
A 31-DAY DEVOTIONAL & DISCIPLINE CHALLENGE

Building a Disciplined Life

AUGUST 1 — AUGUST 31, 2026

*"If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you...
But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not
waver... Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they
are unstable in everything they do."*

JAMES 1:5-8 • NLT

ONE PRAYER • A PROVERB A DAY • THREE HABITS THAT SURVIVE

WHY WE'RE DOING THIS

I've been sitting in James chapter 1, and one line won't leave me alone:

"Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do." — James 1:8, NLT

"he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." — James 1:8, NKJV

That's the diagnosis. Not that we're bad people. That we're split. Half in, half out. Wanting the fruit of a disciplined life while feeding the habits of an undisciplined one. James says you can't ask God for wisdom while hedging your bets with the world and expect to receive anything.

So this month is about closing the gap. Not becoming perfect — becoming *single-minded*.

Three things are going to happen over these 31 days:

- 1. We each bring one prayer.** One real question we want God to answer this month. Not a wish list. One thing. Mine is about a godly woman and whether the relationship I'm in carries into the next season of my life. Yours might be about a job, a move, a habit you can't shake, a person you need to forgive. Bring one.
- 2. We read a Proverb a day.** Proverbs has 31 chapters. August has 31 days. That's not a coincidence I'm going to waste. Proverbs is the wisdom book, and James 1:5 says if you lack wisdom, ask — so we ask, and then we go where wisdom actually lives.
- 3. We build three habits that survive the month.** One spiritual, one physical, one relational. Not eight. Three. The graveyard of every discipline challenge is the person who tried to change everything on August 2nd.

By August 31, the goal is simple: **you have an answer to your prayer, and you have the foundation of a disciplined life under you.** Not a finished house. A foundation.

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE YOU BELIEVE ANY OF THIS

Read this part even if — especially if — you'd describe yourself as somewhere between "not religious" and "I don't know."

I'm not going to pretend this is neutral. It's built around Jesus, the readings are scripture, and the daily prayer is real prayer. Hiding that would be a bad way to start a month about not being double-minded.

But here's why the door is genuinely open, and it isn't a technicality.

The word *discipline* comes from the word for *student*. Latin *disciplina* — instruction, teaching — from *discipulus*, meaning pupil, learner. That's the whole original meaning. Discipline was never first about willpower or punishment. It was about being *taught*.

Which means the only entry requirement for a month like this is a willingness to learn something. Not a conclusion. Not a testimony. Not certainty. Just an open hand.

So if you're not sure what you believe, you can still:

- Read a chapter of the oldest practical wisdom literature in the Western world, one a day, and see whether it's true about people
- Carry one real question for 31 days instead of scrolling past it
- Build three habits with people who'll notice if you disappear
- Watch what happens

And if nothing else lands, you'll have spent a month learning something and getting your body, your calendar, and your friendships in better order. That's not a loss.

We'll take the word *discipline* apart slowly over the month — a piece each week — and by August 31 you'll see why this month is called what it's called. Just come as you are. Come all the way in, but come as you are.

HOW IT WORKS

Your Daily 15–20 Minutes

Every day has the same four moves:

READ	The Proverbs chapter matching the date (Aug 7 = Proverbs 7)
ANCHOR	A short passage outside Proverbs that carries the week's theme
ASK	One reflection question — write the answer down, don't just think it
PRAY	Your one prayer, plus the day's prayer focus

Fifteen minutes if you're moving. Twenty if you're honest.

Two translations. Every verse is given in the New Living Translation (NLT) and the New King James Version (NKJV). Read whichever lands — or read both, which is often where the verse actually opens up. NLT says it the way you'd say it. NKJV keeps the weight and the rhythm. Neither is the "real" one.

Your Three Non-Negotiables

Before August 1, pick three. Write them where you'll see them.

- **One spiritual** — the daily reading. This one's fixed for everybody.
- **One physical** — training, food, sleep, sobriety, screens. Pick the one you've been avoiding.

- **One relational** — your pair check-in, a weekly call to family, a men's or women's group, a standing therapy appointment.

Everything else in your life — work, medicine, side projects, friendships — still matters. But these three are the ones you don't negotiate with at 10pm when you're tired. Everything else is bonus.

Your Pair

Everyone gets a partner. **Men with men, women with women.** No exceptions, and not because we're being weird about it — because the honest conversations in a month like this get personal fast, and you'll hold back if you're worried about being perceived.

Your pair is who you text every day. Two lines is enough:

Day 12 done. Trained. Still avoiding the conversation with my dad.

That's it. The point isn't the report. The point is that somebody notices when you go quiet.

THE PRAYER RULE — THIS IS A SACRED PLACE

Your one prayer is yours. You choose who ever sees it.

The default is that you share it with your pair and nobody else. You never have to say it out loud in the group chat. Some of these are going to be about marriages, health, addiction, sin, money, and family — a group chat is not the place, and it doesn't become the place just because we all like each other.

Four rules, and they're not negotiable:

- 1. Nobody has admin access. Including me.** I'm organizing this, and that gives me exactly zero right to know what you're praying about, what you marked on your tracker, or what you told your partner. If you want to tell me, tell me. Otherwise I don't know and I'm not going to ask.
- 2. What's said in a pair stays in the pair.** Not repeated to a spouse, not repeated to a friend "who'd want to pray about it," not brought up in the group as an example. If you need to bring something outside the pair — because someone's in danger, or over their head — you say so *to them first*.
- 3. Nothing gets recorded.** No shared spreadsheet of who's praying for what. No screenshots. Your tracker is paper and it lives at your house. If you use the app, everything you write stays on your own phone — there's no server, no account, and nothing is uploaded.
- 4. Never volunteer someone else's story.** Not their prayer, not their number, not what they confessed on day 26. Yours is yours to tell. Theirs isn't.

If you *want* to share your prayer with the group, share it — some people find that's the whole point. But nobody is owed it, and nobody gets to ask twice.

The only reason anybody ever says the real thing out loud is that they're sure it won't travel. Protect that and this works. Break it once and it's over — not for the person you broke it about, for everybody.

THE RHYTHM

Before August 1 — Setup Week

- [] Say yes. Get in the group.
- [] Get paired (same gender). If you don't have someone, say so and you'll get matched.
- [] Write your **one prayer** on paper — or in the app. Somewhere you'll see it daily.
- [] Pick your **three non-negotiables**.
- [] Print the tracker, or open the app and set yourself up.

Daily

Read, anchor, ask, pray. Mark your tracker. Text your pair. Fifteen to twenty minutes.

Sundays — Group Check-In

Five Sundays in August: **Aug 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**.

Everybody drops three things in the group:

1. **One line** from the week that hit you.
2. **A number** — how many of 7 days did you hit all three non-negotiables? (Just the number. No explaining.)
3. **One ask** — something the group can pray for. Doesn't have to be your one prayer.

Keep it short. A check-in that takes ten minutes to write is a check-in people stop doing by week three.

The Last Two Days — The Decision

Aug 30 (Sun) and **Aug 31 (Mon)** are the close. Aug 31 lands on Proverbs 31 — the wisdom book's final word on character over charm, and a fitting place to land a month of asking.

On Aug 31, everybody writes down two things and sends them to their pair:

1. **The answer.** What did God say to your one prayer? "Yes," "no," "not yet," and "keep walking, I'm not done" are all real answers. So is "nothing yet, and I'm going to keep asking." Write what you actually got, not what sounds good.
2. **The foundation.** Which of your three non-negotiables is going into September, and what's the actual plan for it? Not "keep working out." "*Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 6am, gym on Colorado, with Marcus.*"

WHERE WE TALK

Group: WhatsApp. It works on iPhone and Android, threads don't get lost, and nobody's left out of a green-bubble situation.

Pairs: However you already text each other. iMessage, WhatsApp, whatever's already open on your phone. Do not add friction here — the pair check-in has to be the easiest thing you do all day or it dies first.

Daily reading: Either this guide or the app — same content, same 31 days. The app shows you one day at a time, which most people find easier than opening a book. Everything you write in it stays on your own phone.

GROUND RULES

1. **You will miss days.** *"The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again"* (Proverbs 24:16, NLT). The metric that matters isn't your streak. It's how fast you come back. Miss a day, start the next day. Don't try to "catch up" by reading three Proverbs — you'll just quit properly instead.
2. **No performance.** Nobody's scoring your walk. If your number on Sunday is 2 of 7, post the 2.
3. **Confession over impression.** *"People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy"* (Proverbs 28:13, NLT). The whole thing only works if we're telling the truth.
4. **Wherever you're starting from is fine.** If you've never read the Bible, start August 1 with everyone else. Proverbs is the most accessible book in it. You will not be lost.

THE 31 DAYS

DAY 1 — Saturday, August 1

The Line in the Sand

Read: Proverbs 1 | **Anchor:** James 1:2–8

Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

PROVERBS 1:7 • NLT

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

PROVERBS 1:7 • NKJV

Today isn't about doing anything. It's about deciding something. James says the double-minded person is unstable in *all* their ways — not some. The split doesn't stay contained in the area you're compromising in. It leaks into everything.

Ask: Where in my life am I currently double-minded — asking God for something while quietly keeping the door open to the opposite?

Pray: Your one prayer, out loud, for the first time. Then ask for wisdom and mean it — including the part where you're willing to not like the answer.

THE WORD • PART ONE OF FIVE

discipline

Hold the word **discipline** in your head this month. Just hold it. There's something inside it that most people never look at, and we're going to take it apart slowly — one piece a week. By August 31 you'll know why this month was called what it was called.

WEEK ONE — WISDOM

Ask, and Don't Waver (August 2–8)

The first week isn't about changing your behavior. It's about changing what you're consulting. Most of us are undisciplined not because we lack willpower but because we're taking our orders from a source that doesn't have our good in mind.

DAY 2 — Sunday, August 2

Read: Proverbs 2 | **Anchor:** James 1:5–8

Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God.

PROVERBS 2:3–5 · NLT

Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God.

PROVERBS 2:3–5 · NKJV

Notice the verbs: *cry out, lift your voice, seek, search*. Wisdom isn't handed to the passive. It's found by people who go looking like there's money in it.

Ask: Am I actually searching for an answer to my prayer, or am I waiting for one to be delivered?

Pray: For the energy to pursue an answer, not just want one.

Today: First group check-in today. Three things in the group chat, and keep them short: **one line** from the week that hit you, **your number** — how many days so far you hit all three non-negotiables — and **one ask** the group can pray for. Today that number is out of 2, because we're only two days in. Every Sunday after this it's out of 7.

DAY 3 — Monday, August 3

Read: Proverbs 3 | **Anchor:** Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

PROVERBS 3:5–6 · NLT

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

PROVERBS 3:5–6 · NKJV

The verse everybody knows and almost nobody does. *Lean not on your own understanding* is a direct hit on the part of you that has already decided what the answer to your prayer should be.

Ask: What outcome have I already decided on? What would it cost me to actually hold it loosely?

Pray: For the willingness to be wrong about what you want.

DAY 4 — Tuesday, August 4

Read: Proverbs 4 | **Anchor:** Proverbs 4:23–27

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

PROVERBS 4:23 · NLT

Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

PROVERBS 4:23 · NKJV

Guard duty. Everything downstream — your appetite, your temper, your habits, your relationships — flows from the reservoir. You can't fix the river by treating the water. You go to the spring.

Ask: What am I letting into my heart daily without a filter — what I watch, scroll, listen to, who I talk to?

Pray: For a guarded heart, and the discipline to actually stand at the gate.

DAY 5 — Wednesday, August 5

Read: Proverbs 5 | **Anchor:** 1 Corinthians 6:18–20

For the LORD sees clearly what a man does, examining every path he takes.

PROVERBS 5:21 • NLT

For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He ponders all his paths.

PROVERBS 5:21 • NKJV

Proverbs 5 is a hard chapter about sexual sin and the private life. The line above isn't a threat — it's that there's no such thing as a hidden decision. Everything you do in the dark is happening in front of somebody.

Ask: What am I doing in private that I'd be undone by in public? You don't have to tell the group. Tell God, and consider telling your partner.

Pray: *Create in me a clean heart, O God.* (Psalm 51:10)

DAY 6 — Thursday, August 6

Read: Proverbs 6 | **Anchor:** Proverbs 6:6–11

Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones. Learn from their ways and become wise! Though they have no prince or governor or ruler to make them work, they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter.

PROVERBS 6:6–8 • NLT

Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest.

PROVERBS 6:6–8 • NKJV

The ant's superpower isn't strength. It's that nobody has to tell it. Discipline is what you do when there's no captain, no overseer, and no ruler standing over you. That's the whole test.

Ask: What do I only do when someone is watching or a deadline is on me? What would it take to do it without either?

Pray: For self-governance — to be the kind of person who moves without being pushed.

DAY 7 — Friday, August 7

Read: Proverbs 7 | **Anchor:** James 1:13–15

Don't let your hearts stray away toward her. Don't wander down her wayward path.

PROVERBS 7:25 • NLT

Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths;

PROVERBS 7:25 • NKJV

These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

JAMES 1:15 • NLT

Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

JAMES 1:15 • NKJV

Proverbs 7 is a case study of a young man walking into disaster in slow motion, and the striking thing is how many exits he had. Temptation has a chain of custody. You can break it early or fight it late — early is easier.

Ask: In my worst pattern, what is the actual first domino? Not the sin — the thing three steps before it.

Pray: For the sense to see the first domino, and the guts to not tip it.

DAY 8 — Saturday, August 8

Read: Proverbs 8 | **Anchor:** James 1:22–25

For wisdom is far more valuable than rubies. Nothing you desire can compare with it.

PROVERBS 8:11 • NLT

For wisdom is better than rubies, And all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.

PROVERBS 8:11 • NKJV

End of week one. James says be doers of the word, not hearers only — the person who hears and doesn't do is like someone who looks in a mirror and immediately forgets their own face.

Ask: Look back at whatever you wrote this week. What's one thing I've now clearly heard and not yet done?

Pray: For the gap between hearing and doing to close.

THE WORD • PART TWO OF FIVE

discipline

Discipline comes from the Latin *disciplina*. But *disciplina* didn't mean what we mean. It didn't mean punishment, and it didn't mean willpower. It meant **instruction. Teaching. What a teacher gives.** The word started its life on the receiving end of someone else's knowledge — which is a strange origin for a word we now use to describe gritting our teeth alone.

WEEK TWO — THE BODY

Train the Temple (August 9–15)

Week two goes physical: food, training, sleep, substances, screens. Not because the body is the point, but because the body is where discipline is most measurable — and where most of us are most honest about failing.

DAY 9 — Sunday, August 9

Read: Proverbs 9 | **Anchor:** 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

PROVERBS 9:10 • NLT

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

PROVERBS 9:10 • NKJV

Proverbs 9 sets two tables — Wisdom's and Folly's — and both are calling from the same street. Same invitation, same volume. The difference is what's for dinner.

Ask: What is my body currently being trained *toward* by my defaults — my regular food, my regular sleep, my regular screen?

Pray: For your body to be treated like it belongs to God rather than to your cravings.

Today: Group check-in today — one line, your number out of 7, one ask.

DAY 10 — Monday, August 10

Read: Proverbs 10 | **Anchor:** 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

Lazy people are soon poor; hard workers get rich.

PROVERBS 10:4 • NLT

He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

PROVERBS 10:4 • NKJV

I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:27 • NLT

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:27 • NKJV

Paul, who wrote more of the New Testament than anyone, was worried about being disqualified by his own body. That should recalibrate how seriously we take this.

Ask: What's my slack hand? The specific place where I'm coasting and calling it rest.

Pray: For diligence in the unglamorous, repeated, boring work.

DAY 11 — Tuesday, August 11

Read: Proverbs 11 | **Anchor:** Romans 12:1–2

Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

PROVERBS 11:2 • NLT

When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.

PROVERBS 11:2 • NKJV

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

ROMANS 12:1 • NLT

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

ROMANS 12:1 • NKJV

Living sacrifice is a strange phrase — the problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar. That's the daily part. You put yourself back.

Ask: What did I take back off the altar this week?

Pray: For a body offered, not just a Sunday offered.

DAY 12 — Wednesday, August 12

Read: Proverbs 12 | **Anchor:** Hebrews 12:1–11

To learn, you must love discipline; it is stupid to hate correction.

PROVERBS 12:1 • NLT

Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction is stupid.

PROVERBS 12:1 • NKJV

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

HEBREWS 12:11 • NLT

Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

HEBREWS 12:11 • NKJV

Both translations land on the same blunt word: hating correction isn't sensitivity, it's *stupid*. And discipline is supposed to feel bad in the moment. The feeling isn't evidence you're doing it wrong.

Ask: When was the last time someone corrected me, and how did I actually respond?

Pray: For a thicker skin toward correction and a thinner one toward conviction.

DAY 13 — Thursday, August 13

Read: Proverbs 13 | **Anchor:** Daniel 1:8–16

Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.

PROVERBS 13:20 • NLT

He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.

PROVERBS 13:20 • NKJV

Daniel *resolved* not to defile himself with the king's food — and then asked for a ten-day test. Note the order: conviction first, then a small, testable, time-bound experiment. That's a discipline plan.

Ask: What's my ten-day test? One specific thing — food, training, sleep, screens, whatever I named as my physical one — that I'll try for ten days and then evaluate.

Pray: For resolve that survives contact with a good-smelling kitchen.

DAY 14 — Friday, August 14

Read: Proverbs 14 | **Anchor:** Galatians 5:22–24

There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.

PROVERBS 14:12 • NLT

There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

PROVERBS 14:12 • NKJV

Self-control is listed last in the fruit of the Spirit, and it's the one people try to manufacture first. It's *fruit* — it grows from something. It isn't gritted into existence.

Ask: Am I trying to white-knuckle a change at the branch when the problem is at the root?

Pray: For the Spirit to produce what willpower can't sustain.

DAY 15 — Saturday, August 15

Read: Proverbs 15 | Anchor: 1 Timothy 4:7–8

Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisers bring success.

PROVERBS 15:22 • NLT

Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established.

PROVERBS 15:22 • NKJV

Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.

1 TIMOTHY 4:7–8 • NLT

But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

1 TIMOTHY 4:7–8 • NKJV

Halfway. Paul doesn't dismiss physical training — he ranks it. *Profits a little* is not *profits nothing*. The gym is real. It's just not ultimate.

Ask: Two weeks in — has the physical discipline been serving the spiritual one, or competing with it for the same 20 minutes?

Pray: For right order: body trained, soul trained more.

THE WORD • PART THREE OF FIVE

discipline

Disciplina is built on an older Latin word: **discipulus**. It means **pupil. Student. Learner**. So discipline isn't first a behavior — it's a *relationship*. It's the training that happens to somebody who has put themselves under a teacher. Halfway through the month, that's worth sitting with: whose student have you actually been?

WEEK THREE — THE HEART

Peace Under Pressure (August 16–22)

Halfway through is where it gets heavy. Week three is about peace — Romans 5, anxiety, therapy, the interior life. Because a disciplined person who's white-knuckling everything and quietly falling apart hasn't actually built anything.

DAY 16 — Sunday, August 16

Read: Proverbs 16 | **Anchor:** Romans 5:1–5

Commit your actions to the LORD, and your plans will succeed.

PROVERBS 16:3 • NLT

Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established.

PROVERBS 16:3 • NKJV

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

ROMANS 5:1 • NLT

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

ROMANS 5:1 • NKJV

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.

ROMANS 5:3–4 • NLT

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

ROMANS 5:3–4 • NKJV

This is the honest promise of the whole month. Not that discipline feels good — that it *makes something*. The chain runs suffering → endurance → character → hope, and there's no shortcut that skips a link.

Ask: Which link am I on right now — and am I trying to skip to hope without doing the endurance?

Pray: For peace that comes from being right with God, not from things going right.

Today: Group check-in today — one line, your number out of 7, one ask.

DAY 17 — Monday, August 17

Read: Proverbs 17 | **Anchor:** Philippians 4:6–7

A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need.

PROVERBS 17:17 • NLT

A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.

PROVERBS 17:17 • NKJV

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7 • NLT

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7 • NKJV

Guard is a military word — a garrison posted around your mind. Peace here isn't a mood. It's a defense.

Ask: What am I carrying anxiety about that I have never actually, specifically prayed about out loud?

Pray: That thing. Specifically. With thanksgiving.

DAY 18 — Tuesday, August 18

Read: Proverbs 18 | **Anchor:** Psalm 51

Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish.

PROVERBS 18:13 • NLT

He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.

PROVERBS 18:13 • NKJV

Psalm 51 is David after the worst thing he ever did. He doesn't manage his image and he doesn't explain. *Against you, you only, have I sinned.* Then: *restore to me the joy of your salvation.* Repentance and joy in the same prayer.

Ask: Is there something I've apologized for but never actually repented of?

Pray: Psalm 51:10–12, in your own words.

DAY 19 — Wednesday, August 19

Read: Proverbs 19 | **Anchor:** Matthew 11:28–30

You can make many plans, but the LORD's purpose will prevail.

PROVERBS 19:21 • NLT

There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the LORD's counsel—that will stand.

PROVERBS 19:21 • NKJV

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:28 • NLT

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:28 • NKJV

Three weeks into a discipline month, this is the necessary correction: a few verses later Jesus calls the yoke *easy*. If your walk with God currently feels like a second job you're failing at, something has gone sideways in how you're carrying it.

Ask: Am I doing this month for God, or *at* God? Am I trying to earn something already given?

Pray: For rest. Actually ask for it.

DAY 20 — Thursday, August 20

Read: Proverbs 20 | **Anchor:** Isaiah 26:3

Though good advice lies deep within the heart, a person with understanding will draw it out.

PROVERBS 20:5 • NLT

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, But a man of understanding will draw it out.

PROVERBS 20:5 • NKJV

Some things are too deep to reach on your own. That's not weakness — Proverbs treats drawing them out as a *skill*. This is the day to say it plainly: therapy, counseling, a pastor, a doctor. Getting help is a discipline, not an admission of failure.

Ask: What's in the deep water that I've never let anyone help me draw out? Who could I call?

Pray: For courage to be known by someone qualified to help.

DAY 21 — Friday, August 21

Read: Proverbs 21 | **Anchor:** 2 Corinthians 12:7–10

Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.

PROVERBS 21:5 • NLT

The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, But those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.

PROVERBS 21:5 • NKJV

Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9 • NLT

And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9 • NKJV

Three weeks in, you know your weak spot by now. Paul asked three times for his to be removed and got a no — and the no *was* the answer.

Ask: What weakness have I been asking God to remove that he may be asking me to carry with him instead?

Pray: For grace to be sufficient — and to believe that it is.

DAY 22 — Saturday, August 22

Read: Proverbs 22 | Anchor: Psalm 23

Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold.

PROVERBS 22:1 • NLT

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold.

PROVERBS 22:1 • NKJV

Read Psalm 23 slowly today. All of it. It's the most familiar passage in the Bible and most of us haven't actually sat in it in years. *He restores my soul* is the line for week three.

Ask: What is my name — my actual reputation among the people who know me best — currently built on?

Pray: Psalm 23, line by line, as your own prayer.

THE WORD • PART FOUR OF FIVE

discipline

Here's where it turns. *Discipulus* came into Old English as **discipul** — and that was the word they used for the twelve men who followed Jesus. Not a religious term they invented. Just the ordinary word for a **learner**. When the Gospels call those men disciples, they are calling them *students*. That's all the word ever meant.

WEEK FOUR — THE CIRCLE

Iron and Covenant (August 23–29)

The last full week goes outward: friendship, family, and the relationships that determine the next season. This is the week the one prayer usually starts getting answered — because most of God's answers arrive through people.

DAY 23 — Sunday, August 23

Read: Proverbs 23 | **Anchor:** Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

Do not carouse with drunkards or feast with gluttons, for they are on their way to poverty, and too much sleep clothes them in rags.

PROVERBS 23:20–21 • NLT

Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat; For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.

PROVERBS 23:20–21 • NKJV

A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

ECCLESIASTES 4:12 • NLT

Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

ECCLESIASTES 4:12 • NKJV

Proverbs 23 puts appetite and company in the same breath, and it isn't an accident. Who you eat with shapes what you eat. Every appetite you have is being calibrated by a room.

Ask: Which room is calibrating my appetites right now — and is it the room I'd choose?

Pray: For the courage to change rooms if the answer is no.

Today: Group check-in today — one line, your number out of 7, one ask.

DAY 24 — Monday, August 24

Read: Proverbs 24 | **Anchor:** Galatians 6:1–5

The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again. But one disaster is enough to overthrow the wicked.

PROVERBS 24:16 · NLT

For a righteous man may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity.

PROVERBS 24:16 · NKJV

The difference between the righteous and the wicked here isn't the falling. Both fall. It's the getting up. If you've missed days this month, this is your verse — and it's not a consolation prize. It's the actual standard.

Ask: Where have I stayed down out of shame when I could have gotten up?

Pray: For the specific person in your life who's down right now — and ask whether you're supposed to go get them.

DAY 25 — Tuesday, August 25

Read: Proverbs 25 | **Anchor:** Ephesians 4:29–32

A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls.

PROVERBS 25:28 · NLT

Whoever has no rule over his own spirit Is like a city broken down, without walls.

PROVERBS 25:28 · NKJV

The image is worth sitting in. It's not that the undisciplined person is bad — it's that they're *undefended*. Anything can walk in. Discipline isn't restriction. It's fortification.

Ask: Where are my walls down, and what keeps walking in through the gap?

Pray: For rebuilt walls in one specific place.

DAY 26 — Wednesday, August 26

Read: Proverbs 26 | **Anchor:** 1 Corinthians 15:33

As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness.

PROVERBS 26:11 • NLT

As a dog returns to his own vomit, So a fool repeats his folly.

PROVERBS 26:11 • NKJV

The grossest verse in Proverbs, and deliberately so. The point isn't shame — it's that from the outside the cycle is obviously repulsive, and from the inside it always feels reasonable.

Ask: What's my loop? The thing I've quit and returned to more than twice.

Pray: For someone to be honest with about the loop today. Then be honest with them.

DAY 27 — Thursday, August 27

Read: Proverbs 27 | **Anchor:** Proverbs 27:5–6, 17

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

PROVERBS 27:17 • NLT

As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

PROVERBS 27:17 • NKJV

Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.

PROVERBS 27:6 • NLT

Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

PROVERBS 27:6 • NKJV

Iron sharpening iron makes sparks and takes metal off. Real friendship costs you something. If nobody in your life has said something to you that stung and was true this year, you don't have this yet.

Ask: Who has permission to wound me faithfully? If nobody does, who should?

Pray: For the friend who's been avoiding telling you something — and for the willingness to hear it.

DAY 28 — Friday, August 28

Read: Proverbs 28 | **Anchor:** 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8

People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.

PROVERBS 28:13 • NLT

He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

PROVERBS 28:13 • NKJV

Two verbs: confess *and* forsake. Confession without forsaking is just narration. Forsaking without confession is just willpower. Mercy is attached to both.

Ask: What am I confessing but not forsaking? What am I forsaking but not confessing?

Pray: Do both today. Out loud, with one person.

DAY 29 — Saturday, August 29

Read: Proverbs 29 | **Anchor:** Romans 12:9–18

When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is joyful.

PROVERBS 29:18 • NLT

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law.

PROVERBS 29:18 • NKJV

The old King James renders it *where there is no vision, the people perish*. Restraint collapses when there's nothing to be restrained *for*. Discipline without a vision is just self-denial, and self-denial without a why does not survive September.

Ask: What is the vision that all this discipline is *for*? If I can't name it in one sentence, that's the real work of the last two days.

Pray: For a clear vision of the next season, not just a clean one.

THE CLOSE — THE DECISION

Name It and Build On It (August 30–31)

DAY 30 — Sunday, August 30

Reading the Month

Read: Proverbs 30 | **Anchor:** Romans 8:26–30

First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name.

PROVERBS 30:8–9 • NLT

Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches—Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, And say, "Who is the LORD?" Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.

PROVERBS 30:8–9 • NKJV

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

ROMANS 8:28 • NLT

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

ROMANS 8:28 • NKJV

Agur's prayer is one of the most mature in scripture: *don't give me so much that I forget you, or so little that I steal and dishonor you.* Give me enough. That's a person who knows himself.

And Romans 8:28 is the safety net under whatever answer you got this month. Yes, no, not yet, or silence — it covers all four. It doesn't say everything *is* good. It says everything is being *worked*.

Today, go back through everything you've written this month and read it in order. You're looking for a repeat — a theme God kept returning to whether you liked it or not.

Ask: What did God say more than once this month?

Pray: Bring your one prayer for the second-to-last time. Ask plainly: *what's the answer?*

Today: Final group check-in today — one line, your number out of 7, one ask.

DAY 31 — Monday, August 31

The Foundation

Read: Proverbs 31 | **Anchor:** James 1:22–25 · Joshua 24:15

Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised.

PROVERBS 31:30 · NLT

Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

PROVERBS 31:30 · NKJV

But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.

JOSHUA 24:15 · NLT

And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

JOSHUA 24:15 · NKJV

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

JAMES 1:22 · NLT

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

JAMES 1:22 · NKJV

Proverbs closes on character over charm — the wisdom book's final verdict on what actually holds up over a life. Whatever your one prayer was about, that's the standard it gets measured against: not what's attractive, what *lasts*.

Today you write two things down and send them to your partner.

1. THE ANSWER. What did God say to your one prayer? *Yes — and here's what I do about it. No — and here's what I let go of. Not yet — and here's how I wait well. Nothing yet — and here's how I keep asking.*

2. THE FOUNDATION. Which non-negotiable goes into September, and what's the specific plan? Day, time, place, person. Not intentions — logistics.

Ask: A month ago I was double-minded about something. Am I single-minded about it now?

Pray: Thank God for the month, name what he did, and ask for the next thing.

Today: That's the month. The foundation is poured. Now go build on it.

discipline

Discipline and disciple are the same word.

Not similar. Not related. The same root — *discipulus*, the learner. Discipline is not something a disciple *does*. Discipline is what being a disciple *is*: the training a learner undergoes because they've placed themselves under a teacher.

Which means the thing you've actually been doing for 31 days isn't what it said on the invitation. You didn't build discipline. **You became a learner.** The habits were never the point — they were the evidence.

And the Greek says the same thing. The New Testament word for disciple is *mathētēs*, from *manthanō* — **to learn**. Two languages, one idea, and neither of them is about being impressive. They're both about being teachable.

So the only real question on the last day of August is the same one it was on the first: *whose student are you?*

The 31-Day Tracker

Print this. Put it somewhere annoying — fridge, mirror, the inside of your bag. Mark it the moment you do the thing, not at the end of the day.

MY ONE PRAYER

SPIRITUAL

the daily reading

PHYSICAL

RELATIONAL

MY PARTNER

#		READ	SCRIP	PHYS	RELAT	PRAYED	ONE LINE — what hit me / what I ducked
1	Sat	Pr 1					
2	Sun	Pr 2					
3	Mon	Pr 3					
4	Tue	Pr 4					
5	Wed	Pr 5					
6	Thu	Pr 6					
7	Fri	Pr 7					
8	Sat	Pr 8					
9	Sun	Pr 9					
10	Mon	Pr 10					
11	Tue	Pr 11					
12	Wed	Pr 12					
13	Thu	Pr 13					
14	Fri	Pr 14					
15	Sat	Pr 15					
16	Sun	Pr 16					
17	Mon	Pr 17					
18	Tue	Pr 18					
19	Wed	Pr 19					
20	Thu	Pr 20					
21	Fri	Pr 21					
22	Sat	Pr 22					
23	Sun	Pr 23					
24	Mon	Pr 24					
25	Tue	Pr 25					
26	Wed	Pr 26					
27	Thu	Pr 27					
28	Fri	Pr 28					
29	Sat	Pr 29					
30	Sun	Pr 30					
31	Mon	Pr 31					

Missed a day? Proverbs 24:16 — the godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again. Don't double up to catch up. Just start again tomorrow.

The Prayer Log

Five Sundays, one page. This is the page you read on August 30 when you're looking for what God said more than once.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2 *week one · wisdom*

Days hit all three: **___ / 7**

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9 *week two · the body*

Days hit all three: **___ / 7**

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 *week three · the heart*

Days hit all three: **___ / 7**

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23 *week four · the circle*

Days hit all three: **___ / 7**

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30 *the close · what did God say more than once?*

Days hit all three: **___ / 7**

AUGUST 31 · THE ANSWER

YES

NO

NOT YET

STILL ASKING

AUGUST 31 · THE FOUNDATION *day · time · place · person*

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