November 21/22, 2026
"The Prayer from the Cave"
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Beyond the Weekend

SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY, + ACT.

2026 Focus: 12 Months of Prayer | **November**: Thanksgiving

Each month, journey through a different biblical model of prayer.

Day 1 Psalm 142 | **The Pain Cave**

A maskil of David. When he was in the cave. A prayer. **I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy.** Psalm 142:1

As David flees Saul and hides for his life, his mind races: *How did I get here*? Years earlier, the prophet Samuel anointed David as Israel's next king—God's chosen leader for God's chosen people. Yet David finds himself on the run, escaping Saul's murderous pursuit. The confusion, inner turmoil, and disappointment build, leading David to cry out. David's heartfelt prayer in Psalm 142 is a prayer in the pain—agonizing words for a confusing space and season. Yet this space—the pain cave—is where God continues to prepare David for his eventual role as Israel's leader.

Pain, confusion, and disappointment come with living in a broken world. We may not know the exact pain David felt, but we have all experienced disappointments and confusion. The key issue, however, is where we go with that pain. Because we know such times are coming, we can ready our hearts for the pain cave and decide in advance to turn to God. Rather than numb out, check out, or lash out, we can bring God our tangled emotions and rattled thoughts. Though our questions may remain, we can trust him in the pain cave.

TODAY: Pray in advance of the pain cave. Ask God for grace to trust him when hard times come and to look to him rather than turn away. Consider using this prayer: "Father, steady my heart in the truth of who you are. Help me always believe the best about you, even when times are hard or confusing. You are always worthy of my trust, so please help me look to you."

Day 2 Psalm 142 | **Desperate Prayer**

I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble. Psalm 142:1–2

Amid the pain and inner turmoil, David cries out. What other option does he have? He is running for his life, stuck in a cave, with no one, it seems, to turn to. So David does the only thing he can do—he lifts his voice to the Lord. David utters his "complaint" to God, a pattern echoed throughout the Psalms. In this God-directed complaint, David is not grumbling *about* God. Instead, he is voicing his pain and confusion *to* God. This is the heart of biblical lament: praying to God in the pain.

When we face deep pain and confusion, it's important that we turn *to* God. Prayers in the pain are often messy. They are rarely polished. Instead, they are heartfelt cries of trust to the God we know is there but struggle to see. Such prayers can be filled with questions, uncertainties, and even doubts. David turned to God amid his pain and uncertainty, and his example invites us to do the same. God welcomes our honest, raw, and even tear-drenched prayers in seasons of pain and confusion.

TODAY: Like David, tell your trouble to the Lord. Put words to your fears, disappointments, and pain. Try to be as specific as possible. Lay it out before him, trusting that he cares for you and welcomes your honest cry to him.

Day 3 Psalm 142:4–5 | Prayer of Trust

Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. I cry to you, LORD; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." Psalm 142:4–5

As David looks back, he recalls countless times when God revealed his character and provided for him. God spared David the shepherd boy from the lion and bear in the wild, gave him victory over Goliath, the Philistine champion (1 Samuel 17:34–37, 50), and now sustains his life on the run from Saul. As David lies in the cave, wrestling with this confusing space, he can rest, anchored in God's goodness and strength. Elsewhere, David affirmed, "With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken" (Psalm 16:8b). And so here, even with doubts and questions, David can persevere with hope and confidence, resting on the character and provision of God.

It is possible to navigate a confusing, challenging, and even overwhelming space through firm conviction in who God is, what he has done, and what he promises to do. These truths anchored David in his pain cave, and they can anchor us as well. God is faithful, good, and always true to his promises. We can trust him. So even when times are hard, confusing, and uncertain, we can turn to him with our doubts and questions, trusting that he will lead us and care for us.

TODAY: One of the best ways to remain anchored in the truth is to memorize Scripture. Memorize a core truth that stabilized David in his season of uncertainty: "I cry to you, LORD; I say, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living'" (Psalm 142:5).

Day 4 Psalm 142:7 | Prayer of Rejoicing

Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me. Psalm 142:7

David cries. And then David turns to rejoicing. As David's heart pivots, he recalls the goodness of God and calls upon God to deliver him. He trusts the God who saves. Just as God has rescued David in the past, David is confident God will do so again—in this life and in the life to come. David's prayer ends with hopeful rejoicing in who God is, what he has done, and what he will do. He is the God who never changes and who rescues us from all our iniquities.

On Thanksgiving, we pause to give thanks. And the ultimate reason for thanksgiving is the character and work of God. God is unchanging, always faithful, and the one who delivers us from evil. This was true for David thousands of years ago, and it remains true for us today. Like David, we must turn our gaze from our troubles and trials to our all-sufficient God who delivers. And we know this heart of God most clearly through the person and work of Jesus, the one who came to rescue us from our sin and give us new life—our truest reason for thanksgiving!

TODAY: As you celebrate Thanksgiving, do so grounded in God's goodness. Sing "Goodness of God" with our Ada Bible worship team. As you sing, reflect especially on these words: "All my life You have been faithful / All my life You have been so, so good."



Day 5 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 | Give Thanks Always

This year in Beyond the Weekend, journey through different biblical models of prayer—one each month. November's focus is Thanksgiving: expressing gratitude to God.

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Paul knows pain and hardship. Sitting in a Philippian jail with his companion Silas, beaten and bloodied by order of the city's magistrates, Paul prays and sings hymns to God at midnight (Acts 16:22–25). After their release, Paul makes his way to Thessalonica, where a church soon takes root. This young church quickly faces the same kind of opposition Paul faced: persecution, political accusations, and even mob violence. Yet Paul's joyful faith amid trials becomes a guiding light as these believers endure trials of their own. Though they face hardship, they are to pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances.

We have much to learn from the example of Paul and these young believers. Often, when we experience hardships, trials, or discomfort, our default response is grumbling. God has a better way for us to walk. We are to be people who understand his gracious heart toward us and his provision even in our trials. And such truth—anchored in who he is and what he has done—should lead to our praise and thanks *always.* We cultivate this habit of the heart through daily discipline. Rather than give way to grumbling, we can strengthen our spiritual muscles by giving God thanks every day.

TODAY: Journal at least three things for which you are thankful. Then, turn this list into prayer, praising and thanking God for who he is and what he has done.