

ACTIVE
PRAYER
SERIES

writing to GOD

40 DAYS OF PRAYING WITH MY PEN

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day

1 Caffeine

*Wake up!
Wake up, my soul,
from your winter slumber
and stretch your tired limbs to savor this season*

*Shake off your routines like bedcovers
Plant your feet on the ground
for the journey*

*Clear your eyes of sleep
Take in the sight of a new day
for loving your God*

*Feast on prayer and scripture
Attend to the holy in life and in love
Do not be weary*

*Wake up!
Wake up, my soul,
to experience your greatest joy
Be actively present in this day, in this season*

God will refresh your spirit.

READ Ezekiel 37:1–3.

What “dry bones” in your life need a breath of fresh air, a burst of new life, from the Spirit? Let your written prayer be God’s words of encouragement to you as you let God dust off the dry and weary places of your spirit.

day

2 Daily Blessing

God be the light in my eyes.

God be the love in my voice.

God be the gentleness in my steps.

God be the compassion in my touch.

God be the word on my lips.

God be the strength for my spirit.

God be the ground under my feet.

God gives you unique gifts for this day
and this season.

READ Ephesians 6:10–18.

The author advises readers to make full use of the gifts and “armor” of God to live their days fully, confident in faith, wise in the Spirit. What gifts of the Spirit do you need for this day, for this season in your life? Let your written prayer wrap God’s strength and grace around your day.

day

3 Humility

I pray that you have a sense of humor, O God:

How fickle I am on any given day!

*Saddened, thoughtful, worried in one minute
and relaxed, top-of-the-world in the next.*

How flighty we are as humans!

*Outpouring in generosity for one another,
then intensely self-serving and self-focused.*

How quick are the days you have given us!

*Faster than the grass withering and fading,
the sun races across the sky to mock our sense of time.*

I pray that you laugh . . .

and I will try to do the same.

God is above all and in all and through all!

READ Isaiah 40.

Who is like God? What person, what institution or government, what season, what war can possibly outlast God? Let your written prayer praise God for the mystery of God's eternal power.

day

4 Psalm 46:10

Be still and know that I am God.

o my God, i pray for the perspective to bear in mind that i am not God; that no amount of planning, no amount of caffeine, no amount of pride can set me in your place; that yours is the wisdom and the bearing that i need most of all.

Be still and know that I am.

o my God, i ask for the calm and the trust to know that your breath is the source of my life; for the faith and the confidence to know that there is a living God though the mountains should fall and the earth tremble, though rivers of tears should flood seas of heartache.

Be still and know.

o my God, i struggle with the weight of all that i don't know, with the worries of all that remains unseen; grant me the quiet peacefulness of lilies waving in the wind, clothed beyond the beauty of Solomon himself; bless me with the joyful focus of a sparrow going about its work simply because another day has dawned.

Be still.

o my God, i am not still but restless, pressing through each day as though it all depends on me; be the voice in silence just as you once whispered to Elijah on Mount Horeb, and call me to task for lacking faith . . . until i let go of the busy noise that i have created.

Be.

o my God, let me be fully what you have created me to be: a reflection of you in words and in silence, in work and in stillness, in community and in solitude; let me be, to your glory.

God will be your quiet strength.

READ Psalm 46.

For many individuals, the discipline of sitting with God in silence is a difficult one. Today, before you write, sit in silent prayer for ten minutes (setting a timer works well). Relax your body; listen to your breathing; let your thoughts come and go. When the ten minutes have passed, let your written prayer reach out to God for stillness to ground you through the day.

day

5 Ashes to Ashes Confession

*I am worn down today,
fatigued in every muscle*

*I am not whole,
not even halfway.*

*It is brilliant, thrilling to be human . . .
oh but I strain against the ashes
the limits.*

Heal me, Jesus, with the scars of your own brokenness.

*Heal me . . . not to strength or perfection,
but to togetherness
to gentleness*

to taking care of these ashes.

*Be the wholeness that I am not
and remind this body of ashes
to rest my scars in yours
to live my broken life
fully.*

God will comfort you in all seasons.

READ Ecclesiastes 3:1–20.

There are days, years, and seasons sometimes, when our humanity is evident and tangible in very painful ways. Let your written prayer give voice to the aches of your body, whether your issues are of physical health or spiritual fatigue.

day

6 The Word Became Flesh

To the One who created humanity and walked among us:

Thank you for people—for all people, but today especially I'm thankful for those who radiate love and warmth and meaning into my life. The simplest gifts of shared laughter, a warm embrace, and caring conversation make all the difference in how I see the day.

It's good to know that you laughed and hugged and talked with your friends too. Having a God who was human helps.

Jesus is with you in all of life!

READ John 1:1–5, 14a.

The good news of the Word Made Flesh is that the God of the highest heavens, the Creator of light and life, has walked along dusty roads, tasted the fresh warmth of crusty bread, and shared a cup of wine with friends in full humanity. Let your written prayer invite the Word Made Flesh to be present and real in your day.

day

7 In Need of Prophets

*In the days to come,
will you stretch out your hand and inspire your people,
Spirit of the Living God?
Will you raise up prophets with tongues of fire
to denounce the crimes of war and of hatred,
to protest the lukewarm tolerance of discrimination?
(And will those prophets be us?)
Spirit of the Living God,
will you shake us from our slumbers
with visions of the work that is needed,
the sweat and labor that are necessary
to turn swords into plowshares
(guns, too, and maybe tanks)?
And after the plows have turned the soil,
will you give us courage to melt the metal again,
this time into bells:
huge, loud, clanging bells that we will ring unceasingly
until the harvest of justice is reaped?
Will you, Spirit of the Living God,
in the days to come?*

God will guide the way.

READ Habakkuk 2:1–3.

In your written prayer, lift up a current need for social justice and for visionaries to guide the way toward healing and change.

day

8 Heartache

*O Holy Heartache,
O Open Wound,
I come to you afresh with pain:
bleeding, sore, and tired.
Will you knit flesh back together,
or will you say, "This pain is my presence?"*

*O Holy Heartache,
O Open Wound,
I have prayed without ceasing for strength,
battled in pursuit of confident faith.
Do not tell me that I have been wrong,
that holiness is in the vulnerability.*

*O Holy Heartache,
O Open Wound,
I long to find you in the hurt
so that you will carry me to healing;
instead, you have confined me
to this wilderness of heartache.*

*O Holy Heartache,
O Open Wound,
I am disquieted to discover your weakness,
discouraged that "getting better" may not be the goal.
Be my solace amidst the unknown;
give me courage to keep bleeding.*

God will be present in the midst of your pain.

READ James 5:7–11.

Let's be honest: there is no joy in waiting patiently through suffering. Yet as Job and the prophets and the early Christians testify, God surprises us with strength and grace for endurance in all circumstances.

day

9 A Lover's Psalm

*I love you, O my God,
my joy and my daily delight.
You awaken my senses at every turn—
in caress and the whisper of sweet nothings,
with beauty and warm embrace.
How good it feels to be wrapped in your love—
like the sweetness of a moment,
I do not savor it enough!
Let me be as a lover to you:
blissfully aware of every minute
every intimacy,
grateful for the tenderness
and strength of affection,
pleased to call myself yours
and you mine.*

God loves you!

READ Psalm 36:5–9.

Let your written prayer be a response to the deep love of God.