

ONE VOICE – ONE PURPOSE
Devotionals for International
Women's Day 2025

Day 1

ONE VOICE – ONE PURPOSE

Question for Reflection:

What was your purpose when you were baptized into Christ? Are you able to recall it?

Romans 15: 5-6 (ESV)

⁵May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This passage states that the objective of our lives is to glorify God with one voice. To me, reflecting on Isaiah 43:7, to

glorify God means to exalt him via praise or worship. God is magnificent. He is fantastic and wonderful. He is particularly great in both character and conduct. The natural world all around us testifies to it. When we glorify Him, we recognize His magnificence and splendor. We applaud him who is worthy.

Paul says here that God is the God of endurance and encouragement. He is the one who gives us the ability to persevere and he gives us encouragement. We became disciples because God gave us the faith to do so. God gave us the heart to love him and serve his people. God created us to be who we are and what we do as disciples.

If we are not careful, even Christians can end up doing godly things to seek their own

glory instead of glorifying God. Let me share an instance from my own life where I was seeking my own glory: I was going to be awarded a certificate of completion of my training for full-time ministry on stage at a conference. Everyone at the conference applauded a brother for his evangelistic skills and the number of people he baptized. The Holy Spirit convicted me of my envious thoughts at that point because I was feeling that no one is recognizing my service, while they are lifting someone else up.

God impacts people's lives for his glory and uses that brother and me for a purpose. I came to see how foolish it was of me to pursue fame for myself. I thank God for helping me to recognize my sin of seeking glory for myself. I had to pray and ask

God for forgiveness of my sins before I could get my certification.

Sisters, in order to honor God with one voice, we must have one mind. Let's not let our differences, fears, and transgressions keep us from coming together to exalt God.

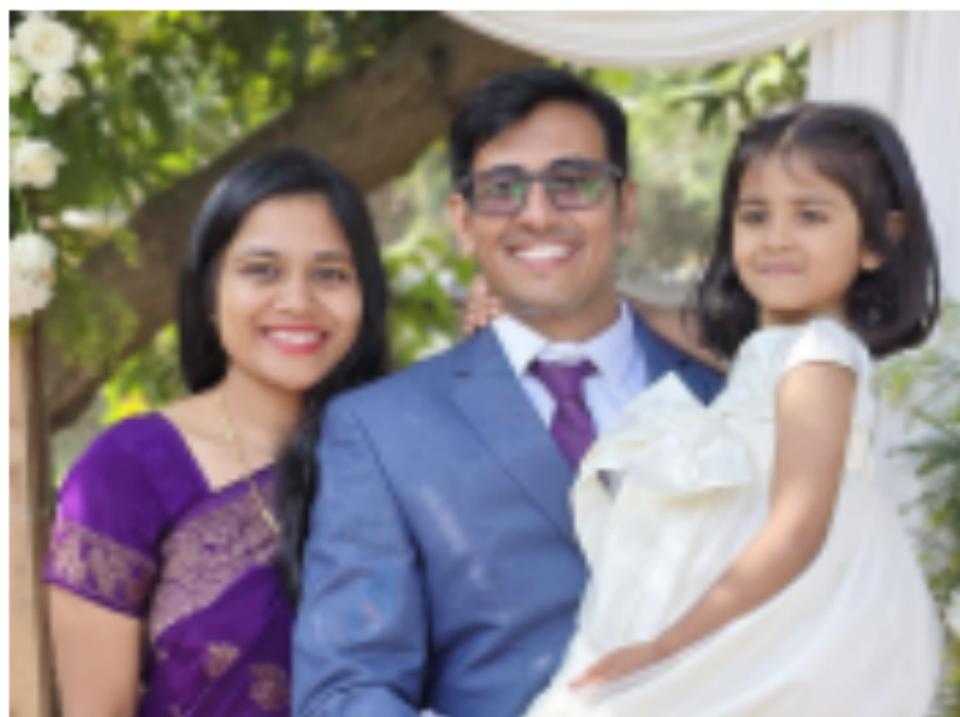
Let us live our lives that reflect God's glory. Let us give our praise and glory to the only one who is worthy, for we will laud him all the time in heaven. Let us prepare for it.

For further reflection:

1. Call to mind a blessing which you greatly appreciate. Take time today to glorify God for this.
2. Are there any circumstances – regarding this blessing or

others — in which you take credit for yourself when God is the one who deserves the credit?

3. Consider: how might we glorify God even more, through the way we think, serve and interact with others?



**By Pavithra S. G., Bangalore,
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Day 2

ONE VOICE – ONE ATTITUDE

Theme:

As God gives us endurance, he can also give us a good attitude towards one another in order to accept one another.

Romans 15:5-7

*5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, 6 so that with **one mind and one voice** you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*

1. Endurance

This passage talks about having the same attitude of mind towards each other that Christ Jesus had. I recall that I once

heard that an unbeliever read the story of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. As he pondered on it, he came up with the following expression: **“There is a Man who not only suffered, but who knew how to use His suffering.”**

“Hypomonē” (<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5281/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>) is the Greek word used to describe the quality of endurance, particularly in the face of trials which are connected to patience.

The word *“hypomonē”* here indicates that endurance should be active, not passive. It calls to mind an image of someone who is under a terrific load, and it indicates that as you are bearing that terrific load, you must exercise your energy in a way so as to win people for Christ, in other words, in such a way so

that others see Christ in the way you are enduring. Your endurance is an active witness for Christ. There should be no passive endurance in the Christian life.

As I understand it, **endurance** is the ability to continue doing something painful or difficult for a long period of time without complaining.

I would like to share with you about my first pregnancy in 2003. From day one of testing positive for pregnancy, I had severe vomiting, a condition called hyperemesis gravidarum. My primary nourishment became lime soda. I was hospitalised several times due to dehydration and urinary tract infections.

Generally, this condition subsides after three months and

I thought I would get relief from this, but it continued during my whole pregnancy. At the seventh month I started vomiting blood. I had to undergo an endoscopy at that time which felt unbearable for me. After they found out I had a slight tear in the esophagus I was advised to use a backrest for sleeping from that point onwards. Overall, I lost seven kilograms (about fifteen and a half pounds) during pregnancy and also underwent a c-section when I reached full term.

Even though it was a very challenging situation with my health, one thing that helped me to endure all this pain and these struggles was the thought of seeing and holding the baby whose movements I could see during the ultrasound tests.



This endurance brought me and the child together and there was much joy.

Now let me take your attention back to the second theme of this passage:

2. A good attitude towards each other, to accept one another

The Roman church was a diverse community. It was made up of

Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free people, rich and poor, strong and weak in faith. So they had difficulty accepting one another.

Now, how did Christ receive you? Were you absolutely the ideal, perfect person? Did He say, "Go out and clean up your act and then I will accept you?" No, He received us with all our imperfections. Isn't it amazing how horrible sins look when someone else is committing them? How blind we are to our own faults.

I appreciate God's patience with me. I am thankful for that. However, I am not so patient with Him. I appreciate other people's patience with me, but I am not always so patient with them.

The Scriptures say, "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). As God is the

God of endurance and consolation, so are we to be for each other. We are to be comforting and patient with one another.

It is all a matter of love. If I would love you as I love myself, then I wouldn't be seeing and picking at all the little flaws in you. I would receive you even as Christ has received me.

Sometimes we say, "Conform to my standards, live as I want you to, and then I will accept you as my friend and my associate." But that is not how we are to receive each other. We are to receive each other even with our differences. And that love that we have in Christ should be greater than any differences between us; it should be the unifying power within the body of Christ.

In the book of Romans, Paul urged people to live in harmony and avoid pride.

He emphasized the importance of associating with people of all social positions, including those of low status, and warned against using relationships for selfish gain. Drawing from Jesus' teachings, Paul advocated treating everyone with respect, regardless of race, disability, age, gender, or social class, and stressed that no one should ever be seen as inferior.

I want to share a real story of endurance of my brother-in-law Pradeep, a member of the Border Security Force Personnel.

His team serves on the Line Of Control border, named Kupuwara district, with a geographical area of 2300 kilometers. Within this district is an area which is

100% very high alert, meaning that they are constantly vulnerable to an attack from the neighboring country.

The temperature here is minus ten to minus fifteen degrees Celsius (between fourteen degrees Fahrenheit down to five degrees Fahrenheit) with snowfall during several months. From August they start loading food and other provisions up to the border post which is 1500 meters above sea level.

Before they climb to the camp they have to undergo a medical check-up in the base camp for six days. Only if they are medically fit they can go up to that post, as the oxygen level is very low on top, and every day they are given a tablet to help them adjust to the altitude.



Once you reach the border post in October, you can come down only in April or May. Traveling from one post to a neighboring post takes one week. They walk throughout the night fully equipped, and sleep and rest during the day. Their boots cost around 1.5 lakh rupees (150,000 rupees or about \$1700 USD) to

protect their feet from frostbite. They wear bulletproof jackets and carry 100 bullets, two grenades, a rifle and a walkie-talkie set.

They travel with a donkey, which carries other things like their bed, their food, etc. They can't carry water along with them because of the low temperature. Ice must be melted for drinking water. Their food is only tinned and canned meat, dried fish, dried fruit, vegetables and chocolates. They use a kerosene stove to heat up the tinned food. They fire 30 to 60 rounds of ammunition through the nights to let the enemy know that they are present and on alert.

They have no connection with their families for six months as their communication is only via satellite phones. They can't use mobile phones.

Because of his sacrifice and of his several friends, we can live in peace in this country. My brother-in-law was saying, "if we start thinking about our family and kids or parents, we cannot work on that terrain." The commanders have to keep encouraging the *jawans* (the local term for these types of soldiers in India) so that they don't get discouraged.

Pradeep is using his suffering to protect India and to help us to live in harmony with another country. Jesus died for us. He endured and suffered so that today we can live in peace and harmony,

How are we setting an example in enduring hardships and having a good attitude in relationships today?

Let us learn to follow in Jesus' footsteps with one voice and one attitude.

For further reflection:

- Let's consider in what ways we've endured to bring unity and peace to our relationships with others. Do you welcome conversation with people who, in your estimation, are unattractive, non-prestigious people?
- Are you willing to befriend newcomers and people you perceive to have a lower status than you? Or do you relate only to those who will help you get ahead?
- Let's pray this week for the attitude of acceptance in relationships where that is difficult for us.



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Lucy and Christy have two sons in college, Jonathan and Joshua.

Day 3

ONE VOICE, ONE LOVE

Question for reflection:

Some of us carry debt. We look forward to the day when we will pay it off and be debt-free. How would you feel if you one day woke up and were told that the interest rate on your debt had increased so much that you will never in your lifetime ever be debt-free?

Romans 13:8 (NIV)

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

In answer to the question above, I think of words like despair, overwhelmed, devastated, depressed. Imagine now, that your creditor comes to you and says, "It's true, you will

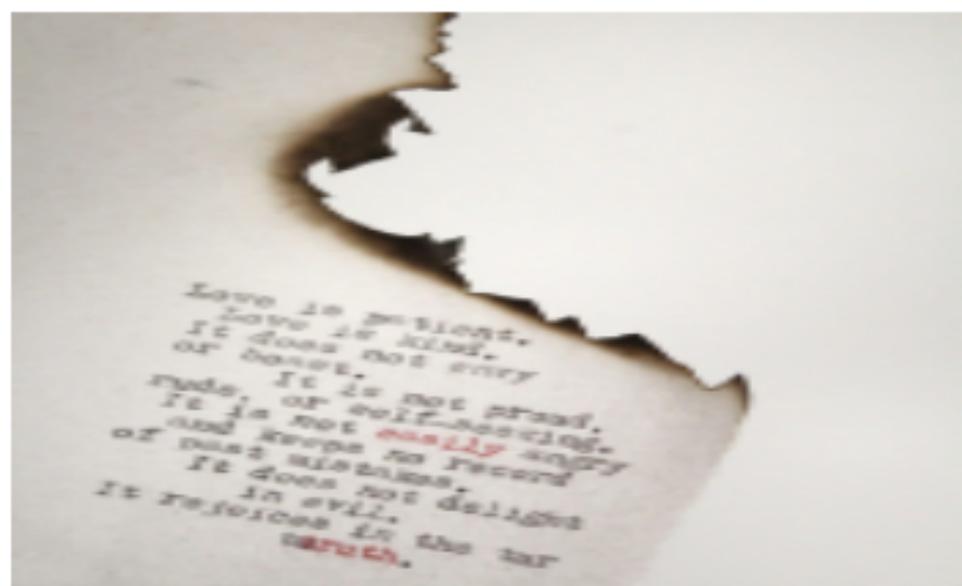
be in debt for the rest of your life. But don't worry. I will provide everything you need so that you will be able to pay your debt, and you'll have a better quality of life for it!"

We are bound to love, which means this love does not originate from us; it belongs purely to God. When He created us, He showed us pure love. This means we are born in debt—a debt of love. There is an expectation that we must love others.)

Why is love for others an obligation? We are permanently in debt to Christ for the abundant love and grace He has poured out on us. The only way we can begin to repay this debt is by extending the same kind of lavish love and grace to others. Because Christ's love is infinitely greater than ours, we

will always have the obligation to continue repaying that love to others as best we can.

This is the first fundamental truth taught here: Love is not merely an emotion we can choose to express or withhold. It is not based on how lovable or good we perceive someone to be. We are commanded to love—without discrimination, regardless of whether someone is beautiful or ugly, good or bad.



This is a hard teaching—who can accept it? Yet, every person is our

creditor in this debt of love. If we do not love them, we are not giving them what is due. Furthermore, this debt of love is never fully paid. No matter how much love we give, the obligation remains. We may grow weary of loving, especially when the recipient seems unworthy, and we may even feel that we have fulfilled our duty. But if we take Paul's words to heart, we will develop greater patience and not be so quick to shut our hearts against those who seem ungrateful.

Fulfilling the Law

Is it possible to clear all our debts? Paul teaches that love fulfills the law. Some Jewish teachers also saw love for one's neighbor as fulfilling the law (Matthew 22:39-40) but Paul's ultimate teacher was Jesus Himself.

Paul highlights that love is the key to obeying all other commandments.

1. Love is the essential ingredient that must accompany obedience to the commandments. We must still obey them, but they cannot truly be followed without a loving spirit.
2. Love for others replaces the need for other commandments because when we truly love, we automatically fulfill what the law requires. As Paul states in verse 10, "*Love does no harm to a neighbor.*" If we genuinely love others, we will not murder, commit adultery, steal, or covet.

Throughout the Bible, the *one voice* that echoes repeatedly is the *one love* that God commands us to hold onto. The world

teaches love in a conditional and self-serving way—love based on expectations, rules, and personal benefits. We experience love from parents, spouses, children, friends, and society, but often, it comes with conditions. We may wear a mask of love that we change depending on the situation and the people involved.

Many times, we claim to love God. We say, *“I serve God because I love Him. I read my Bible and pray. I am committed to attending all my church’s meetings because I love God.”* Yet, at the same time, we may carry resentment toward certain people. We avoid speaking to them, hold grudges, judge them based on their actions, and condemn them for their behavior. There are people we have rejected because we are not comfortable being around them.

But how can we say we love God if we struggle to love our brothers and sisters? As **1 John 4:20** says, *“Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.”*

That is a shocking truth! If someone tells us, *“You don’t love God,”* we would struggle to accept it. Yet, by failing to love others, that is exactly what we are doing.

Personal sharing

I would like to share an experience from when I was an intern in the ministry. There was a sister who mentored me who always questioned what I was doing. Her constant inquiries made me feel controlled, and I suppressed many feelings about her being judgmental and

incapable of understanding me. As a result, I was not open with her. One day, overwhelmed with emotion, I finally expressed my frustration to her.

To my surprise, she responded with kindness and sought to understand me. I had already judged her in my mind, believing she would never forgive me or love me after what I had said. But one day, she invited me to her home and asked me to share my feelings openly. She had already prepared to wash my feet.

Even after I spoke words against her, she washed my feet with humility. I was in tears. She did not try to defend herself—she simply showed me the love of Christ. That moment deeply moved me. I realized that we do not need to prove who is right; we just need to do what is

right—showing the love of Christ. That day, we became not just mentor and mentee but true friends.

For further reflection:

1. Do you hear the *one voice* that calls us to love one another? Are you someone who takes the initiative to show Christ's love?
2. When you see someone, do you recognize the debt of love you owe them?
3. Is there someone in your life you are still holding back from loving? Would you be willing to reach out to them today with the attitude of Christ?
4. If God were to examine whether you are repaying the debt of love, what would He say about you?



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Josephine, 36, became a disciple in 2007. In 2013 she joined the school of missions. She married Thiyagu in 2013. Together they led a church in Salem, India, for five years from 2017-2022. Recently they have been leading the church in Trichy, India. They have two sons, Jaden Timothy who is four and Theo who is one year old.

Day 4

ONE VOICE, ONE IDENTITY

Question for reflection:

What is a quality about yourself that you have believed about the way that God sees you? You can choose any point during your journey with God.

Romans 8:16-17 NIV

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (Emphasis added.)

Identity is something that shapes a person's life. It has the power to build up or to destroy. A positive identity is something

that everyone seeks or desires. All of us are in a quest for that. Everything we do contributes to making an identity for ourselves. But the Bible says we already have an identity: "we are God's children." The church is mentioned as the family of God (Ephesians 2:19-21).

Paul says that we are God's children and co-heirs with Christ. You have a new identity now. Your past, your failures, your old life doesn't define you. We are His daughters, and we share our inheritance with our big brother Jesus. Our life is now in God, and we are treated equally by God.

Can you imagine this one big happy family, created by God, where we have a father who is willing to love and accept whoever comes to him as his own as a son or daughter? Can

you imagine a father who's willing to share all his rights with us without any jealousy or judgement or condemnation! To comprehend this is very difficult as it's exactly the opposite of what we experience in the world.

We may never see or experience this in the World but in God's family, everything is possible. God gave us this identity by His grace which is beyond measure. We cannot earn it no matter what, but it is a gift that's given to everyone freely.

We might've gone through a great deal of pain or troubles or trauma or worries that have weighed us down and kept us from embracing God. In our identity as His daughters, we can be freer with Him than we ever could be with our earthly father. Our brokenness can often make us feel worthless. We

might have an identity crisis. We can be stuck somewhere in the darkness and feel helpless and try to fix our broken identity on our own.



I was stuck in my life like that. My past and my trauma defined me. It confused me. High expectations made me lose myself and my identity. I didn't know who I was, and I was trying to be someone that could satisfy myself and others. I was confused. Even after baptism I struggled with it for some time,

until I found my identity in Christ. I finally understood that I am God's daughter and how precious I am to Him (Isaiah 43:1-4). I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14), for His glory. My past doesn't define me, my traumas don't need to rule over me because I am God's daughter now, forever.

Once I embraced this identity, everything changed. I started enjoying the little things in my life. I understood that I'm chosen to be His daughter even when I am unworthy. I share my inheritance with Christ, who has given His life for me without hesitating.

Dear sisters, I want to remind you of this again. You are God's daughter. Don't believe anything else. This is your identity. Hold onto it and make

it a daily practice to meditate on this truth. Embrace God as your loving father. Your past or your brokenness doesn't define you because now you are in Christ.

Let's live like God's daughters every single day and cherish every moment along with God, bringing glory to God. When we live in our identity as God's daughters, we can build the church as God's family.

For further reflection:

1. Is there anything holding me back from owning my identity in Christ? What is it/are they?
2. What are some lies of the devil that I believe which confuse me, not allowing me to live in my identity as God's daughter?

3. How does God celebrate me as His daughter? How can I be grateful for this daughterhood?



BLESSY J T was baptized in 2019 in the church in Trivandrum, India. She has a Masters in English. Currently she serves as a youth mentor in the church in Cochin, India.

Day 5
ONE VOICE, ONE MIND

Question for reflection:

When was the last time you really took a good look at your mind?

Romans 12: 1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

For me, understanding my own mind is one of the most difficult things to do. I need time, space

and a curious heart that is feeling safe at the same time.

If we are dissatisfied with our spontaneous responses to certain situations, and we can notice that we are responding in this same way to similar stimuli over time, then maybe it is a good time for us to pause and reflect on the state of our mind. Many wise people have understood it is good to think about our thoughts, such as King Solomon in Proverbs 4:23 (Be careful how you *think*; your life is shaped by *your thoughts*. GNT: *Good News Translation*).

Most of us must have read or heard about how our thoughts define who we are and that they determine our choices and the pattern of our lives. Cognitive psychologists say every little thought carries an emotional

charge, pulling us away or toward some emotion like anger or joy. So, how we experience life and how we live has a lot to do with our minds. None of us are as objective as we would like to believe about ourselves.

There are always situations and topics that can make us lose perspective and bring out parts of us that we seem to have no control over. There can also be desires and dreams that seem to have an unusually stronghold over us.



The Greek word *anakainôsis* which is translated in Romans 12:2 as *renewing* describes a complete change for the better, a makeover of the mind and soul. (“G342 - anakainôsis - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (nasb95).” Blue Letter Bible. Web. 15 Feb, 2025. <<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g342/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>>.)

So, when Paul is writing about being “transformed by the renewing of your mind,” he is talking about the need to keep changing and growing until God’s will is pleasing to us in such a way that we do not even have to keep denying or pushing ourselves to do His will.

This is a state of mind where what we desire is aligned with what God desires and where we are no longer attracted to the world, its ways and its pride (1

John 2:16) in the same ways we were before.

Since the verse starts with the word "Therefore," and from the message of the previous chapters, it is obvious that this work cannot be done on our own at all. We need to be already saved by God's grace and mercy. We also need to voluntarily offer ourselves to God as a sacrifice that is holy and pleasing.

So, when we understand how powerful God is and how blessed we are with His grace, we will be able to understand His mercy. Without fully appreciating God's mercy we cannot understand and develop a desire to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to the point that we are no longer the same as we were before. This is a lifetime process, and we need to be patient with ourselves,

acknowledging that God is going to do the slow work in us even as we keep offering ourselves to Him.

Then the passage talks about “holy and pleasing,” which means our sacrifice must come from a pure heart that trusts God, as opposed to being preoccupied with our own performance or our own motives. This kind of worship is true and proper and reminds us of John 4:24 where Jesus says we must worship in spirit and in truth.

When we worship, we are entering the presence of God. It is an opportunity for us to examine our minds and hearts in the light of God’s glory.

I know that it is never easy to think about our thoughts. I wonder, if I were to label my thoughts, how would I do that?

To identify the levels of thoughts in my mind that conform to the pattern of the world, I must spend enough time with God in such a way that I am not only asking and talking but also contemplating and listening.

Verse two in this passage says, "do not conform to the pattern of this world." We conform to the world when we desire the world more than we desire God.

Patterns are persistent habits and habits are hard to break. Patterns are repetitive and keep coming naturally; one does not have to put in much effort. But much effort and intentional planning will be required to break worldly ways of thinking. The verse goes on to say that we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds. For the mind to be renewed what will it

take? How will we gain the mind of Christ?

We need to be intentional and prayerful about our mind.

An important process for renewing my mind or to have a makeover of my mind is to learn how to identify my current ways of thinking.

Do I assess my thoughts — especially when I am feeling negative emotions? Another way to check is to find Scriptures against or for my thoughts. If there are no Scriptures which support my thoughts and motivations then it is good to change my thought and replace it with biblical conviction. This also requires us to be growing in our knowledge of the Bible. A deeper way to assess our thoughts is to examine our motives and goals. What do I

want to achieve in a particular situation? If the motive is selfish, for example, to glorify myself or to get my way; or if the motive is malicious, for example, to dishonor someone, or to harm someone, then I should simply confess.

Confessing shows that I agree my motives come from wrong thinking, hurtful to myself and to God, and I can choose to change my mind. Sometimes we can seem to be doing the right thing outwardly but our minds are worldly and so we do not experience life to the full.

Romans 8:6

The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

John Ortberg writes in his book, *God is Closer Than You Think*, "Our goal is to make our minds the

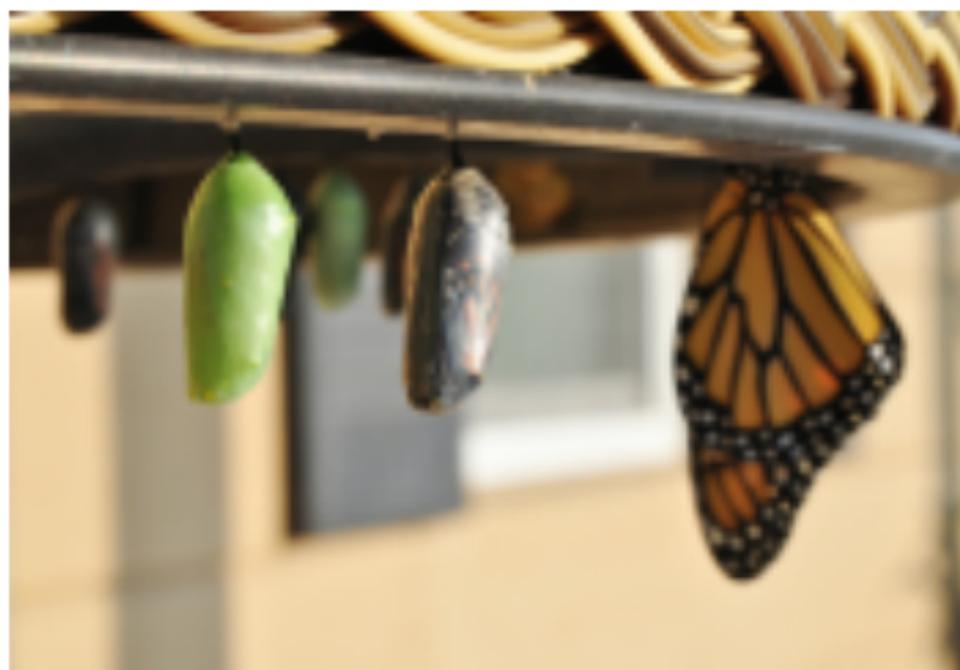
dwelling place of God where every distorted belief and every destructive feeling and every misguided intention is being identified and removed.

You will know your mind is increasingly set on God when the moods that dominate your inner life are love joy, and peace — the three primary components of the Holy Spirit.” He also writes, “God is never more than a thought away.”

In recent times one thing that has really helped me is praying through some lines of a prayer called *The Litany of Humility*. It is included at the end of this devotional. Whenever I struggle with pride or envy, a line from the prayer (*may others be esteemed more than I*) is something I just utter to God silently. Somehow my heart shifts and my mind feels at ease.

The other thing that has helped me immensely is to pray for God to help me so that my thoughts can be noble and lovely and pure and excellent and praiseworthy.

Paul says we will be transformed by the renewing of our mind. What does it really mean to be transformed?



Transformed means I am no longer the same person; the old self is gone and the new has come. If I were to be

transformed, I would be a totally different person. My responses would be different. My reactions would be godly. My relationships would be deep and fulfilling. My habits would become less self-focused. My attachments to the things of the world would decrease and my desire for storing up treasures in heaven would increase. My life would revolve less around me and more around Christ and somehow paradoxically my life would become more meaningful and purposeful.

The outcome of a transformed life in Christ will be like someone who is able to reflect Christ in such a way that their light will shine so brightly that others will see their good deeds and praise God.

How wonderful it will be if all Christians are being

transformed even as we all aim for the mind of Christ. How transformative will that be for the world around us, to see this transformation in the behaviour of the church?

Some questions to consider:

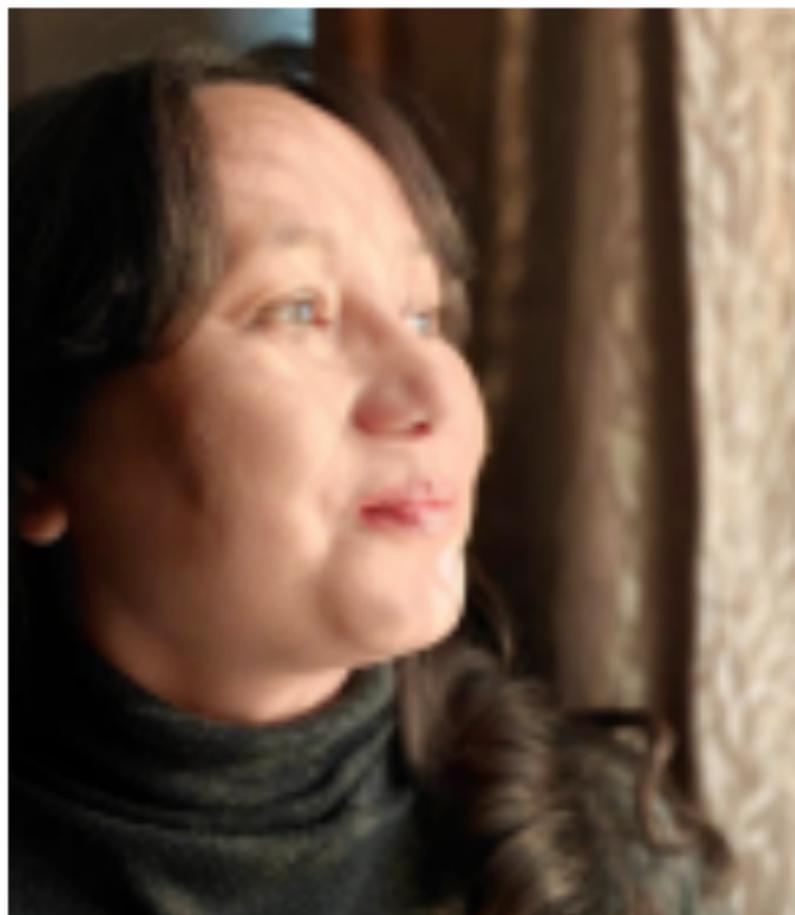
- Do I offer myself to God daily as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to Him? What will it take to do so?
- Do I make an intentional effort to include God in all my choices and decisions, especially when I am feeling negative emotions?
- How attached am I to the world, its glitter and glamour, its biases and values, its philosophies, and traditions?

Some practices to consider:

- Everyday take a few minutes to just be still before God in silence and solitude.
- Memorize scriptures/prayers/psalms and meditate on them even as you go through the day.
- Take a moment to pause and reflect on the day in the presence of God before you lie down to sleep.

Sources:

- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/living-forward/202009/how-your-thinking-creates-your-reality>
- <https://healingheartofjesus.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Litany-of-Humility-PDF.pdf>



Author bio

Toli Baruah became a disciple in 1997 on Delhi University campus, where she completed her Master's degree in English Literature. She has been married to her husband, Emmanuel, for 22 years and they are blessed with two daughters: Deborah and Lydia. Toli has been in the ministry for more than 20 years. She and Emmanuel currently lead the church in New Delhi. She enjoys reading, being with babies, baking from time to time, and cooking some favourite meals.

The Litany of Humility

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, *Hear me.*

From the desire of being esteemed, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being loved, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being extolled, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being honored, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being praised, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being preferred to others, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being consulted, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being approved, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being humiliated, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being despised, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of suffering rebukes, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being
calumniated, *Deliver me,
Jesus.*

From the fear of being
forgotten, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being
ridiculed, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being
wronged, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being
suspected, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

That others may be loved more
than I, *Jesus, grant me the
grace to desire it.*

That others may be esteemed
more than I, *Jesus, grant me
the grace to desire it.*

That, in the opinion of the
world, others may increase
and I may decrease, *Jesus,
grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may be chosen and
I set aside, *Jesus, grant me
the grace to desire it.*

That others may be praised
and I unnoticed, *Jesus, grant
me the grace to desire it.*

That others may be preferred to me in everything, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*
That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

The Litany of Humility is attributed to Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val (1865-1930), who was Secretary of State to Pope Saint Pius X.

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Day 6
ONE VOICE - ONE HOPE

Question for Reflection:

Have you ever gone through a situation in your life where you felt you were at the end of hope, with nothing more left to do, nowhere more to go, and everything seemed so bleak and hopeless, that you could feel a sinking darkness in your heart?

Romans 15:4

“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.”

The Scriptures in the Bible record the events that happened in the past, with the intention of teaching us endurance for our

present struggles and giving us hope and encouragement.

1 Samuel 1:1-28

Here we recall the story of an ordinary housewife, Hannah, who lived in Israel 3000 years back. Her husband Elkanah probably married his second wife Peninnah because, though he dearly loved Hannah, she could have no children for him. It was important in those days for a man to have sons to carry forward his lineage, to keep the family legacy, and ensure his identity and social status.

Though Peninnah had many children, she was a rival who had no compassion for Hannah. Things were pretty bleak for Hannah.

Year after year she wept out of bitterness of soul, in pain,

feeling cursed, hopeless that she could ever have children! Every time she watched Penninah's children, and heard her rival's insults being rubbed in like salt into a wound, "home" would have become equivalent to hell's torment and torture for her!

In verses 9-18, we see Hannah pouring out her soul to the Lord at the temple, and after that prayer of faith and dedication, her face was no longer downcast.

God heard her prayer, and blessed her with an amazing son Samuel, who would become Israel's first prophet and last judge!

Hannah's story gave me a lot of hope and transformed my attitude of weeping and crying bitterly to God about my son who

left the church and went through mental illness. Though he is not completely healed from his condition, my face is no longer downcast as I learned to trust God, His promises, and His journey with my son. I look forward to the future; I am certain that God has great plans for him. I don't need to know or monitor any of the details involved. I had to let go of my desire to be in control and hand over control to Him, and understand that He is enough for me.

The Scripture that I hold on to is **Philippians 4: 4-7:**

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace

of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

In Christ, I receive the peace that passes understanding and the hope that never goes away.

1 Peter 1: 3-9

*3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into **a living hope** through **the resurrection of Jesus Christ** from the dead, **4and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.** This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, **5who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.** **6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer***

grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the ***salvation of your souls. (emphasis added)***

We have been provided with a living hope of resurrection, an imperishable inheritance, and salvation of our souls through the grace of Jesus. Our grief and trials are meant to refine our faith better than the fire that refines gold which still perishes.



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For further reflection:

1. Read **Romans 5:1-5**

- Suffering produces perseverance, character and hope. What character issue are you personally struggling with, and find it difficult to grow in?
- Pray and share with someone how you can change your perspective.

2. Read **2Corinthians 2:1-11.**

- What was Paul going through?

- How did he deal with the one who grieved him and others?
- What are some difficult relationship issues you currently face, maybe with your husband, children, in-laws, leaders, employers, employees, or others?
- Do you believe God can bring you healing if you persevere in and obey His word? Make a decision to pray about this

3. Read **Romans 15:13, Psalms 119:43-56.**

- Make a list of the promises of God that you can trust in and hold onto so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

For further meditation:

Hebrews 10:32-39, Hebrews 12:4-11, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Isaiah 40: 29-31, Isaiah 46:3-4.



Beena Philip, currently serving as a Women's Ministry Leader at Kottayam Church, Kerala, India. I became a disciple in 1994, entered the full-time ministry, and got married in 1995 to Shaijus Philip. We have been on mission teams and served in different places, mainly in Bangalore, India. We have three children. Our oldest is working in Chennai, our second one is undergoing training for serving in an NGO, and our youngest is doing her 10th grade year in school.

ONE VOICE – ONE PURPOSE

Devotionals for
International Women's Day 2025

Day 7
ONE VOICE – ONE MISSION

Question for reflection:

What is the first thing you would like to do when you wake up in the morning?



Romans 15:14-16 (NIV)

I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another. Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

1. Encourage

In verse 14, Paul is encouraging the believers. He says he is convinced that they are:

- a) full of goodness
- b) filled with knowledge and

c) competent to instruct one another.

When you look at the disciples that you minister to, do you feel they are full of goodness, knowledge and able to instruct each other?

Very often, I don't feel that way. I feel that every problem can only be solved by me and that I have all the answers. I, however, need to trust that they are competent to instruct one another as the Scripture declares.

When I checked the meaning of instruct, it says 'to teach someone a subject or a skill, to tell or to order someone to do something.' For those of us who are ministers, let's focus on teaching, advising, or requesting gently.

2. Be Bold

Inverse 15 Paul mentions that he is being bold in reminding them again on some points because of the grace God has given him. When you read chapters 12, 13 and 14 you will notice Paul being bold on several topics – for instance: to offer yourself as a living sacrifice; to not think of yourself more highly than you ought; to have a sincere love for each other; to submit to the authorities; to accept those weak in the faith and many, many more points.

The same boldness that Paul has, we need to emulate. Do we remind the disciples on these important points that Paul emphasizes repeatedly or do we let things slide because we want to avoid confrontation?

Being bold means confronting people – in a loving manner. Call

things out as you minister to God's people.

2 Timothy 1:7 says,

"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." NIV

3. The Mission

Ministering can mean to perform a public act of service. Paul was a religious teacher, a Hebrew of Hebrews and he persecuted the disciples of Jesus to the point of approving the killing of Stephen. Once he met Jesus, his mission changed.

His mission earlier was to kill disciples but now his mission was to bring people to the Lord. Having begun as a Jewish rabbi he was now a priest who had to minister to the Gentiles and present them as an acceptable sacrifice to God.



Today our mission is the same as Jesus' mission (Luke 19:10). We also need to present every person we lead to the Lord as a pleasing and acceptable sacrifice. This is an ongoing process.

Romans 15:16 is filled with the language of priesthood. Paul says he serves as a "ministering priest" of Jesus Christ, presenting the gospel as a

“priestly service,” so that Gentile converts would be an acceptable sacrifice to God.

For further reflection:

- As we complete this week of devotionals on the theme of One Voice One Purpose, let us devote ourselves to our purpose of being focused on Jesus' mission.
- Encourage someone every day. Be bold and address issues.
- Am I and the people I minister to, an “offering acceptable to God” or are there some things that need to change? Let's pray to glorify God with our lives, our voices, our purpose as we gather to celebrate International Women's Day 2025!



**By Cheryll Pereira, Mumbai City,
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Cheryll became a disciple in 1987 and has served the church in Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai, India. She and her husband Mark currently lead the East Sector in the Mumbai church.