

TWO WEEKS
with GOD

*A 14-Day Devotional
Based On The Songs From
Clear My Mind*

ERIC ELDER

Two Weeks With God
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Two Weeks With God is based on the instrumental piano songs found on the CD called *Clear My Mind*, also by Eric Elder. The CD, as well as a piano book showing the full piano score for the music, are available by visiting *The Ranch* website at:
WWW.THERANCH.ORG

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Introduction

CLEARING YOUR MIND

I believe the music from *Clear My Mind* will go a long way in helping you to clear your mind. Music has a tremendous power to heal our hearts, soothe our souls, and clear our minds.

But I believe this music can help you in another way too: it can bring you into the very presence of God. And I've found that the best way clear my mind is to spend some time with Him. He promises that whenever we have anxious thoughts, we can bring our requests to Him and He will give us a peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7).

God knows you better than anyone else. He knows the depths of what you're going through. He knows where you hurt and how to heal those hurts. There's nothing more soothing or peaceful than to let Him wrap His arms around you and hold you tight.

If that sounds good to you, I'd like to encourage you to go through this devotional. For the next fourteen days you can focus on

Him in a way, perhaps, that you've never done before.

By the end of the two weeks, I hope you'll feel better about yourself, about your situation, and about your relationship with God.

Even more, I hope you'll finish with a strong desire to come back to God again and again. Because as much as you might look forward to spending time with Him, He is even more eager to spend time with you. That's why He created you: to fellowship with Him. Always know that He loves you very much.

Enjoy the music – and enjoy your time with God.

Eric Elder

Day 1

MOMENT BY MOMENT

I am sometimes overwhelmed by the apparent slowness with which God answers prayer. I wonder how many deep breaths I'll have to take before the answers come. And yet, time after time the answers have come, even if they come gradually, moment by moment.

One of the reasons God takes time to answer our prayers is recorded in the book of Exodus. God told Moses that he would bring his people into a remarkable land, but that it was currently occupied by their enemies. God said, "But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land" (Exodus 23:29-30).

Because of God's great love for us, He sometimes delays the answers to our prayers so they won't overwhelm us when they come. As the saying goes, "Be careful what you ask for, because you just might get it!" Although

we might think we could handle the answer, God knows best and we would do well to follow this advice from Proverbs: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your path straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Don’t be discouraged if God’s answers are slow in coming. God loves you very much. He already sent His Son to die for you. There’s nothing He wouldn’t do for you. Jesus tells us that everyone who asks receives, and then He adds these touching words: “Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him” (Matthew 7:7-11)!

The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. The Bible says, “With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day” (2 Peter 3:8b). Trust Him moment by moment, and soon you’ll see the answers to your prayers.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I pray for those who need to renew their trust in You today. I pray that You would show them, even this week, that You are answering their prayers moment by moment. Let them know in their hearts that there's nothing You wouldn't do for them, and that if they can trust You with their eternal life, they can trust You for their needs here on earth as well. In Jesus' name, Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land” (Exodus 23:29-30).

- *Read Romans 8:28.* In what things does God work for our good?
- *Read Ephesians 3:20-21.* How much is God able to do for us?
- *Read John 3:16 and John 15:13.* To what length is God willing to go for us?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *Moment By Moment*. Take a few minutes to bring your requests to God. Allow some time for Him to speak to you, too.

AFTER YOU PRAY

By the way, never underestimate what can happen in a moment. The Bible says that a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years touched Jesus' robe and was healed *from that moment* (Matthew 9:22). A boy who had been tormented by demons since childhood had them cast out and was healed *from that moment* (Matthew 17:18). A day will come in the future when a trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised, and we will be transformed into the image of Christ *in a moment, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye* (1 Corinthians 15:52, KJV and NIV). Keep trusting Him moment by moment, for in one moment you could see the answers to years of prayer!

LORD, I BELIEVE YOU ARE
ANSWERING MY PRAYERS EVEN NOW.

Day 2

YOU ARE THE WAY

I recorded these songs on a piano that is very special to me: a restored 1910 “Model B” made by STEINWAY & SONS. I mention this in case you’re a piano buff, but also to relate the following story.

One morning as I sat down to play the piano, a ray of light came through the window and illuminated only three letters of the maker’s nameplate above my fingers. Highlighted before me were the letters W-A-Y.

I began to write a song about Jesus, who said He was “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). The melody stirred me so much that I played it over and over, singing to Him, “You are the Way, Lord. You are the Way, Lord. You are the Way, Lord. And I will follow, I will follow You.”

Later that same day, without prior notice, I was released from my job! At least I thought it was without prior notice. I soon realized that God had shown me in the morning that He Himself was taking me in a new direction. Even though I couldn’t see the path ahead of

me, I knew which way to go: to follow Christ, the Way. Within a week the path became brighter and brighter.

Although we often want Jesus to show us the whole map at once, He does something even better. He promises to take us there Himself. "Follow me," He said to Peter and Andrew. "Follow me," He said to Matthew. "Follow me," He said to Philip.

Each of these men got up immediately and followed Him. They knew enough about Jesus to know that there was really only one way to go. Peter said it best when Jesus asked the twelve disciples one day if they wanted to leave Him. Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

When the path ahead looks dark, we can count on Christ to give us light. "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). He alone is the Way.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I pray for those who need direction in their life. I pray that You would go before them and

You Are The Way

light the path so they can see. I pray that they would stay close to You, and as they do, the path ahead of them would get brighter and brighter. Let them know that You are worthy to follow, for You have the words of eternal life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:6).

- *Read John 8:12.* What promise does Jesus make to those who follow Him?
- *Read Proverbs 4:18.* What happens to the path of the righteous?
- *Read John 14:1-6.* Where will following Jesus ultimately lead us?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *You Are The Way*. Take a few minutes to commit to God that you are willing to follow Jesus wherever He leads you, for He is the Way. Ask Him to light the path ahead of you.

AFTER YOU PRAY

Ultimately, God wants us to follow Jesus not only on earth, but also into heaven. Jesus declared that the only way to come to the Father was through Him: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). When we put our faith in Christ, believing that He died in our place for the sins we have committed, we can be assured that God will take us into heaven. Jesus said, “For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:40). There’s only one sure way to get into heaven on judgment day: put your faith in Christ. And when you stand at the gates, Jesus will say, “Let them in...they’re with me.”

LORD, YOU ARE THE WAY.
I WILL FOLLOW YOU.

Day 3

GO INTO ALL THE WORLD

There are two things I pray that God would impress on your heart today: 1) that He loves you very much; and 2) that He needs you very much.

First, if you doubt God's love for you, let me tell you again: "God loves you very much." These are more than just words; God has shown us it's true. The Bible says, "God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). You are valuable to God. He wouldn't have sent Jesus to die for you if He didn't think you were worth saving. He saved you because He loves you.

Second, God saved you because He has a purpose for your life. Jesus said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last" (John 15:16). God has a purpose for our lives: He wants us to bear fruit that will last.

Although God could have used some kind of cosmic loudspeakers to tell everyone in the world about Christ, He has chosen to entrust

that job to each of us. Listen to Christ's final words on earth: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). There are people who won't make it into heaven because no one ever told them about Christ. The Bible says, "'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" (Romans 10:13-15).

Wouldn't it be nice to have someone tell you your feet are beautiful? God saved us because he loved us, and also because He needs us to share that love with others. I want to encourage you today to consider sharing the message of Christ with someone else. Think of the joy of seeing someone in heaven because you told them about Christ. And think of the sorrow of not seeing someone there because you didn't.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I pray for those who need to know today how very much You love them. I pray Your love would overwhelm them, even now. I ask that You would also show them how very much You need them. Lead them to people who need to know about You, then give them the words to speak. In Jesus' name, Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned’” (Mark 16:15-16).

- *Read Ephesians 2:8-10.* What has God created us to do?
- *Read John 15:4-6.* What do we need to do so that we can produce fruit?
- *Read Matthew 25:14-30.* Do any talents come to mind that God has given you that He might want you to use for His kingdom?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *Go Into All The World*. Take a few minutes to ask God to reveal His great love to you. Ask Him to bring to mind specific gifts He has given you, and to show you how you can use them to share His love with others.

AFTER YOU PRAY

Our faith can be a very personal thing, but not so personal that others can't see it. Here's how Jesus puts it: "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). If God has lit your lamp, let it shine.

LORD, SHOW ME HOW I CAN
SHARE YOUR LOVE WITH OTHERS.

Day 4

STAND ON ME

The promises God makes in the Bible are rock solid. We can stand on His promises with as much confidence as we can stand on the strongest rock. When doubts or discouragement come against us, we can stand on His word to carry us through. One hymn writer called this “Standing on the Promises of God” (Russell Carter, 1886).

One day, God asked me to do something that surprised me. It wasn’t ungodly, but it wasn’t what I expected. I wrestled in prayer to find out if He was speaking these words or not. As I often do, I asked God to give me a scripture to back up what He was saying. I asked Him, “Lord, what word can I stand on?” Without hesitation, His answer came back: “My Son, you can stand on Me.”

In the Bible, Christ is called the Word (John 1:14). He is as strong as any rock on which we could stand. Another hymn writer

wrote, “On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand” (Edward Mote, 1834).

As I prayed, God brought to my mind other people in the Bible who had also heard perplexing words from God. I thought of Peter, up on a roof, when God asked him to eat food that Peter thought was impure (Acts 10:15). I thought of Abraham when God asked him to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22:2). I thought of Jesus, the night before He died, when He pleaded with God to see if there was any other way (Matthew 26:39).

In each instance, these people submitted their finite wisdom to God’s infinite wisdom. As they did, the miraculous occurred. Through Peter’s obedience, God brought the message of Christ to the Gentiles. Through Abraham’s obedience, God brought forth countless descendants. Through Christ’s obedience, God gave all people victory over death, once and for all.

I knew what I had to do that day. With renewed confidence I took my stand on God’s Word and soon saw His wisdom prevail in my own situation. If you feel like you’re sinking

and you need a place to stand, you can always stand on Christ, the Rock, the Living Word.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I pray for those who need a solid place to stand. Let them know they can stand on Your promises today. Prove to them that You are faithful to do what You say You will do. Show them that their obedience to You will make a difference in their lives and the lives of others. We ask all these things in the strong name of Jesus, the Solid Rock. Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

- *Read Matthew 7:24-27.* What does a wise person do to build a house that will stand?
- *Read Isaiah 55:8-11.* How do God’s thoughts compare to ours?
- *Read Matthew 26:36-39.* How can we apply Christ’s example to our own prayers?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *Stand On Me*. Ask God to renew in your heart that His Word is trustworthy. Ask Him to bring to mind a promise that you can stand on today.

AFTER YOU PRAY

If you're looking for a word from God, look in the Bible. It has over 800,000 of them! King David said, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105). The Bible has answers to everyday questions, as well as to eternal ones. If you've been away from the Bible and would like to get reacquainted, You might start in the book of John. Read as much as you can each day, and let God speak to you about your life as well. God speaks in various ways, but He has spoken to me through the pages of the Bible more than any other way. Don't let a day go by without opening this book and asking God to speak to you through it.

Stand On Me

LORD, I'M GOING TO STAND
ON YOUR PROMISES TODAY.

Day 5

CLEAR MY MIND

Many people long for a clear mind. At the heart of this longing is a desire for peace. A true peace that lasts. A peace that doesn't fade when the bottle is empty, or when the song is over, or when the world closes in. Believe it or not, such a peace does exist. It's called peace with God, and it's available to every one of us.

The reason we don't have peace with God is because of sin. When we do things that we know He doesn't want us to do, we put a barrier between us and God. Although God is still eager to talk to us, we're no longer eager to talk to Him. Even when He calls to us, we'd rather turn away, and sometimes we run in fear. But we don't have to run away, for God has made a way for us to come back to Him and be clean again. That way is through Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the price for all of our sins. When we put our faith in Christ, believing that He has died in our place, God wipes our slate clean. He forgives us so that we can come back to Him

with our whole hearts – and with our hearts whole.

God is eager to take us back, like a Father who waits for a lost child to return. Jesus describes our reunion with God like that of a Father whose son ran off and squandered all of his inheritance. When the son returned, ashamed of what he had done, “his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.” Then the Father said, “Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found” (Luke 15:20, 23-24).

If you’d like this peace, you can have it today by praying a prayer to God. You can let God wrap His arms around you and welcome you back. And even more, when you put your faith in Christ, you will be able to enter heaven and spend eternity with God (1 John 5:13).

When you make peace with God, He clears your name. He separates you from your sins as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). In fact, He doesn’t even remember them (Hebrews 8:12)! And once you know your name is clear, your mind is sure to follow.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Note: If you've never been at peace with God because of your sins, you can have it today by coming to Him in prayer. Like a father welcoming back his lost son, God will wrap His arms around you and welcome you back, too. And even more, when you put your faith in Christ, you will be able to enter heaven and spend eternity with God . If you would like this peace right now, pray this prayer with me.

“Dear God, I’m sorry for the sins I’ve committed against You and against others. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for me so I wouldn’t have to. I ask for your forgiveness. I ask that Jesus Christ would be Lord of my life. And I ask that You would fill me with your Holy Spirit so that I can follow You with my whole heart. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you” (Acts 13:38).

Clear My Mind

- *Read 1 Peter 3:18a.* For what purpose did Christ die for our sins?
- *Read Romans 5:1.* Through whom can we have peace with God?
- *Read 1 John 5:13.* Of what can we be assured when we believe in the name of the Son of God?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *Clear My Mind*. Ask God to clear your mind and to bring you His peace.

AFTER YOU PRAY

Although peace with God is everlasting, there are times when it comes under attack. Sometimes Satan tries to fill our mind with his lies. Sometimes we have trouble forgiving ourselves. Sometimes the sins of others deeply impact us. Regardless of the cause, the solution is always the same: come to Christ again and again. Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For

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my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30). Come to Christ anytime you need His peace (Philippians 4:6-7).

LORD, YOU’VE CLEARED MY NAME.
NOW, LORD, PLEASE CLEAR MY MIND.

Day 6

A GRAND MAN

For Father's Day one year I wrote a tribute to my dad. As I recalled various memories of him over the years, I realized what an impact he has had on my life. I wrote this song to go with the tribute to let him know that even though my kids call him Grandpa Bob, he's more than a grandpa. He's a Grand Man.

We all, like Jesus, had an earthly father who raised us. But we all, like Jesus, have a heavenly Father as well. The difference between the two can be, at times, like night and day. As a father to my own children, I am fully aware that no father on earth is perfect! But our heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48).

Many people, whether they recognize it or not, often view God in the same way they view their earthly father. While sometimes this image we have of God is good, other times it is distorted, and sometimes it is flat-out wrong.

I'd like to encourage you to get to know the God of the Bible, a Father who is good to

all and has compassion on all He has made. The Bible says that God is “gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love” (Psalm 145:8-9). Does that sound like a dad you’d like to get to know better?

At the same time, the God of the Bible disciplines us because of His great love for us. “Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness” (Hebrews 12:10). Would you like a dad who disciplines you for your own good, and trains you in ways that will bring you peace?

That is the kind of Father we have in heaven. He’s the same Father that Jesus called on every time He went to pray. Jesus says that we are His brothers, and that His Father is our Father (Matthew 28:10-12, John 20:17). If you need a fresh view of your heavenly Father, I’d like to encourage you to come to Him in the pages of the Bible. Take a look at the ways God was a good Father to Christ. In the same way, He’ll be a good Father to you, too.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I pray for those who need to know You as

A Grand Man

their Father. I pray You would show them what You are like, and that You would correct any wrong thinking they may have about You. And Lord, as they come to see You as You are, I pray they would be filled with the confidence and joy that comes from knowing they are Your child. In Jesus' name, Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

- *Read Matthew 7:9-11.* How does God compare to earthly fathers in this passage?
- *Read Hebrews 12:5-11.* How does God compare to earthly fathers in this passage?
- *Read John 5:19.* Why was it important for Jesus to know His Father well?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *A Grand Man*. Take a minute to thank God for being your Father. Ask Him to make right any of the wrong

thoughts you might have about Him as your Father.

AFTER YOU PRAY

God calls us to “Honor your father and your mother’ – which is the first commandment with a promise – ‘that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth’” (Ephesians 6:2-3). When I wrote a tribute to my dad, it was a great blessing to me as well as to him. I found that the Bible was true when it said that honoring our father and mother is the first commandment with a promise. Honoring our parents is good for them – and good for us. If your parents are still alive, you may want to ask God if there’s something you can do to honor them. Then watch the blessings of God pour out on each of you.

LORD, THANK YOU
FOR LOVING ME AS A FATHER.

Day 7

A DAY TO EXPLORE

Congratulations! You've made it to the end of the first week of this devotion—all I'd like you to take today to explore the Bible on your own.

Since the day I gave my life to Christ, hardly a day has gone by that I haven't opened my Bible to see what God might have to say to me. It doesn't matter how many times I've read it; God always has something new and fresh to say.

That's because the Bible is not like any other book in the world. The book of Hebrews says, "the word of God is living and active" (Hebrews 4:12). Some days the words seem to jump off the pages as God speaks to me.

It is the best love letter ever written. You could open to any page and you'd see how great God's love is for you. And like all good love letters, this one is worth reading over and over and over again.

So go ahead and explore it today on your own. If your Bible has an index or concordance in the back, look up a topic that's on

your mind and see what God has to say about it. Or try reading all the way through one of the shorter books in the Bible in one sitting, like Ephesians or First John.

Whether you're new to the Bible, or you've read it many times, know that God can speak to you every time you open its pages and every time you open your heart to Him.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I thank You for telling us so much about You on the pages of the Bible. I thank You that the words are living and active, and that they can speak so personally to each of our hearts. Lord, pour out Your wisdom on those who read Your Word today. And as they get to know You better through these pages, I pray they would want to return to You again tomorrow, and the next day, and every day, for the rest of their lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

I DECLARE

One reason the Bible helps so many people is that it tells *real* stories about *real* people who have been touched by a *very real* God. When we read how God worked in the lives of Moses, David, Paul, Esther, Ruth, and countless others, we see how God can work in our lives, too.

In the same way, people can learn from our lives as well. The Bible says, “Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all peoples” (Psalm 96:3).

I wrote this song after my own struggle about whether or not to share with others my own testimony of what God has done in my life. Although I am still self-conscious at times, I have seen God use my testimony for His glory far too often to ever want to hold back if God prompts me to share.

I’d like to encourage you to share your testimony with others, too. Although sharing it may be uncomfortable, you can know that if God is prompting you, He has a purpose for

it. There are many hurting people going through the very same things that you've already been through. They need a glimmer of hope that God can work in their lives, too.

The woman at the well didn't have a particularly flattering background, but after she met Jesus, she went back to her town to tell them what He had done for her. The Bible says, "Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony..." (John 4:39). The apostle John recorded what Christ had done in his life and the lives of others, "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

Peter and John were so excited to tell about Christ, they couldn't keep quiet even when threatened with imprisonment. "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20).

The words of our testimony are like gold to God. When we share them, they can be like gold to others, too.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I pray for those whom You have touched, that they would be willing to share with others what You have done for them. Lord, I pray that You would show them, even this week, how their testimony could affect someone else's life. I pray that when they're ready, Your Holy Spirit would lead them in exactly what to say and when to say it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all peoples” (Psalm 96:3).

- *Read Acts 26:1-29.* Why was Paul so willing to be honest about what God had done for him?
- *Read Revelation 12:10-11.* What kind of power does the word of our testimony have?
- *Read Mark 5:18-20.* What response did the people have when the man who had been demon-possessed told them what Christ had done for him?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *I Declare* (please note that the song numbers for this week are not the same as the “Day” numbers of the devotional). Thank God for what He’s done in your life. Ask God to put people in your life who might need to hear about what He’s done for you.

AFTER YOU PRAY

Every week I receive letters from people on the Internet who have read my testimony and the testimonies of others on our web site called *The Ranch* (www.theranch.org). They often simply need someone to talk to who has struggled with their same struggles. They are looking for hope. When they find a Christian who can point them to God’s solution to their problems, they are thrilled, healed and thankful beyond words. If God has helped you through a struggle in your life, would you be willing to share it on the Internet so others could find hope, too? If so, send me your testimony and watch God work through your words.

I Declare

LORD, HELP ME TO SHARE WITH OTHERS
WHAT YOU'VE DONE IN MY LIFE.

Day 9

TRUST ME

This is the first song I ever wrote. I had been asking God what He wanted me to do that day. I was surprised when I thought He said, “Write a song.”

Having never written one before, I wasn’t exactly sure what to do! I had played the piano most of my life, but I had only played songs that were written down by others. This time God wanted me to write a new song. The Bible says, “He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD” (Psalm 40:3).

On my heart that day was a friend who needed to put his trust in the Lord. He was about to make a decision to leave his wife, but I had pleaded with him that there was another way, the way of Christ.

I had seen God breathe life back into several other marriages as I spoke to them from God’s Word, so I knew the words I was speaking to him were trustworthy. Even

though he didn't know Christ for himself, I prayed that he would at least trust the words I was speaking to him, for I trust in Christ.

Unfortunately, he chose not to trust Christ nor me. He left his wife, and he left a trail of destruction behind him. But I haven't stopped praying for him, because I know that God answers prayer. Jesus told His disciples that they should "always pray and not give up" (Luke 18:1).

A man named George Mueller prayed for many people during his lifetime who gave their hearts to Christ. His journal records that at the time of his death, there were still three people for whom he had prayed daily, but had not yet accepted Christ. But, on the day of George's funeral, one of them accepted Christ, and the other two did the same shortly thereafter.

We may not always see how God ties up the loose ends of our hopes and prayers for people. But I believe there was a reason that Jesus told his disciples that they should always pray and not give up. One day we'll see why.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I pray for those who need encouragement to always pray and not give up. Lord, help them to trust that you do indeed have a plan, and that their prayers are not in vain. Lord, give them favor with those they speak to about You, and let the words they speak come out as if they came straight from You. I pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up” (Luke 18:1).

- *Read Luke 18:1-8.* What encouragement can you take from this parable?
- *Read Luke 15:4-10.* What happens in heaven when someone who was lost is found?
- *Read James 5:20.* What benefits can come from our influence on others?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *Trust Me*. Pray for someone who needs to know Christ.

AFTER YOU PRAY

God's Word has power not only when we read it, but also when we speak it. The Bible says, "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God" (1 Peter 4:11). When we carefully pray about what to say to others, and then ensure that what we say lines up with God's Word, God can use our words powerfully. In one instance, I talked to a man who was separated from his wife. His family and friends told him to divorce her, and he was on the verge of doing just that. When I spoke to him from the Bible, he said, "You're the first person who has told me the Truth!" Within a few months he and his wife were back together again. Your words may be the only the Bible some people will ever hear.

LORD, I AM GOING TO PRAY
AND NOT GIVE UP.

LORD, I PRAY

Iwrote this song as a lullaby for our children, but it has become a prayer of blessing for our whole family.

I established our nightly prayer routine before I was married. I had heard someone say that he made a commitment to pray with his wife every night before they went to sleep. That way, each of them had received a prayer of blessing every day. I liked the idea so much I began that same week to pray daily with my roommate.

When I got married, I continued those nightly prayers with my wife. Now that we have children, we do the same for each of them at bedtime, placing our hands on their heads and asking God to bless their lives. I believe that our prayers, our verbal blessing, and our physical touch can make a difference.

If you have someone in your life for which you'd like to pray each day, I urge you to consider starting that habit today. Our prayer

Lord, I Pray

times with each other can be quiet moments of intimacy in otherwise hectic days.

Some of you may not be in a place where you can pray for someone each day in person. But I can assure you that there is someone who is praying for you. The Bible says that Jesus “is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Romans 8:34).

By the way, if you have children and want to try singing this song as a prayer over them, here are the words. It simply goes, “Lord, I pray for my children. Lord, I pray for my children. Lord, I pray for my children. Lord, I pray for my children.” The next time through, replace the word ‘children’ with the name of each person in your family. By praying for our children, we can pass onto them the blessings of God, just as Isaac passed them onto his son Jacob, who passed them onto his son Joseph (Genesis 27:25, 48:15).

As you listen to this song, you may also hear a familiar melody in the background. It’s a simple reminder of God’s great love for us.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I thank You for always interceding on our

behalf. I pray for those who want to pass on the blessings they've received from You to their families. I ask that You would give them the insight and wisdom to know how to do this in a way that's meaningful to them and honoring to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them” (Mark 10:16).

- *Read Mark 10:13-16.* How did Jesus bless the children who were brought to Him?
- *Read Genesis 48:9-20.* How did Israel bless his grandchildren?
- *Read Proverbs 22:6.* How can our influence on our children affect them when they are older?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *Lord, I Pray*. Pray, by name, for those you love. Also remember to thank God that Christ is praying for you.

AFTER YOU PRAY

In many of Paul's letters in the New Testament, he prays for the people to whom he wrote and ministered. And at the end of his letters, he would often ask for those people to pray for him as well. If God has blessed you through this ministry, could I ask you to pray for us as well? Here are a few of the prayers Paul asked people to pray on his behalf: "Pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you" (2 Thessalonians 3:1). "And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should" (Colossians 4:3-4). We know your prayers are heard and answered and we appreciate the time you spend in prayer for us.

LORD, I PRAY
FOR THOSE I LOVE.

Day 11

MY LANA

One day I read a verse in the Bible that said, “May He give you the desire of your heart...” (Psalm 20:4). Immediately, I knew what my desire was: to marry Lana.

As odd as it seems to me now, this wasn’t always my desire. I had dated Lana in college, and we loved each other enough, but I wasn’t ready to consider marriage. We moved to different cities and eventually stopped dating.

We still talked from time to time and one day she told me she wasn’t really happy in her job. I said I’d pray for her that week. As I prayed, I also sensed that it wasn’t her job so much as the fact that God really wanted her to have a husband. So I began to pray that God would send her a husband.

You know the rest! Over the next three months, God put in my heart a love for her like I’ve never known for anyone else, before or since. I didn’t even tell her what was happening to me! At the end of three months of

praying, the desire in my heart was so strong that I called her to tell her about it. It turns out that when I called, she had just decided to quit her job, but wasn't sure what to do next. I told her I had an idea!

It was then that I read the verse from Psalm 20. I pleaded with God that He would have her say "Yes!" for she was the desire of my heart. Looking back, I realized that God not only gave me the desire of my heart, but He was the One who put that desire in my heart in the first place.

I've heard this described like a dad who buys his son a blue bicycle for Christmas then hides it in the garage. The dad then spends the next few months showing his son blue bicycles in the stores. By the time the son asks for a blue bicycle for Christmas, the dad is happy to oblige!

I want to encourage you to ask God to fill your heart with His desires so that they may become your desires as well. The Bible says, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4).

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I pray for those who have been calling out to You for the desires of their hearts. I pray You would put Your desires in their hearts so that their thoughts and prayers will line up with Yours. God, I ask, too, that You would strengthen those who have been waiting for a long time for You to answer their prayers. Let them know that Your promises are true and that You will indeed give them the desires of their hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed” (Psalm 20:4).

- *Read Psalm 37:1-9.* What does God want us to do while we wait for the desires of our heart?
- *Read Luke 22:42-43.* Who came to strengthen Jesus when He submitted His will to God's?
- *Read Isaiah 40:29-31.* What will God do for those who hope in Him?

My Lana

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *My Lana*. Ask Him to fill your heart with His desires.

AFTER YOU PRAY

If God doesn't give you what you ask for, I believe He has something better in mind. Back in college, Lana sensed that one day we would get married. When we broke up, she was surprised, but felt that if I wasn't the one, God must have someone better in mind for her. During our time apart, I committed my life to Christ. When we got back together, guess what? She got someone better than the Eric she knew! If God would give up His Son for you, you can be sure He wouldn't withhold anything from you unless He had something better in mind. Continue to trust Him. This is one Father who really does know best.

LORD, I PRAY YOU WOULD FILL
MY HEART WITH YOUR DESIRES.

BLESSED ARE YOU

I have sometimes wondered if God has a unique purpose for my life, a special role for me to play in His world. Last Christmas I saw the answer in the pages of the Bible as I read about Mary when she was chosen to give birth to Jesus.

In God's great plan for the world, He needed a woman to carry His son in her womb. He chose Mary. Her cousin Elizabeth heard the news and exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear" (Luke 1:42)! She was blessed! She had a unique role to fill in God's plan, that of giving birth to the long-awaited Savior.

I began to think about people in the Bible who were called by God for other purposes. Even though God is all-powerful, He has chosen to work through us as His fellow-workers (1 Corinthians 3:6-9).

God needed Moses to lead the slaves out of Egypt (Exodus 3:10). He needed Paul to share Christ with the Gentiles (Acts 13:46).

He needed Esther to marry a king to save the Jews (Esther 4:14). He needed Elijah to speak prophetic words to influence the course of history. Yet listen to what the Bible says about Elijah: “Elijah was a man just like us” (James 5:17).

All the people in the Bible were men and women just like us. And God has created each of us for a unique purpose as well. We really are special! Hallelujah! We’re not cookie-cutter men and women made out of gingerbread. Our fingerprints are unique, our voices are unique, our eyes are unique. And God’s plans for us are unique.

Paul reminds us that we all have a role to play, just like a body needs various parts to function well. Some of us are eyes, some are ears, and some are hands or feet. “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27).

I believe God would say to each one of us, “Blessed are you!” “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11). Let God’s unique plans for you sink deep into your soul.

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I pray for those who wonder if they have a special role to play in Your plan. I pray You would let them know that You do, and that You would show them what that role is. I pray You would also fully equip them to carry out the plans You have for them. In Jesus' name, Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“In a loud voice she exclaimed: ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear’” (Luke 1:42)!

- *Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.* Do the parts of the body have unique roles to play?
- *Read Romans 12:6-8.* What are we to do with the gifts God has given us?
- *Read Esther 4:13-14.* Could God have put you into your present position for a unique purpose?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *Blessed Are You*. Ask God

to show you how special you are to Him, and to show you your unique role in His plan.

AFTER YOU PRAY

I also believe that God will give us a sense of fulfillment in our unique calling in a way that we won't envy the calling of others. Mary was obviously overjoyed to carry the Son of God in her womb, but I don't think most women would want to trade places with her. There were special demands on her life because of her calling: everything from riding a donkey in her ninth month of pregnancy to watching her son's execution on a cross. God not only called her for that role, but He equipped her uniquely for that role – just like God is calling you and equipping you for yours.

LORD, I BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE
A UNIQUE PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE!

I'VE SEEN THE SUN

Not long ago, our family went through a time of transition. While we knew we were following Christ, we were definitely walking by faith and not by sight. All we could see was Christ leading us forward.

Then one morning, I saw the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. It was actually the sun shining through the window as I read my Bible. As the sun lit up the room, I felt God was telling me that a new day was coming; a day when we would clearly see just where He had brought us.

I began to write a song, "I've Seen the Sun! I've Seen the Sun!" And as I sang, I realized why I was so excited. It wasn't just the fact that the light had broken through. It was the fact that I could now begin to see with my eyes what I had believed in my heart. My sight had finally caught up to my faith.

As I praised God with this song, I raised my voice higher and higher and out came a

new refrain: "I'VE SEEN THE SON! I KNOW HIS NAME! HE DIED FOR ME! AND THEN HE ROSE AGAIN! I'VE SEEN THE SON!"

There will be a day when we will see Jesus face to face! (1 Corinthians 13:12, 1 John 3:2). On that day we'll be able to see with our eyes what we have believed in our hearts for so long. We'll be able to say, "He *is* real. He *is* alive. He *really does* care about us. He *really did* come back for us so we could be with Him forever."

John says that we can *know* that we have eternal life if we believe in Christ: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). Faith is no obscure adventure. It is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1).

One day our faith and our sight will be the very same thing. What an awesome day that will be! Until then, hold onto your faith – it's worth far more than gold (1 Peter 1:7).

LET ME PRAY FOR YOU

Lord, I pray for those who need to renew their faith in You today. I pray You would implant a seed of faith deep in their heart so they will never waver again. I pray they would know that You are real, You are alive, and that You really will come back again for them so they can be with You forever! In Jesus' name, Amen.

TAKE TIME IN HIS WORD

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13).

- *Read 2 Corinthians 4:18.* On what should we fix our eyes?
- *Read 1 Peter 1:7-9.* What is the goal of our faith?
- *Read 1 John 3:2.* Although we don't know everything about the future, what do we know?

TAKE TIME IN PRAYER

Listen to the song *I've Seen The Sun*. Ask

God to renew your faith. Let Him know you believe that one day you'll see the Son, too!

AFTER YOU PRAY

Just as the sun in the sky is constant and unchanging from day to day, so is the Son of God. He's always there, whether you see Him or not, whether it's cold or hot. It doesn't matter how many clouds may darken the sky. That doesn't change the fact that the sun is still there. If the sun weren't there, you can be sure we'd be flung out of orbit and die instantly. In the same way, Jesus is always there, always strong, always steady, always holding us tight – whether we see Him or not. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

LORD, I LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY
WHEN I WILL SEE YOU FACE TO FACE!

JUST THE BEGINNING

I hope you've enjoyed these two weeks with God. I'm sure He's enjoyed these two weeks with you.

Although today is the last day of this devotional, it's just the beginning of your time with God. In fact, this whole life is just the beginning of your time with God. The last line of *Amazing Grace* says it well: "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun" (John Newton, 1725-1807).

These past two weeks were to whet your appetite for more of what God has in store for you. He has so much He wants to do in and through your life that you won't want to miss a day with Him from now on. As Jesus said, "I am the vine and you are the branches... apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Stay close to the vine every day. Draw your life from His life, your strength from His

strength. Ask Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit from head to toe until you overflow. Don't let a day go by without coming to Him – for His wisdom, for His comfort, for His strength and for His love.

The best way I've found to stay close to God is to stay in the Bible. Go ahead and read the whole thing from cover to cover – then read it again and again and again. There's not a better Book in the world you could spend your time reading. And God promises that when we seek Him, we will find Him, even though He is not far from each one of us (Acts 17:27, Proverbs 8:17).

Let me close our time in prayer.

Lord, I pray that You would bless those who have spent these two weeks with You. I pray that You would draw them to want to spend time with You each day from now on. I pray that You would continue to speak to them and show them the plans You have for their lives. And finally, Lord, I pray that You would fill them with Your peace, Your love, and Your unending joy. In Jesus' name, Amen.

THERE'S MORE!

If you like this music and devotional, I'd also like to invite you to join me at *The Ranch* at www.theranch.org. It's a spiritual retreat center on the Internet where you can unwind and spend some more time with God. Join me anytime you need a boost in your faith, and invite your friends, too!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Described by *USA Today* as “a new breed of evangelist,” Eric Elder is an ordained pastor, a contemporary pianist, and the creator of *The Ranch*, a faith-boosting website that attracts thousands of visitors each month at TheRanch.org.

Eric is also an inspirational writer, speaker and performer, having written about God for publications like Billy Graham’s *Decision Magazine*, and having played piano at national conferences like the *Exodus International Freedom Conference*.

By combining the his love for God and his love for the piano into this heartfelt CD and Devotional, Eric has been able to touch the hearts and minds of many. Musicians and non-musicians alike will appreciate his simple, yet rich compositions, and Christians and non-Christians alike will appreciate his practical insights into the issues we all face.

To listen to, download or order more inspiring resources, please visit:

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