

# **God's Grace Is Enough: A Month of Sabbath**



**Daily Devotions: Week Two**  
**August 8-13, 2022**

## How to Use This Devotional

This devotional can be used at any time of the day. Find a quiet place that is free from distractions. Allow yourself 10-15 minutes to be still in God's presence.

Each day's devotion follows the same rhythm: **opening, hymn, scripture, another voice, prayer, blessing, final thought** and **practice**.

The **opening** sentence/s provide a transition into a time of prayer, of becoming attuned to God's presence. These sentences may come from scripture, the church's liturgy or hymnody, or an author's writing. In a way, these words function like the entryway to a sanctuary.

Worship often includes some form of music or singing, one of the most powerful expressions of prayer. You will find lyrics from a Christian **hymn** – some old, some new – that express praise.

We often think of prayer as a time when we speak to God, but prayer is also a time set aside to allow God to speak to us. This happens most powerfully as we read thoughtfully and listen prayerfully to **scripture**. Scripture continues both to inform and form us as God's people. Allow yourself time to reflect on the passage after reading it.

The purpose served by **another voice** is add understanding to the "why's" and "what's" of sabbath keeping.

Although all everything to this point has been prayer, a specific **prayer** is included at this point to gather up the theme of the day.

Just as the opening sentence/s provide a transition into a time of prayer, the **blessing** provides a place to exit the sanctuary.

The **final thought** is provided as a nugget for additional daily reflection.

Each day's devotion concludes with a suggestion for sabbath **practice**.

Use this devotional as suits you. You can use it as written or the pieces and parts that suit you. Some of you may want to do something altogether different. It doesn't matter. All that matters is that we each establish a practice that will help us understand that God's grace is enough!

May the God of all grace be with us as we go about our sabbath keeping!

# Day One

## **Opening** (*Psalm 19:1-4a NIV*)

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
The skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech;  
Night after night they reveal knowledge.  
They have no speech, they use no words;  
No sound is heard from them.  
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth.

## **Hymn** (*"How Great Thou Art" Stuart K. Hine 1899-1989*)

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made,  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:  
How great thou art, how great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:  
How great thou art, how great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze.  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:  
How great thou art, how great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:  
How great thou art, how great thou art!

## **Scripture** (*Psalm 145:1-12 GNT*)

I will proclaim your greatness, my God and king;  
I will thank you forever and ever.  
Every day I will thank you;  
I will praise you forever and ever.  
The Lord is great and is to be highly praised;  
his greatness is beyond understanding.  
What you have done will be praised  
From one generation to the next;  
They will proclaim your mighty acts.  
They will speak of your glory and majesty,  
And I will meditate on your wonderful deeds.  
People will speak of your mighty deeds,  
And I will proclaim your greatness.  
They will tell about all your goodness

and sing about your kindness.  
The Lord is loving and merciful,  
Slow to become angry and full of constant love.  
He is good to everyone  
And has compassion on all he made.  
All your creatures, Lord, will praise you,  
And all your people will give you thanks.  
They will speak of the glory of your royal power  
And tell of your might,  
So that everyone will know your mighty deeds  
And the glorious majesty of your kingdom.

### **Another Voice** *(Macrina Wiederkehr)*

*There are times when ordinary experiences that have been part of our lives day after day suddenly speak to us with such a radiant force it seems as though they are miracles. In his spiritual autobiography The Golden String, Bede Griffiths describes an evening walk when he was taken by surprise in a way that had never happened to him before. This experience significantly changed his life, drawing him into a more mindful way of living. As he walked alone at dusk, the birds were singing in full chorus, the hawthorne trees were bursting with bloom, the fading sun was casting color across the fields. As everything grew still and the veil of darkness began to cover the earth, he paints a picture of his feelings with these words:*

*'I remember now the feeling of awe which came over me. I felt inclined to kneel on the ground, as though I had been standing in the presence of an angel; and I hardly dared to look on the face of the sky, because it seemed as though it was but a veil before the face of God.'*

*Listening to the description of this ordinary yet mystical experience, I can hear my friend Paula D'Arcy saying, 'Everything in the universe breathes for God. It does not matter what name is given to this Presence.'*

*If we practice living mindfully, we slowly begin to see the holiness of so many things that remain hidden when we choose to rush through the hours, striking tasks from the list of things we must accomplish before day's end. It will be a happy moment when we remember to add the wise act of pausing to our to-do lists.*

### **Prayer**

Time-stretching God,  
who see our frantic rushing,  
teach us to use time as our ally  
– to prepare, to reflect, to ponder –  
so we may greet with wonder and joy  
the gifts you give to us. Amen.

## **Blessing**

Blessed is the one who can look upward  
and recognize divine glory in the sun and clouds,  
who can look downward  
and be moved to praise by stones and flowers.

Blessed is the one who can look inside  
and find Being within being, knowing she is never alone,  
certain there is more to be known than to be seen.

## **Final Thought** *(Joyce Rupp)*

*Every once in a while, each of us sense, for a moment, this rare blessing of the touch of God. Brief as it is, it is enough to remind us that there is an underlying harmony beneath all the chaos. There is an eternal beauty giving a loving texture to all of life.*

## **Practice**

Go outside and look around. Make a list of all the things you see that God has made.

## Day Two

### **Opening** (*Psalm 46: 8, 10 GNT*)

The Lord Almighty is with us;  
The God of Jacob is our refuge.  
Come and see what the Lord has done.  
See what amazing things he has done on earth.  
“Be still and know that I am God.”

### **Hymn** (*“Come and Find the Quiet Center” Shirley Erena Murray 1931-2020*)

Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,  
Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:  
Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see  
All the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,  
Making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,  
Raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

### **Scripture** (*John 14:23, 25-27 CEB*)

Jesus answered, “Whoever loves me will keep my word. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. “I have spoken these things to you while I am with you. The Companion, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I told you. “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives. Don't be troubled or afraid.”

### **Another Voice** (*Frederick Buechner*)

*In our minds we are continually chattering with ourselves, and the purpose of meditation is to stop it. To begin with, maybe we try to concentrate on a single subject – the flame of a candle, the row of peas we are weeding, our own breath. When other subjects flout up to distract us, we escape them by simply taking note of them and then lettering them float away without thinking about them. We keep returning to the in-and-out of our breathing until there is no room left in us for anything else. To the candle flame until we ourselves start to flicker and burn. To the weeds until we become only a pair of grubby hands pulling them. In time we discover that we are no longer chattering.*

*If we persist, every once and so often we may find ourselves entering the suburbs of a state where we are conscious but no longer conscious of anything in particular, where we have let go of almost everything.*

*The end of meditation is to become empty enough to be filled with the kind of stillness the Psalmist has in mind when he says, ‘Be still, and know that I am God’ (46:10).*

## **Prayer**

Bless me with your gifts  
of silence and stillness.  
Neglecting to listen  
for your still, small voice,  
God of whispered messages,  
I talk and do too much. Amen.

## **Blessing**

In Christ  
All things are held together  
And his grace is the integrity of creation.  
May you know yourself held by Christ  
Who holds all things together.

## **Final Thought** *(Meister Eckart)*

*There is nothing so much like God in all the universe as silence.*

## **Practice**

Just sit quietly for five or ten minutes.

## Day Three

### **Opening** (*Hosea 6:3 GNT*)

Let us try to know the Lord.  
He will come to us  
As surely as the day dawns,  
As surely as the spring rains  
Fall upon the earth.

### **Hymn** (*"Open My Eyes, That I May See" Clara H. Scott 1841-1897*)

Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth you have for me;  
Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unlock and set me free.  
Silently now, on bended knee, ready I wait your will to see;  
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my ears, that I may hear voices of truth you send so clear;  
And while the message sounds in my ear, everything false will disappear.  
Silently now, on bended knee, ready I wait your will to see;  
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my mouth, and let me bear gladly the warm truth everywhere;  
Open my heart, and let me prepare love with your children thus to share.  
Silently now, on bended knee, ready I wait your will to see;  
Open my heart illumine me, Spirit divine!

### **Scripture** (*John 17:20-24 CEB*)

"I'm not praying only for them but also for those who believe in me because of their word. I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. I pray that they also will be in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. I've given them the glory that you gave me so that they can be one just as we are one. I'm in them and you are in me so that they will be made perfectly one. Then the world will know that you sent me and that you have loved them just as you loved me. "Father, I want those you gave me to be with me where I am. Then they can see my glory, which you gave me because you loved me before the creation of the world."

### **Another Voice** (*Joan Chittister*)

*What is right in front of us we see least. We take the plants in the room for granted. We pay no attention to the coming of night. We miss the look of invitation on a neighbor's face. We see only ourselves in action and miss the cocoon around us. As a result, we run the risk of coming out of every situation with no more than when we went into it.*

*Learning to notice the obvious, the colors that touch our psyches, the shapes that view for our attention, the looks on the faces of those who stand before us blurred by familiarity, blank with anonymity – the context in which we find our distracted selves – is the beginning of contemplation.*

*Awareness of the power of the present is the essence of the contemplative life and common to all contemplative traditions.*

*Awareness puts us into contact with the universe. It mines every relationship, un.masks every event, every moment, for the meaning that is under the meaning of it. The question is not so much what is going on in the room, but what is happening to me because of it? What do I see here of God that I could not see otherwise? What is God demanding of my heart as a result of each event, each situation, each person in my life?*

*Until I become truly aware of the world in which I live, I cannot possibly get more out of a situation than a mere outline of reality, a kind of caricature of time. It takes a lifetime to really understand that God is in what is standing in front of me.*

## **Prayer**

Lord, help me to remember that you gave me life.  
Thank you for the gift of life.  
Teach me to slow down,  
to be still and enjoy the pleasures created for me.  
To be aware of the beauty that surrounds me.  
The marvel of the mountains,  
the calmness of the lakes,  
the fragility of a flower petal.  
I need to remember that all these things come from you. Amen.

## **Blessing**

May you hear today  
The song of God's grace unfolding,  
The music of the world becoming,  
The beating of Christ's own heart  
In, with, and under all creation.

## **Final Thought** *(Tilden H. Edwards)*

*Simple attentiveness, moment by moment, can open us to see and receive what is already present – the touch of God and heaven in our midst.*

## **Practice**

Listen to an inspiring piece of music.

## Day Four

### **Opening** (*Deuteronomy 7:9 CEB*)

Know therefore that  
the Lord your God is God;  
He is the faithful God,  
Keeping his covenant of love  
To a thousand generations....

### **Hymn** (*"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" Thomas O. Chisholm 1866-1960*)

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with thee;  
Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;  
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.  
Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided –  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.  
Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided –  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!  
Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided –  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

### **Scripture** (*Genesis 2:1-3 GNT*)

And so the whole universe was complete. By the seventh day God finished what he had been doing and stopped working. He blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day, because by that day he had completed his creation and stopped working. And that is how the universe was created.

## **Another Voice** *(Donna Schaper)*

*I am keenly aware of the need for sabbath keeping because everywhere I go people urge me to go faster, to do more. Keeping sabbath keeps me sane. I walk, pray, sing, garden, worship – and do so with a discipline and vigor that keeps play and praise in my life. God is good to me. Sabbath keeping is a spiritual strategy: it is a kind of judo. The world's commands are heavy; we respond with light moves. The world says work; we play. The world says go fast; we go slow. These light moves carry sabbath into our days, and God into our lives.*

*Our culture urges us to think we need more of just about everything. In fact, we need less. Keeping sabbath is a conscious choice to restrict input. It is a decision not to work in all the available time, but rather intentionally to play in some of the time we have. Keeping sabbath is a method for focus, rest, and play in a life otherwise dominated and tyrannized by scattered-ness, fatigue, and work. Keeping sabbath allows us to say **yes** to a life that is grounded in God's grace, and then to receive more than we could ever have imagined of rest and play. For sabbath keeping allows us time to love, and thus restores to us the joy of our salvation.*

## **Prayer**

Lord, this moment is yours;  
Mine for you, and yours for me.  
I need you,  
I cannot survive without you;  
And yet I go on rushing through life  
As if I could do everything in my own strength.  
Forgive me.  
I know that you care for me at all times,  
And that I am always in your hands;  
But I still need to pause  
And let my heart and spirit  
Be loved by you  
Into loving you again. Amen.

## **Blessing**

Rooted and grounded in the Creator's love,  
Entwined in Christ's own life,  
May you hear the song of the Spirit today  
In trees and grass, in forest and field,  
And in the tender stretching of your own heart.

## **Final Thought** *(Madeleine L'Engle)*

*When I am constantly running there is no time for being. When there is no time for being there is no time for listening.*

## **Practice**

Read a poem. You may find Mary Oliver, Ann Weems, and Madeline L'Engle inspirational.

## Day Five

### **Opening** (*Galatians 5:22-23 CEB*)

But the fruit of the Spirit  
is love, joy, peace, patience,  
kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
gentleness, and self-control.  
There is no law against things like this.

### **Hymn** (*"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" Henry Van Dyke, 1907; alt*)

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,  
God of glory, Lord of love;  
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,  
Opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;  
Drive the gloom of doubt away;  
Giver of immortal gladness,  
Fill us with the light of day.

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,  
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,  
Stars and angels sing around Thee,  
Center of unbroken praise.  
Field and forest, vale and mountain,  
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,  
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,  
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

### **Scripture** (*Isaiah 43:15, 18-21 GNT*)

"I am the Lord, your holy God. I created you, Israel, and I am your king." But the Lord says, "Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do. It is happening already—you can see it now! I will make a road through the wilderness and give you streams of water there. Even the wild animals will honor me; jackals and ostriches will praise me when I make rivers flow in the desert to give water to my chosen people. They are the people I made for myself, and they will sing my praises!"

### **Another Voice** (*Wayne Muller*)

In the trance of overwork, we take everything for granted. We consume things, people, and information. We do not have time to savor this life, nor to care deeply and gently for ourselves, our loved ones, or our world; rather, with increasingly dizzying haste, we use them all up, and throw them away...

Sabbath time can be a revolutionary challenge to the violence of overwork, mindless accumulation, and the endless multiplication of desires, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Sabbath is a way of being in time where we remember who we are, remember what we know, and taste the gifts of spirit and eternity.

## **Prayer**

Creator God,  
You have given me  
The gift of sabbath.  
Help me to step  
Out of this chaotic world  
And into sacred space and time.  
May I keep my intention of rest,  
Worship, and community –  
Seeking always to listen for your voice  
And to number my days rightly. Amen.

## **Blessing**

May the Creator  
Give you eyes to see  
The new creation springing forth.  
May Christ give you ears to hear  
The laughter of new life.  
May the Spirit  
Set the feet of your heart  
Dancing to the rhythm  
Of resurrection.

## **Final Thought** *(Anne Lamott)*

*The secret is that God loves us exactly the way we are...and too much to let us stay like this.*

## **Practice**

Doodle or color for five minutes.

## Day Six

### **Opening** (*Psalm 95:6-7 NAB*)

Enter, let us bow down in worship;  
Let us kneel before the Lord who made us.  
For this is our God,  
Whose people we are,  
God's well-tended flock.

### **Hymn** (*"All People That on Earth Do Dwell" William Kethe 1530-1594*)

All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;  
Him serve with joy, his praise forth tell,  
Come ye before him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God indeed;  
Without our aid he did us make;  
We are his folk, he doth us feed,  
And for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gates with praise,  
Approach with joy his courts unto;  
Praise, laud, and bless him name always,  
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? The Lord our God is good,  
His mercy is forever sure;  
His truth at all times firmly stood,  
And shall from age to age endure.

### **Scripture** (*Psalm 23 NAB*)

The Lord is my shepherd;  
There is nothing I lack.  
In green pastures you let me graze;  
To safe waters you lead me;  
You restore my strength.  
You guide me along the right path  
For the sake of your name.  
Even when I walk through a dark valley,  
I fear no harm for you are at my side;  
Your rod and staff give me courage.  
You set a table before me  
As my enemies watch;  
You anoint my head with oil;  
My cup overflows.

Only goodness and love will pursue me  
All the days of my life;  
I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
For years to come.

## **Another Voice** *(Terry Hershey)*

*Sanctuaries are those sacred spaces, those places, where we stop and pay attention. They provide a way of sanctifying time. They release time from the demand that it measure up or produce, from the requisite questions: 'Did you use your time wisely?' 'Why are you wasting so much time?' 'That wasn't a very good use of time, was it?'*

*Sanctuaries are those spaces, those places, in which, as Maya Angelou observed, 'No problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. Each of use needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us.' It is about refueling, reconnecting. In this space the focus is replenishment.*

*Sanctuary, sacred space, allows us to pay attention. We change focus.*

## **Prayer** *(The Brothers of Weston Priory)*

Creator Spirit,  
mighty wind of God,  
you brood over our lives,  
and speak new life into our chaos.  
You set your Sabbath apart for your service

Your Sabbath  
celebrates the flowering of creation  
the wedding of our hopes  
to your divine yearning.  
In the light of your holy Sabbath,  
Each day is holy;  
In the overflowing of Sabbath joy,  
Each moment is sacred.

As we read in the story of creation:  
"No the whole universe  
sky, earth, and all their array  
was completed.  
With the seventh day,  
God enjoyed rest from the labor of creation.  
Then God blessed the seventh day,  
And called it holy."

Overshadow us now  
With your beauty and your joy,  
That our world may know  
A Sabbath of wholeness and peace,  
Today and forever. Amen.

**Blessing** *(Edmund Banyard)*

Holy is the soil we walk on,  
Holy everything that grows,  
Holy all beneath the surface,  
Holy every stream that flows.

**Final Thought** *(Abraham Joshua Heschel)*

*The Sabbath is a day for the sake of life.*

**Practice**

Go outside and breathe in the fresh air. If weather permits, let your feet feel the grass, dirt, or sand.