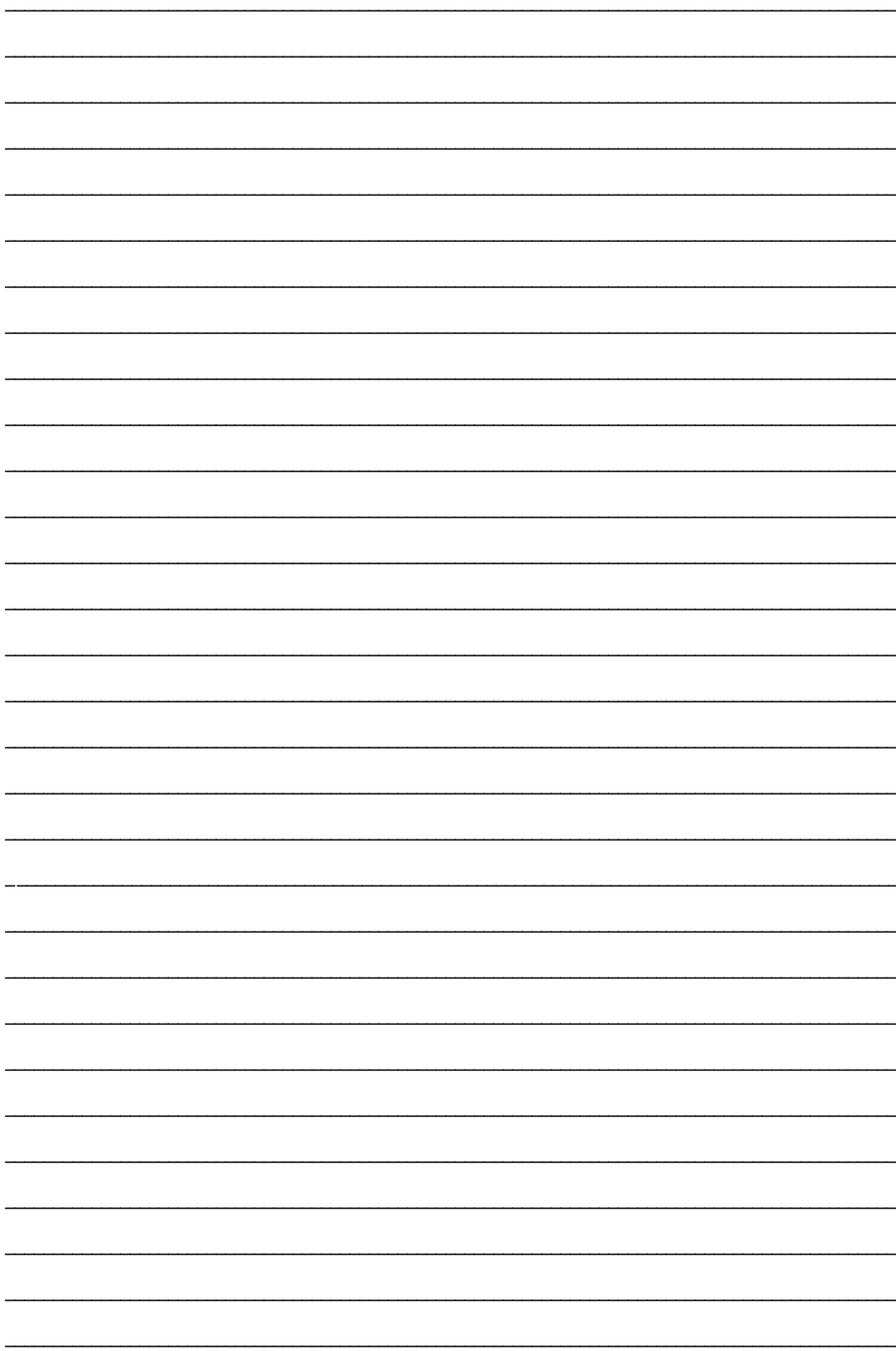
With head covered and feet bare, King David retreated to the Mount of Olives in brokenness and humiliation as his son, Absalom, attempted a coup. David knew that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. He didn't stay to defend his throne, but simply withdrew and sought the Lord. He released the full weight of sorrow, leading his people to follow his example. David showed just how dependent he was on the Lord, even after reigning as king for many years. He would rather God move on his behalf than pursue self-preservation in his own strength.

A thousand years later, another king would retreat to this same mountain. Heartrending prayer would pour forth as Jesus processed the agonizing road ahead with His Father. He too faced an ancient enemy who hungered for his throne. And here, on the same ground that David sought refuge a millennium prior, Jesus crucified His own desires and resolved to His Father's painful, yet perfect, plan of the cross.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You that You love me more than I love myself. Thank You that I can always trust Your will over my own, even when Your plan brings about a crushing in my life. You are my refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble. I ask for Your grace and courage to help me endure the difficult places, so that I might come through the fire looking more like You than ever before. In Jesus' mighty name I pray, Amen.





MONDAY

DIVIDED LOYALTIES AND DELAYED OBEDIENCE

READING:

2 Samuel 20:1-26

VERSE OF THE DAY:

“But when Amasa went to summon Judah, he took longer than the time the king had set for him.”

2 Samuel 20:5

REFLECTION:

As we approach the last days of King David, today’s gruesome passage describes yet another rebellion within Israel. At this point, Joab had just assassinated Absalom after Absalom’s rebellion, and David, full of grief and sorrow, had grown weary of war. David tried to draw Amasa back onto his team. Yes, Amasa, who was freshly back from supporting Absalom’s treason. And for good reason; Joab didn’t trust Amasa! When given direct orders by King David, Amasa’s procrastination exposed his disloyal heart. And yet another divisive situation involving Joab began brewing.

RESPONSE:

1. Like Amasa, have you ever had divided loyalties in your heart or been rebellious against your leadership?

2. Have you ever delayed obedience to someone in authority over you?

3. On the other side of that equation, are you now in a place of trying to pull someone back into the team who maybe hasn't proven repentance or an obedient heart?

If you relate to the first two questions, repentance from having a divisive spirit is key. And if you're a leader who is trying to keep someone on the team, or get someone to return to the team, stay alert to a potential need to set clear boundaries and stick to them.

TUESDAY

HONORING YOUR COMMITMENTS

READING:

2 Samuel 21:1-22

VERSE OF THE DAY:

During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord.

2 Samuel 21:1

REFLECTION:

When the Israelites first conquered the land, God told them to not make a covenant (or treaty) with any tribe. Their take-no-prisoners reputation spread quickly, so the Gibeonites tricked them into a treaty. Their enormous error was that they didn't first consult with God. To make matters worse, King Saul had later killed the Gibeonites, dishonoring the covenant.

Seeking God's face in prayer was how David discovered why there was a famine in the land. Though God would have warned the Israelites not to make a covenant, now that they did make a covenant, God expected them to honor it!

RESPONSE:

1. Have you ever given your word, made a promise or a commitment, and then later realized you didn't consult with God about it?

2. If you answered "Yes" to the above question, what is your next step? What does God say about your situation? What does God's Word say?

WEDNESDAY

REMEMBERING GOD'S GOODNESS

READING:

1 Samuel 21:1-22:5

VERSE OF THE DAY:

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior—from violent people you save me... As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.

2 Samuel 22:2-3, 31

REFLECTION:

Today's passage is a refreshing respite from the grisly rebellions of the previous chapters. King David was now close to 70 years old, tiring easily and struggling to stay warm. Yet, as was his custom, he sang songs of praise to God. He worshiped God and thanked Him for all that He had done for him and, according to this passage, God had done a lot for King David!

RESPONSE:

1. What victory can you thank God for today?

2. What area of your life may still need to experience the victory that comes from continued obedience to God?

3. Can you say with a pure heart that you follow God's will and ways and are blameless before Him? If not, what do you need to surrender?

4. What else can you surrender to the Lord?

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

READING:

2 Samuel 23:1-39

VERSE OF THE DAY:

If my house were not right with God, surely he would not have made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part; surely he would not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire.

2 Samuel 23:5

REFLECTION:

Many have said that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, while the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. Passages like 2 Samuel 23 are just that!

Note that this chapter begins with, “the last words of David,” but then there are more chapters after this one with words of David. Why? Parts of 2 Samuel and 1 Kings are not in chronological order because there is a literary design at play. 2 Samuel chapters 21 and 24 have stories that reflect each other (specifically, the judgments and the mighty men), because they’re like bookends that point us to something more important.

What is it that is more important? In the middle—in today’s passage—we see King David worshipping God and pointing to “an everlasting covenant,” which could only be brought to fruition through King Jesus. David didn’t know the name “Jesus” yet, but he surely looked forward to the coming King!

DAVID'S HUMILITY VS JOAB'S HUBRIS

READING:

2 Samuel 24:1-25

VERSE OF THE DAY:

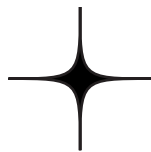
David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

2 Samuel 24:25

REFLECTION:

Earlier this week, we observed that Joab was David's loyal right-hand man. Yet, in other passages, we read that Joab was self-serving, divisive, and disloyal. He put himself ahead of others, even killing relatives to strengthen his leadership. This becomes more apparent later in 1 Kings, when Solomon put an end to Joab's aggression.

In contrast, as you read through chapter 24, notice how David responded after he sinned against God (see verses 14, 17, and 18-25), profoundly humbling himself in response to God's correction. This was the moment when David purchased Auranah's threshing floor and built an altar in the very place where King Solomon would later build the temple (see 2 Chronicles 3:1).

**SCRIPTURE:**

In my distress I called to the Lord; I called out to my God. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came to his ears...He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters...The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be my God, the Rock, my Savior!

2 Samuel 22:7, 17, 47

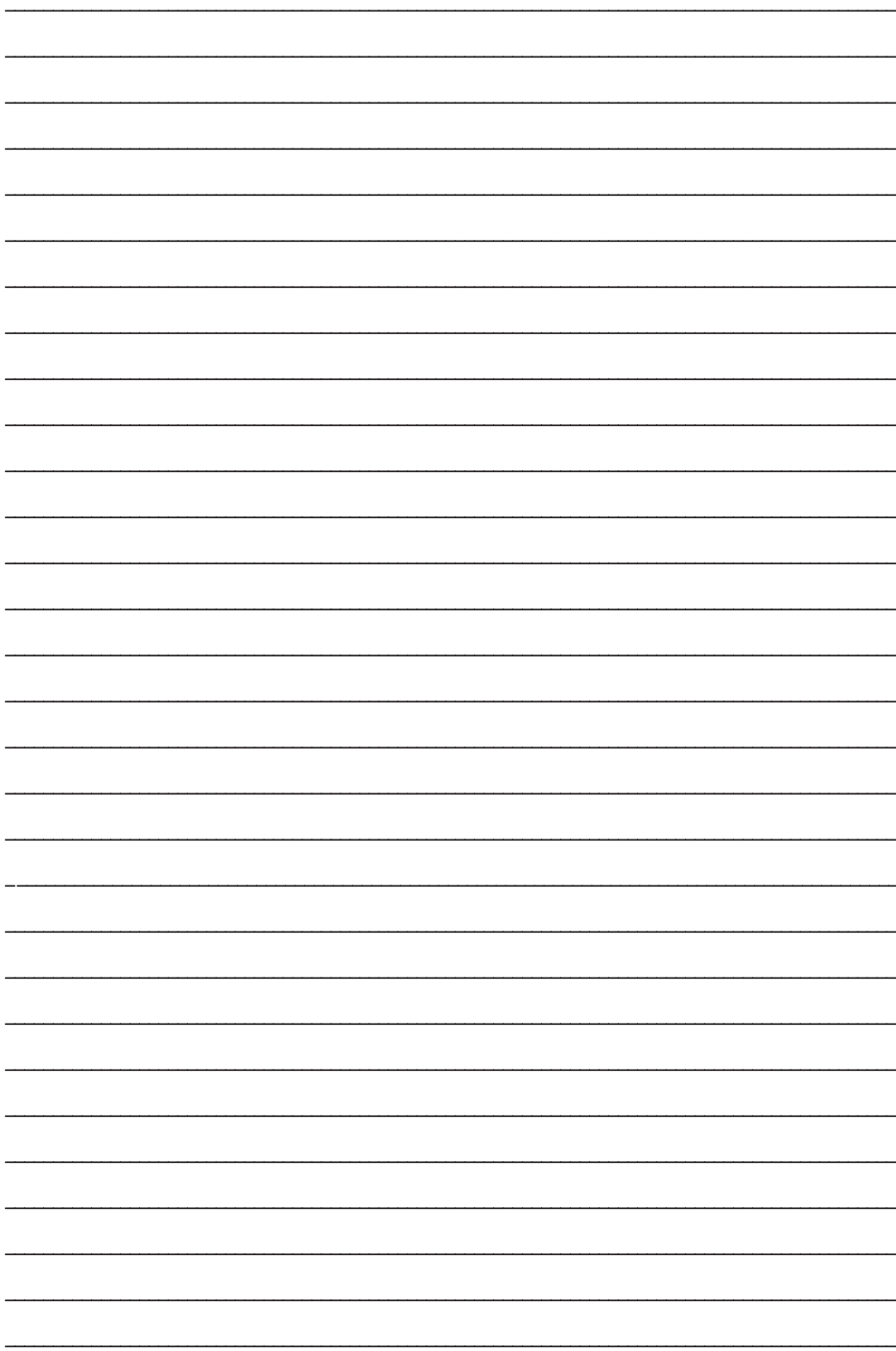
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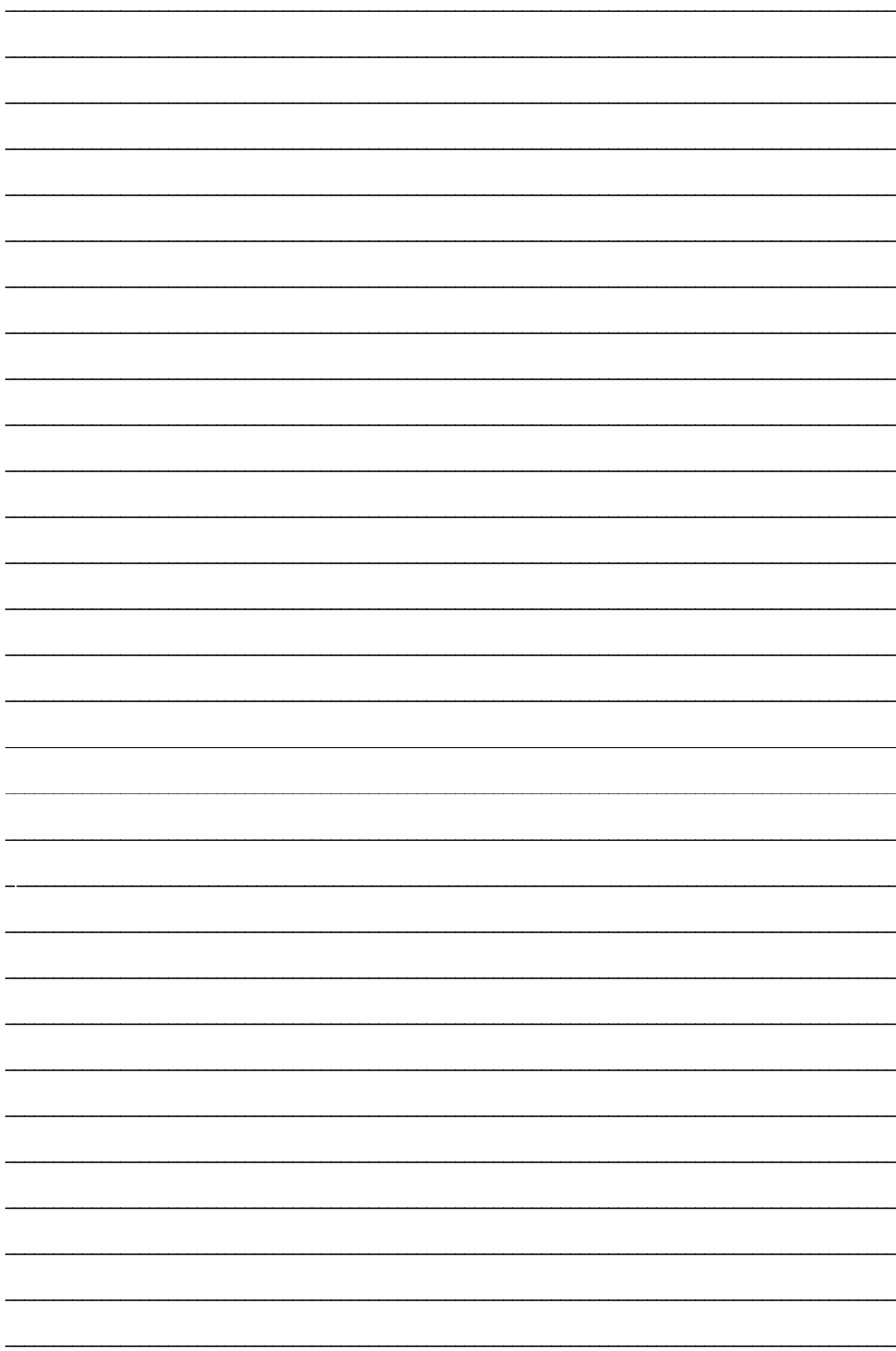
After years of warfare and running for his life, God rescued David from all his enemies. In response, he wrote a song of victory to celebrate God's salvation!

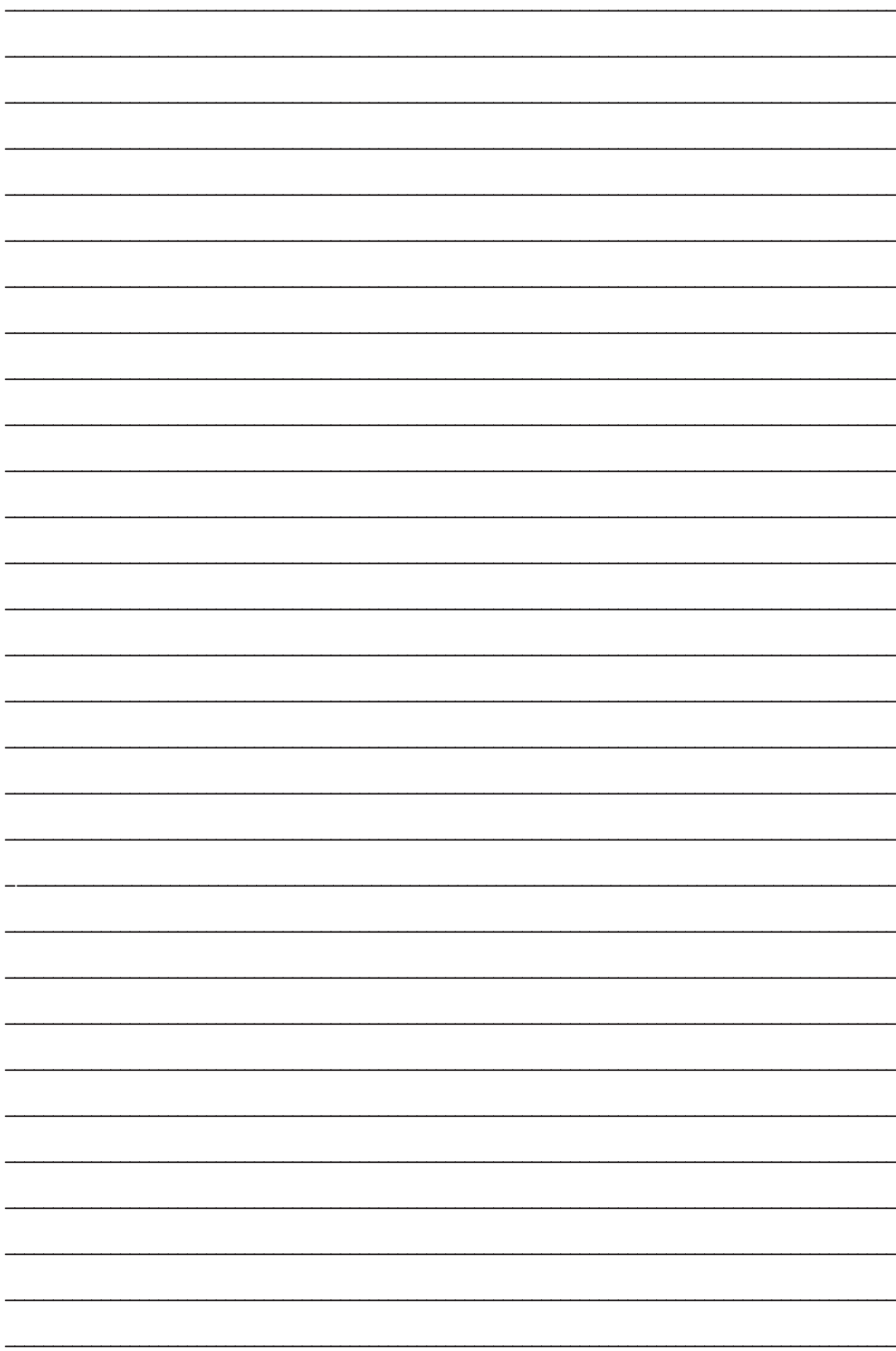
Calling out for help became David's survival instinct. He learned that God always hears the cry of a crushed spirit and His ability far exceeds our own. David witnessed firsthand God's power to save as he cried out for the Savior again and again. This song recounts these harrowing stories of deliverance and gives God the glory due His name! May our prayers be filled with praise for every victory we receive from His mighty hand!

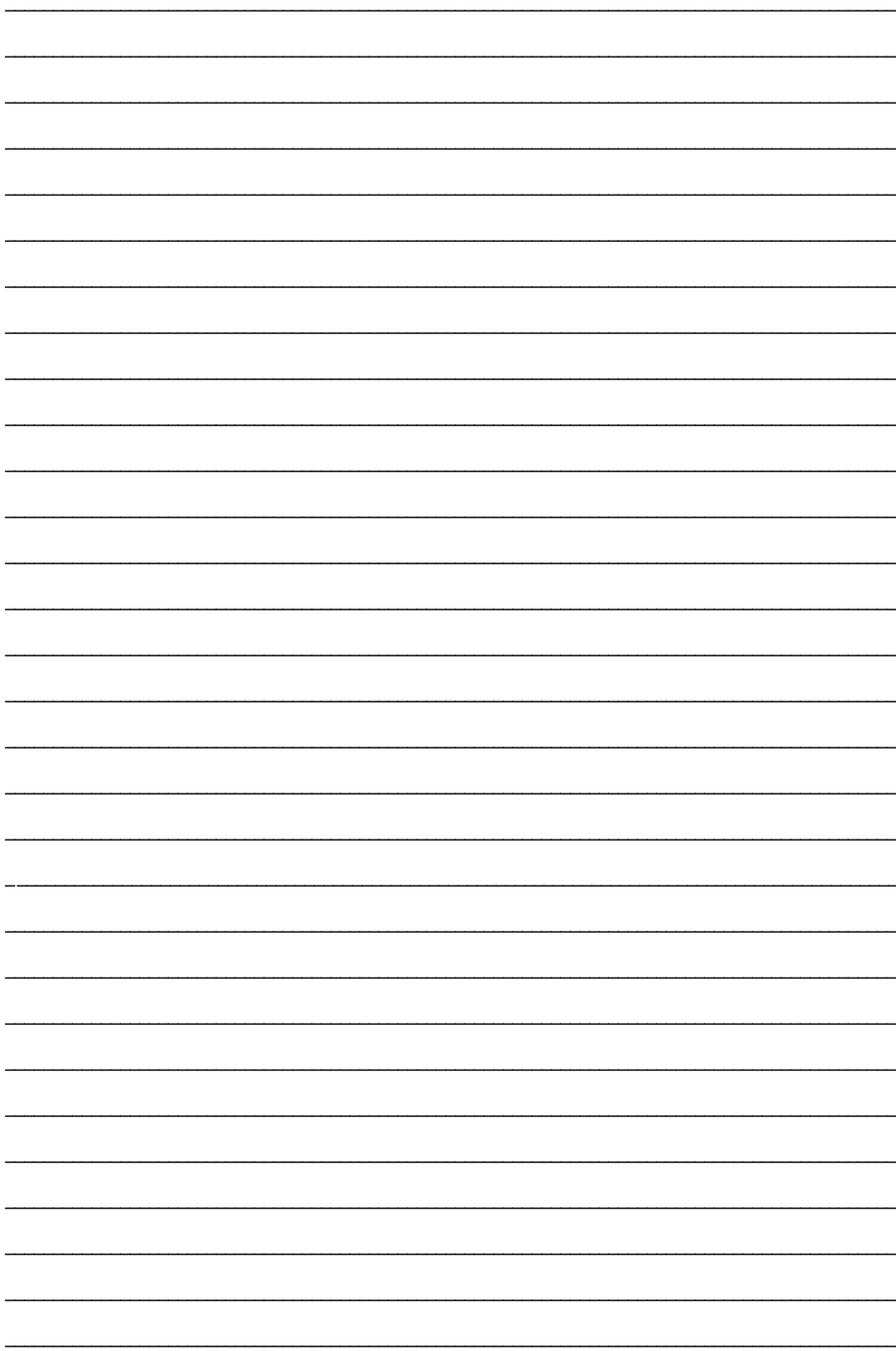
PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I remember many times I was in a desperate place and You heard my cry for help. You have been the Refuge I run to and the Rock who helps me stand. There is no one like You! When my heart was broken, You came near and I could feel You with me. You heard my cries and You have saved me from my enemies! I will always praise Your name! You have forgiven my sins, healed my body, and redeemed my life from the pit. May I never forget all that You, My God, have done for me! I love You. Amen.











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