



START-OF-THE-YEAR “DAY OF PRAYER” GUIDE

This guide leads you through six sets of personal reflections as you begin the year. Each reflection set has suggested topics to reflect on and pray about. Within each set, there are also short inspirational readings from scripture and commentaries; these have mostly been taken from the [Touchpoint](#) devotionals published by Tecarta Bible.

These six sets of reflections are as follows:

1. The Past	Reflections about the year that just passed.
2. Beginnings	How do you feel about this coming year?
3. Planning	Things that God expects of everyone (including you) to make specific plans for.
4. Focus on Character	Specific characters among the 9 fruit of the Spirit that God wants you to focus on.
5. Specific Calling & Purpose	Being sensitive to opportunities for you to respond to God’s specific calling.
6. The Big Ask	Praying for your deepest longings.

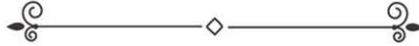


1. THE PAST

The past is like a photo-album containing snapshots of every moment of our lives. These snapshots are not just of happy moments and celebrations; they also record our failures, tragedies, and acts of deepest shame. Most of us would like to lock some of our past away or tear out the snapshots that expose the parts we'd like to forget. The apostle Paul, whom we consider one of the great leaders in the New Testament, had a past he wished he could forget. His memory album was full of snapshots from his days of persecuting and killing Christians. What immense regret he could have been burdened with. But Paul understood his past had been redeemed through God's healing and forgiveness. Unlike our own limitations in time, God has access to our past, not to rewrite it but to bring good out of it in our present and future. How we view our past will affect how we live our present and future. Some of us have had a good past with a strong spiritual heritage with loving parents and mentors. Don't take that for granted; use it to help and minister to others. Some of us have had a past filled with wrong and hurtful activities that produced and continue to yield regrets and shame. No matter what you've done, God is ready to forgive you, clean you on the inside, and give you a new start – fully forgiven. Some of us have a tragic past where we have been victims of abuse, neglect, violence, and shameful acts. This is the most difficult past to deal with. But God wants to throw away all the bad snapshots and restore you like new – and he can if you'll let him. Regret, guilt, and shame can be removed, and we can be free to live in peace with purpose and joy.

TO DO:

1. Read the "Touchpoint Devotionals on THE PAST" below.
2. Recall and write down the significant events and occurrences that happened to you last year. Include both of the following:
 - a. accomplishments, victories, progress, highlights; and
 - b. failures, disappointments, hurts, frustrations, lowlights, if any.
3. Reflect on the work of God in your life during the last 12 months:
 - a. What significant lessons have you learned through these events and occurrences:
 - about yourself; and
 - about God
 - b. What, if any, do you see that God did or accomplished THROUGH you this past year? How do you feel about this?
 - c. What, if any, do you see God did or accomplished IN you this past year? What are you becoming? Or what have you become? How do you feel about this?



TOUCHPOINT DEVOTIONAL – “The Past”:

How can remembering my past help me to shape my future?

PSALM 78:1-4 *O my people, listen to my teaching. Open your ears to what I am saying, for I will speak to you in a parable. I will teach you hidden lessons from our past— stories we have heard and know, stories our ancestors handed down to us. We will not hide these truths from our children but will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord. We will tell of his power and the mighty miracles he did.*

The past can teach you valuable lessons. But you must know and meditate on the stories in order to learn from them to profit from them

God wanted his people, and you, to remember the past for several reasons. First, it is through recalling how God’s power and mercy have transformed your life in the past makes you constantly aware of his power and mercy in the present. Secondly, remembering your past gives you confident hope for the future as you recall how God has rescued you in the past. Thirdly, recalling all that God has provided for you in the past should compel you to thank him and worship him now and in the future.

What is the history of your relationship with God? Can you put into words what he has done for you? With whom could you share your spiritual journey? Remembering and telling your stories of the past is a way to shape your stories of the future by inspiring obedient actions.

2 CHRONICLES 26:16-20 *But when he had become powerful, he also became proud, which led to his downfall. He sinned against the Lord his God . . .*

Past successes can make us prideful. They can make us forget the God who helped make them possible. Make sure success drives you toward God in thankfulness and humility, not away from him in self-confidence.

PSALM 105:5-7 *Think of the wonderful works he has done, the miracles and the judgments he handed down . . .*

Seeing how God has worked in the past can give you confidence and hope that he will continue those great works in you in the future. Sharing Bible stories and recounting family history that highlights God’s faithfulness can be powerful influence on the lives of children.

1 PETER 4:3 *You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols.*

The past can help you avoid temptation today. When you remember past consequences, you will be more motivated to avoid them!



2. BEGINNINGS

A new car, a new house, a new job, new clothes, a new day, a new friendship, a new baby—all suggest a fresh start. Newness is a beginning, or maybe a beginning again. It is something that never was before, or perhaps something that was before but is now different. It is a turn in the road, a starting over, a fresh encounter. People dream of new beginnings: an escape from sameness, a chance to wipe the slate clean and start over, an opportunity to move away from the ordinary. For some, newness is threatening, forcing them away from the comfortable, the tried-and-true. For others, newness is exciting: a challenge to move into uncharted territory, the exhilaration of an encounter with the unknown. Whenever we encounter a beginning, we should remember that all things have their beginning in God.

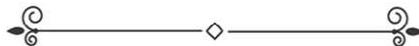
TO DO:

1. Read the Touchpoint Devotionals “BEGINNINGS” below.
2. Without for now diving deep into the details and specifics, what area(s) of your life would you:
 1. Want something new to happen or to do?
 2. Want to end, or to put closure or stop to?
 3. Want to have a fresh re-start/re-boot/to begin anew?

Explain why you say so, without getting into the how. Do this for each of the following areas of your life:

- ✓ your significant relationships
- ✓ your pre-occupations
- ✓ your Ligaya life
- ✓ your prayer life
- ✓ your personal qualities/habits/etc.
- ✓ others

3. How do you feel about knowing that God is ready to give you a fresh start on these?



TOUCHPOINT DEVOTIONALS: Beginnings

Why should beginnings always draw our attention to God?

GENESIS 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

God is the ultimate starting point. Worldly living is the habit of failing to acknowledge God in all things (see Proverbs 3:5-6). We never begin anything with nothing. We always

start, even in our most creative moments, with what God has already provided. The best way to begin anything is to recognize God's presence in what we are doing, where we are going, and what we are using.

Is it really possible for me to get a fresh start?

PSALM 51:10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.*

Hearts can become soiled, and spirits can be guilty of betrayal. On our own we cannot cleanse these or reverse the damage done by our sin, though it is tempting to engage in that hopeless work. How much better it is to turn to the God of new beginnings and ask him to do what we cannot do for ourselves!

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 *I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.*

As flawed people still living in a fallen world, our efforts to live out the new life God has given us will suffer setbacks and even catastrophes. It helps a great deal to remember that our responsibility is not to accomplish the work ourselves as much as it is to get out of the way and joyfully let God accomplish what he has planned. Once God begins, he never gives up on one of his projects.

How many opportunities does God give me to begin anew?

LAMENTATIONS 3:23 *Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.*

Life is a series of new beginnings; how we enter into them makes all the difference. We are more accustomed to new beginnings than we think, for each day offers us a world of new responsibilities and possibilities. Each day also gives us new opportunities to get to know our God better and to start over with a new attitude toward our circumstances and toward other people. God renews his mercies to us every single day. We don't have to be burdened by yesterday's failures or regrets.

Why are beginnings good for us sometimes? How do we get a new start?

EPHESIANS 4:23-24 *Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.*

We harvest what we plant. Pumpkin seeds produce pumpkins. Sunflower seeds produce sunflowers. That is exactly why we must ask the Lord to plant within us a clean heart: so that our lives will produce clean thoughts, motives, and actions. If bad desires and thoughts remain, it is evidence that some bad seeds have been planted and we need to do some weeding. This means that our complete renewal is not yet accomplished. None of us will be entirely pure in this life, but purity of mind and heart is one of the worthiest goals we can pursue. We must begin by asking God's Spirit to do the work. Can you make that a goal for this year? What might you look like twelve months from now—inside and outside—if you diligently pursued that goal?

LUKE 5: 1-5 *One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep*

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water, and let down the nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”

Jesus Himself calls us to new beginnings, to fresh new attempts, to re-set our lives – perhaps to re-do what we did before, even though our past attempts may have seemed to be fruitless and futile. Remember, God’s timing is perfect, and all we need to do is to respond in faith and say, “Because You say so, I will.”



3. PLANNING

Homespun wisdom says, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” Although you won’t find it put just that way in the Bible, you will find many stories of both effective and poor planning. The Bible teaches that God is a God of both purpose and planning. His purpose is to draw all humanity to himself in order to forgive and redeem. His plan—from Creation to the Law to the Prophets to Jesus and the church—is to send his Son to die for our sins, take our punishment upon himself, and be raised from the dead so that we can be rescued from eternal death to eternal life. Our plans won’t be quite so dramatic, but nonetheless, planning is an important part of our lives. The big question is if, in all our planning, we ever consult his perfect and eternal plan.

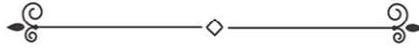
As Christian disciples, the Lord has revealed to us what He wants all of us to be doing in order to live out our lives as Christians. Before we begin to discern what God’s “specific will” is in certain aspects and decisions we have to make, we need to first of all make sure that we are conforming to His “universal” will for all of His followers.

TO DO:

1. Read the Touchpoint Devotionals “PLANNING” below
2. Do an examen of your current state of life as a disciple, and allow the Lord to give you a “performance evaluation”. Don’t assess according to your standards, or limitations, or preferences; evaluate yourself through the eyes of God and His expressed will. How pleased or how concerned might He be about how you are integrating the following activities into your discipleship life:
 1. Daily bible reading and study
 2. Daily prayer and conversation with the Lord
 3. Your personal battle against the world, the flesh and Satan
 4. Personally sharing the good news and making disciples of your children (or family members)
 5. Personally sharing the good news to and making disciples of others
 6. Stewarding your personal resources in a godly manner, including tithing
 7. Ligaya (or community/Church) worship and fellowship life
 8. Serving and ministering to other fellow Christians
 9. Knowledge and exercise of your spiritual gifts among fellow Christians
 10. Honoring God during the Lord’s Day
3. If you have been distracted, delinquent, remiss or indifferent, repent and know that God is a God of second chances. Make a resolution to begin again, and write down any specific plans you intend to take within the next 4 weeks.

NOTE: (a) Remember, all journeys begin with the first step. So, limit your planning horizon to the next four weeks only. (b) Please find time to share this plan with your Pastoral Leader in

Ligaya (or whoever is overseeing your spiritual growth), and allow him/her to hold you accountable to do the above, and to move forward beyond the first month onwards.



TOUCHPOINT DEVOTIONALS -- Planning

What are some plans I should be making that conforms to God’s universal will?

2 CHRONICLES 7:14 *“Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven.”*

JOHN 15:5-7 *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”*

2 TIM 3:16-17 *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

PSALM 119:105 *Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.*

Plan to devote **quality time in prayer and conversation with Jesus**, and in the **reading and study of scriptures daily**. Jesus says apart from Him you can do nothing; but you can do all things through Christ who is in you. Intimacy with Jesus allows you to live your life saying, “It is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me.” Gal 2:20

You will only get to know God more closely by prayerfully reading and studying his Word. As God communicates to you through the Bible, he will show you what he wants you to do and where he wants you to go. The Bible is God’s message to you, and it will guide you in all that you need to do to live a godly life ahead this year.

The most universally practiced yet least understood of human experiences, prayer is one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith. Its simplest definition is communication with God. Yet so often we approach prayer like a one-way telephone conversation, forgetting that God also wants to speak to us. And how do we pray—on our knees or standing; silently or out loud; alone or with others; by rote or spontaneously? And does prayer really induce God to change events or otherwise act on our behalf? Prayer appears on almost countless pages of the Bible as the very essence of a faith relationship with the living God. Simple enough for a child to understand and yet so profound we spend a lifetime plumbing its depths, prayer assumes that it is possible for us to have an intimate relationship with a God who hears, cares, and is able to act.

1 PETER 5:8 *Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.*

Plan ahead of time to stand firm **against temptation**. Then, when you are tempted, you will be prepared to resist and be ready to do the right thing.

DEUTERONOMY 6:20-21 *“In the future your children will ask you, ‘What is the meaning of these laws, decrees, and regulations that the LORD our God has commanded us to obey?’ Then you must tell them . . .”*

MATTHEW 28:16-18 *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Plan to **teach your children** about God and his commands. Be prepared to talk with them about all he has done in your life.

Plan to **bring the good news to others**, and to **make new disciples**, teaching them to obey everything that Jesus has commanded. Teach your disciples to become disciplers.

MATTHEW 25:19-21 *“After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’ The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’”*

Making plans to save and handle your money responsibly is important. Sticking to a regular plan of **tithing**, saving, and careful spending with what you have now will enable you to handle the responsibilities of greater blessings in the future.

HEBREWS 10:25 *And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

Plan for times of **worship and fellowship** with other Christians. Don’t let the busyness of life cause you to neglect these important times of friendship and encouragement.

ROMANS 1:13-14 *I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to visit you, but I was prevented until now. I want to work among you and see spiritual fruit, just as I have seen among other Gentiles. For I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world, to the educated and uneducated alike.*

Plan to **serve and minister to others**. In Paul’s case, God didn’t always put Paul where he thought he would serve. But Paul continued to make himself available to serve wherever and whoever God chose. As a result, he developed a passion for helping all kinds of people.

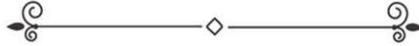


4. CHARACTER FOCUS

If two people were describing you, what would each say? How would they describe the real you? What would they say about your character—the sum total of all that distinguishes you as a person from everyone else? Your reputation—what other people are saying about you—is often a good indicator of your character. Your character reflects who you desire to become. Ultimately your reputation is the mark of your character stamped on society. Those striving for good character, or better yet for godly character, are working toward moral excellence. And Jesus is the ultimate example of moral excellence. We work hard all our lives to become excellent in many areas, especially in the areas of our work and hobbies. Doesn't it make sense to also work hard at becoming morally excellent, to be known as someone who has mastered the art of living in areas that really matter, like integrity, kindness, love, and faithfulness? Ultimately, we want our character to be formed into the image of Christ.

TO DO:

1. Read the Touchpoint Devotionals “CHARACTER FOCUS” below.
2. Just like the examen you did in the previous section, do an examen of how each of the qualities among the 9 fruit of the Spirit are manifesting in your life. If you were to ask two or three of your closest friends or kin -- those who have known you the longest -- would those persons say (a) that you are no longer the same as you were before you met Christ? (b) that they indeed most assuredly see a resemblance of Jesus in your life or not?
3. Bearing in mind that only Jesus is perfect, and that as far as our own character traits goes, there is definitely room for much improvement, select at least three of the 9 fruit of the Spirit (more if you wish) where you feel the fruit is lacking or absent, and where your “natural self” (as opposed to spiritual self) manifests its ugly head perhaps almost uncontrollably.
4. For each of these fruit that you've decided needs nurturing for the coming year:
 - a) Allow the Lord to open your eyes to show you why you are what you are.
 - b) Confess your natural (i.e. unspiritual) tendencies to the Lord, and speak to Him about these, and express your repentance for dishonoring Him because of how you have been behaving.
 - c) See how He has actually been using circumstances in your life to remind you of your sinful (“human”) nature. See how troubles, frustrations, diversities are being used by God as instruments of your transformation.
 - d) Cleanse your motive for improving your character, and acknowledge
 - e) Resolve and commit to cooperate in God's method of transforming you, and express your desire to bear much fruit, not so that you would look good in the eyes of others, but in order that He be glorified when you bear abundant fruit.



TOUCHPOINT DEVOTIONALS – Character Focus

Why does character matter?

John 15:5-8 *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

MATTHEW 5:16 *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

It is to God’s glory that we aim to grow in the fruit of the spirit, and not for our vainglory.

What does the Bible mean when it says my life is to produce “good fruit”?

PSALM 1:3 *They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season.*

ISAIAH 5:4 *What more could I have done for my vineyard?*

The Bible often uses metaphors of trees and vines to paint a picture of how people should be useful and productive. As God’s follower you are to live a life that bears the healthy fruit of righteousness, justice, kindness, love, and truth—all important and productive means of growing God’s Kingdom on earth. These good deeds served to others will leave a wonderful taste in their mouths for God and his way of living.

MATTHEW 13:23 *“The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”*

LUKE 6:44-45 *“A tree is identified by its fruit. . . . A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart.”*

Just as an apple can look good on the outside but be full of worms, so the fruit God desires in you is not the external appearance of goodness but the internal authenticity of a heart that truly wants to love and serve him. Having false pretenses or pretending to be spiritual shows a rotten core which cannot be productive. A good heart is the key to producing good deeds.

GAL 5:19-26 *“The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”*

As we give the Spirit more control of our lives, He begins to do in and through us what only He can do - to shape us and grow us to look like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). Since God's goal for all His children is for us to be like Jesus (Romans 8:29), the Holy Spirit constantly works to rid our lives of the "acts of the sinful nature" (Gal 5:19) and display His fruit instead. Therefore, the presence of the "fruit of the Spirit" – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control -- is evidence that our character is becoming more like Christ's.¹

Are there things I can do to grow my character?

DEUTERONOMY 8:2 *"Remember how the LORD your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands."*

You are not born with godly character; it is developed through experience and testing and a commitment to knowing God and his Word. Everyone develops character by facing daily challenges and choosing wisely.

ROM 5:3-5 *"We boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."*

PHIL 2:12-16 *"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 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. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain."*

The times will come in our lives when we will face life trials, difficulties and through these we will have to make choices. Those choices will be the things that shape our character and more importantly, whether or not it is Godly character.

It is when we realize that life challenges, trials and probably tragedies, produce perseverance and resilience, and draws us closer to the Lord in complete trust of His sovereign will. These directly impacts our character and through growing and maturing in godly character we have the hope that can only come through a personal relationship with only true hope, Jesus Christ. So as you go through what Paul states as "sufferings," don't lose site of the fact these are the things that lead to Godly character.² This is why God is more concerned with our character than our comfort.

¹ <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/what-are-the-fruit-of-the-spirit.html>

² <https://www.rccgcol.church/resources/blog/139-god-is-more-concerned-with-your-character-than-your-comfort>



5. SPECIFIC PURPOSE & CALLING

God has a general purpose and a specific purpose for you. If nothing else, you have been chosen by God to let the love of Jesus shine through you to make an impact on others. If you don't sense a specific call on your life right now, you still have the call to simply follow Jesus, obeying him wherever you are right now. You have been called to do everything you do every day—even the mundane tasks—to the glory of God, letting the Holy Spirit guide, trying to steer clear of sin, and loving your neighbors as yourself. This is the call and purpose God has prescribed for all who believe in Him. Key point: the more you fulfill your general purpose, the more your specific purpose will become clear to you.

And what might be that specific purpose or calling that you need to fulfill?

It is essentially human to search for our purpose, or calling, in life. We want to know why we're here and what we're supposed to do. Inside, we all long to be part of something bigger than ourselves. Maybe God's calling you to be a missionary career in Africa, although that's really not for all. The truth is, God's call can be to do something right in your backyard. He might call you to minister to the youth in your church, care for your ailing spouse, run a large corporation, feed the hungry, play professional sports, or volunteer at a shelter.

Regardless of whether it's a big assignment or a specific single task, how do we know what it is? Often, we wish God's call would come in an audible voice or a miraculous sign in the sky. These are entirely possible, of course. But for sure, God has specifically given you special gifts, abilities, passions and spiritual gifts even, and wants you to use them to make a unique contribution in your sphere of influence. And this is where we ought to begin. When we use those abilities to serve him and others, we are answering his call.

Answering God's call is not a one-time decision; instead, it's daily walking with him, being where he wants us to be, doing what he has prepared for us to do. Taking those daily steps answering God's call will become a life lived for his glory.

TO DO:

Note: God will call us to do something specific at any time. Therefore, we all need to be sensitive to God's calling any time, and not just during today's "Day of Prayer" reflection.

1. Read the Touchpoint Devotionals on "PURPOSE AND CALLING" below.
2. Reflect on your current major preoccupations (student, parent, employee-bread winner, service ministry, etc.), and how and why you think that God has placed you in this particular place and role for His divine purpose. In what ways are you able to, or should you, honor God in this role? How do you sense God now expects you this year to use your specific preoccupation for His kingdom purposes?

3. What, in your opinion, are your special natural gifts, aptitudes, abilities, talents or skills, as well as resources? In what ways are you able to, or should you, honor God with these talents or skills, resources? How do you sense God now expects you this year to use your gifts, talents, skills, resources for His kingdom purposes?
4. Which of the 9 spiritual gifts do you feel God has bestowed upon you? (check out descriptions in <https://wn2w.org/spiritualgifts.html>). What has been your experience in the exercise (or not) of these gifts that you feel you have? Where do you think God is taking you this year with these?
 - a. The Gift of Wisdom
 - b. The Gift of the Word of Knowledge
 - c. The Gift of Faith
 - d. The Gift of Healing
 - e. The Gift of Miracles
 - f. The Gift of Prophecy
 - g. The Gift of Discernment of Spirits
 - h. The Gift of Tongues
 - i. The Gift of Interpretation of Tongues

If you don't know what your gifts are, meet with godly advisers or people you trust in order to discover the abilities that God has given to you. Then, make plans to throw yourself into your tasks.

5. How sensitive are you to the possibility that God may have placed you or will place you in a particular situation where you have an opportunity to conquer evil, establish His kingdom, proclaim the good news, or rescue a soul? What might this be, if there is such an opportunity that is presenting itself to you now. How do you feel about this? What steps do you think you should take in order to be sensitive to, and to gain wisdom on how to seize the opportunity, and actually do it?
6. Aside from the items above, are you now in the midst of a crossroad in your life, where you are discerning which way to go? Or are you contemplating to undertake a major activity or project and still in the process of planning or deciding whether and, if so, how to go about it? Reflect on these plans and considerations prayerfully, and try to discern how God might be honored (or not) in whatever choices you have, and what God's purpose may be that He intends for you to fulfill through that course of action. Make a plan to discuss your thoughts and discernments with your pastoral leader or a trusted, mature Christian who can pray with you regarding your choices.



TOUCHPOINT DEVOTIONAL – Purpose and Calling

Does God have a special purpose or calling for me?

JEREMIAH 1:4-5 *The Lord gave me a message . . . I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my spokesman to the world.*

God created you and has a plan for your life; he wants you to discover and fulfill that plan, as Jeremiah did. God may call you to do a certain job or to accomplish a very specific task or ministry. When that happens, he will help you know what it is. You will feel a very strong sense of leading from him. It's up to you to respond and walk through the door of opportunity he opens.

As you continue reading the Bible and praying, you will feel a very strong sense of leading from him. It's up to you to respond. Discovering your calling means that you'll be doing the work in the world that God specifically planned for you. There's no greater satisfaction and joy in life than that.

How can I be sensitive to opportunities to respond to specific callings?

ESTHER 4:14 *“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”*

In many ways, our lives are defined by opportunities seized or missed. According to the Bible, we are to take advantage of opportunities by responding with bold action when we recognize them as God-given chances to participate in his purpose. At all times we must be prepared to recognize and act upon the opportunities that God creates for us to be used by and for him.

ACTS 8:30 *Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”*

God regularly places “divine moments” right in front of us—opportunities to do good, help someone in need, or share what you know about God. Always be on the lookout for these opportunities to be a witness for your faith in word or deed. God will put them in front of you; you need to act on them. And God promises he will make an important spiritual moment from that.

PHILIPPIANS 1:14 *And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God’s message without fear.*

JOHN 9:4 *“We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work.”*

GENESIS 40:8 *And they replied, “We both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean.” “Interpreting dreams is God’s business,” Joseph replied. “Go ahead and tell me your dreams.”*

When you see an opportunity to do good, jump on it. The more you think about it the less likely you are to act. Even when you are experiencing personal hardship, helping others can be therapeutic.

GENESIS 39:4, 6 *Potiphar . . . put [Joseph] in charge of his entire household and everything he owned. . . . With Joseph there, he didn’t worry about a thing.*

GENESIS 41:1, 14, 39-40 *Two full years later . . . Pharaoh sent for Joseph at once, and he was quickly brought from the prison. . . . Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has revealed the*

meaning of the dreams to you, clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank higher than yours.”

Responsibility will open doors of opportunity. How you handle each responsibility determines whether or not you will be trusted with more. Joseph was unjustly thrown into prison. He could have whined and complained or become bitter and done nothing. Instead, he seized every opportunity he could in his situation, quickly became trusted for his responsibility, and eventually rose to great prominence in Egypt.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:8-9 *In the meantime, I will be staying here at Ephesus until the Festival of Pentecost. There is a wide-open door for a great work here, although many oppose me.*

Be willing to be flexible and change your plans in order to take advantage of an opportunity.

How can I know God's purpose for my life?

ROMANS 12:1-2 *And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

Discovering God's purpose for you begins with your whole-hearted commitment to God. When you give yourself to God, he promises to make his will known to you as you make yourself available to him.

PSALM 119:105 *Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.*

The first step to discovering your calling is to get to know God more closely by reading his Word. As God communicates to you through the Bible, he will show you what he wants you to do and where he wants you to go. The Bible is God's message to you. As you prayerfully read and study, and as you bring this question before him in prayer, he promises to guide you. The call may be to a small task today; it may also be toward a lifelong commitment. If you pray and listen, God promises to show the path ahead. Notice that the lamp guides your feet and offers just enough light for the next few steps. You probably won't see the entire road, just the next little bit. Take those next few steps, and keep moving forward.

DANIEL 1:17 *God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom.*

God has given every individual special aptitudes and abilities—and he has gifted you. These provide the biggest clue to what God wants you to do. What can you do well? What are you passionate about? When God calls you to do something for him, he will use your God-given gifts to get the job done.

Thus, it's important to do whatever you can to develop those special abilities and begin to use them. Do you love children? Find ways to work with them. Do you have a heart for the needy? Look for places you can volunteer and help. Are you good at writing or math

or accounting or public speaking or making music? Take opportunities to use and improve those skills. As you do, you will see what God wants you to do, you will be aware of opportunities that arise to serve him, and you'll know that God has prepared you.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7 *There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. . . . A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church.*

God also gives each individual a spiritual gift (sometimes more than one!) and a special ministry in the church where you can use those gifts to help and encourage others and to bring glory to his name. These specific spiritual gifts, when used by you, help you fulfill the purpose for which God made you.

ROMANS 12:3 *As God's messenger, I give each of you this warning: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves, measuring your value by how much faith God has given you.*

Your full potential is in what God can do through you, not what you can do by yourself and your own abilities. Healthy self-esteem is an honest appraisal of yourself — not too proud because of the gifts and abilities God has given you, yet not so self-effacing that you fail to use your gifts and abilities to their potential for God's glory.

Why is it important that I discover my specific calling?

ACTS 20:24 *But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.*

My life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus.

Paul felt especially passionate about pursuing his calling, which was to preach the Good News wherever he went. He knew that to refuse to do that would be to waste his life. When God gives you a specific calling, it fills your thoughts and energies so that you have a longing to pursue it wholeheartedly. As you continue to do what God calls you to do, no matter how small or big, your life is worthwhile. You don't have to do what the world sees as "great things"; you merely need to do what God has asked you to do.

2 TIMOTHY 4:5 *Complete the ministry God has given you.*

As you follow God's will, it doesn't always mean that you'll feel happy or that life will be perfect. You may, in fact, face suffering. This doesn't mean you made a mistake or that you're out of God's will. Keep serving, keep doing what you sense God has called you to do. He will give you the strength to persevere even when it's difficult.



6. THE BIG ASK

The Bible is filled with seemingly impossible stories: A Flood covers the earth, a sea is divided so people can walk through, the sun keeps shining until a battle can be won, a man survives three days in the belly of a fish, a virgin gives birth to a baby boy. These recorded miracles of God can seem as unbelievable as ancient myths if we fail to recognize God’s intervention in our lives today. Just as Pharaoh was blind to God’s miracles performed right before his eyes through Moses, we too can blind ourselves to God’s miracles, failing to notice the mighty work he is doing all around us. But those who believe in the creator of all things also believe that he can alter what he has created; he can break into natural law and cause something supernatural.

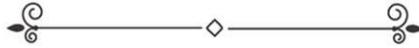
For us to experience the impossible and recognize it for what it is, we need faith. Faith opens up a new dimension, and we understand that what we see is not all there is. Suddenly, we can recognize the “impossible” things God does for his people, because we believe that anything is possible for him. When we look for God he shows himself in miraculous ways: in the birth of a baby, a new cure for a deadly disease, an awesome sunset, or the restoration of a hopeless relationship. Yes, we have a miracle-working God. The Lord is able—and willing—to do the impossible to help us do his work. This means that no situation is hopeless. Thus God encourages us to pray big prayers and never lose hope. The more you see the “impossible” acts of God with eyes of faith, the stronger your faith in God will become.

TO DO:

1. Read the Touchpoint Devotionals on “THE BIG ASK” below.
2. In this last segment of your Day of Prayer, we want to bring to the Lord your deepest longings, your most fervent prayers, your biggest life challenge, or whatever it is that has been in our prayers and til now seem to remain unanswered, or you’ve considered nearly impossible that it would require a miracle, which you’re perhaps already given up on.

Bring those matters up now, and present them to the Lord anew

3. If you wish, see if you can compose your “Bahala ka na, Lord” prayer, using the pattern of Jehoshaphat’s prayer described here: <https://crosstraining.anik-anik.com/your-own-bahala-na-prayer/#more-297>



TOUCHPOINT DEVOTIONAL – The Big Ask

Can God really do the impossible?

ZECHARIAH 8:6 *“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: All this may seem impossible to you now. . . . But is it impossible for me?”*

MATTHEW 14:17 *“But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!”*

LUKE 5:5 *Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”*

EXODUS 14:21 *Then Moses raised his hand over the sea, and the LORD opened up a path through the water with a strong east wind. The wind blew all that night, turning the seabed into dry land.*

DANIEL 6:27 *“He rescues and saves his people; he performs miraculous signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”*

ACTS 2:2-12 *Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. . . . “These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! . . . And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!” They stood there amazed and perplexed.*

There should be no doubt that God specializes in doing what seems impossible from a human perspective. The end of your abilities is the beginning of His. The God who spoke all creation into being can do miracles for you. Believe that he can and that He wants to.

What keeps me from seeing more miracles in my life?

EXODUS 8:17-19 *So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded them. When Aaron raised his hand and struck the ground with his staff, gnats infested the entire land, covering the Egyptians and their animals. All the dust in the land of Egypt turned into gnats. Pharaoh’s magicians tried to do the same thing with their secret arts, but this time they failed. And the gnats covered everyone, people and animals alike. “This is the finger of God!” the magicians exclaimed to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh’s heart remained hard. He wouldn’t listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted.*

You won’t see a miracle if you are too stubborn to believe that a miracle can happen today, or that God won’t perform one on your behalf. Even Pharaoh’s magicians saw this miracle as an act of God, but Pharaoh was too stubborn to admit it. He convinced himself this couldn’t be from the hand of God. When you get rid of pride and stubbornness, you will be surprised to see how much God is doing in your life that you never noticed before.

PSALM 106:2 *Who can list the glorious miracles of the LORD? Who can ever praise him enough?*

Maybe you think a miracle is always a dramatic event like a dead person coming back to life. But miracles are happening all around you that are supernatural occurrences. They may not be as dramatic as the parting of the Red Sea, but they are no less powerful. The birth of a baby, recovery from an illness, the rebirth of the earth in spring, salvation by faith alone, the work of love and forgiveness to change someone, hearing the specific call of God in your life. These are just a few. If you think you've never seen a miracle, look closer. They are happening all around you.

How do I deal with impossible situations?

2 CHRONICLES 32:10, 20 *“This is what King Sennacherib of Assyria says: What are you trusting in that makes you think you can survive my siege of Jerusalem?” . . . Then King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to God in heaven.*

NEHEMIAH 2:4-5 *The king asked, “Well, how can I help you?” With a prayer to the God of heaven, I replied . . .*

Go immediately to God in prayer. Your best choice is to go directly to the only one who can do the impossible.

PSALM 39:7 *And so, Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in you.*

MARK 9:23 *“What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.”*

HEBREWS 11:11 *It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep his promise.*

Place your faith and hope in God. Trust that God can do the impossible and wants to work in your life. But even if he chooses not to, believe that he is the only one who can.

EXODUS 18:18, 21-23 *“You’re going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself. . . . But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups. . . . They should always be available to solve the people’s common disputes. . . . They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you. If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures.*

When advice is wise, perhaps it is from God. Follow it, for it may be God’s way of beginning the impossible in your life. God often works through his people to accomplish what seems to be impossible.

1 CHRONICLES 28:20 *Then David continued, “Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don’t be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. He will see to it that all the work . . . is finished correctly.”*

REVELATION 3:8 *“I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me.”*

Start by doing what you can to the best of your abilities. God promises he won't abandon you but will help you in your impossible situations. If he wants a task done, he will enable you to do it! When you live by God's principles, you remain in the shadow of his helping arms.

DANIEL 2:11, 27-28 The king's demand is impossible. . . . [Then] Daniel replied, "There are no wise men, enchanters, magicians, or fortune-tellers who can reveal the king's secret. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and he has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the future. Now I will tell you your dream and the visions you saw as you lay on your bed."

Only God can do the impossible, but he often allows you to be involved in the process. Be open and ready to be used to accomplish whatever God has in mind!

1 SAMUEL 17:33-50 "Don't be ridiculous!" Saul replied. "There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth." . . . [David] picked up five smooth stones from a stream and put them into his shepherd's bag. Then, armed only with his shepherd's staff and sling, he started across the valley to fight the Philistine. . . . "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of Heaven's Armies." . . . As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him. Reaching into his shepherd's bag and taking out a stone, he hurled it with his sling and hit the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank in, and Goliath stumbled and fell face down on the ground. So David triumphed over the Philistine with only a sling and a stone.

JOHN 6:5-11 Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" . . . Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them!" Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?" "Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted.

In each of these situations, God's people had to deal with seemingly impossible people. These situations had some things in common: (1) open communication with God by acknowledging the impossible and (2) obedience to God's response, whether it meant waiting or moving forward. God often uses what he has already given us to accomplish the impossible. In the previously mentioned situations, he used an ability to discern dreams, a slingshot, and a small lunch.



CONCLUDING PRAYER

1. End your day of prayer with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.
2. Be sure to find time to share your reflections and the results of your day of prayer with your prayer group (Ligaya mwg) and your discipleship (pastoral) leader.

*“I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints,
what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,
so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”*
Eph 3:18-19

God bless you.

EDDIE MENDOZA