

FREE
7-DAY
SAMPLER



pray

a word a day

— VOLUME 2 —

Connecting with God One Word at a Time

editors of guideposts

bow

... in reverence I bow down ... —Psalm 5:7 (NIV)

A square dance begins with the call to honor your partner, which is done with a bow. A bow is how you begin. I aim to practice this in my daily life. Begin with a bow. Approach with reverence and honor that which awaits me. When I do, I find it de-escalates both me and whomever or whatever I am about to engage, be it people, projects, or even my chronic pain. Approaching with a grumble or a growl only results in a tangled mess, with me tripping over the other person or situation instead of enjoying the dance.

What might change if I were to take one quick moment of reverent pause before engaging with what or who is before me? In deference and preference, why not bow? In honor and humility, in respect and reverence, let us bow to begin.

Honor one another. Honor your Partner. Bow to begin.

—Jenny Gehman

God, help me today to begin with a bow. Amen.



start

He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high. —Psalm 110:7 (NIV)

I woke, craving a drink of water, my throat dry and head pounding. I had filled a thirty-two-ounce glass the night before, and now I downed it in two long gulps. Then I began my day, showering, dressing, and completing all the necessary tasks before my workday.

When I sat down to eat breakfast, I realized my headache was gone. At the start of the new day, my body made it very clear what it needed. Water.

The thought came to me: *How often do I listen to my soul's need for refreshing? How often do I rush to get my body ready for work without preparing my heart for the day?*

I set my spoon down and opened my Bible. As I filled my stomach with oatmeal, I nourished my mind and soul with God's Word. The right start for every day.

—Beth Gormong

Lord, help me start my days nourishing my soul the way I satisfy my body after a long night without water and food.



plant

You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance—the place, LORD, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, LORD, your hands established.

—Exodus 15:17 (NIV)

When my husband, Craig, finished his Army obligation, the road trip from Kansas to our forever home in the Sierra Valley was challenging. He drove a U-Haul truck and pulled one car while I drove his large flatbed truck and pulled another. Each of us had a baby in tow too—he, our twenty-one-month-old, and I, our seven-month-old. Those were pre-GPS, pre-cell phone days, so relief settled in when we reached our mountain valley for the first time. And I prayed.

Lord, if you will plant me here, I will dedicate our home to your service. It will be a sanctuary for whoever needs a place to stay.

The following four decades served as a garden for exchange students, countless ministry gatherings, foster children, and young adults in transition. God truly planted us in our small, rural community, and our life here has caused us to blossom.

—Janet Holm McHenry

*Lord, plant me purposefully in my community
for the sake of serving others and You.*



soar

Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. —Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)

I love high vistas—mountaintops, skyscrapers, airplanes. They offer some of the best views, and they infuse my spirit with a feeling of freedom. Eagles represent that same sense of freedom to me. They fly high above the earth and don't fear a storm. When they face turbulent winds, they do not seek shelter like other birds, but use the force of the updrafts to rise higher and higher. They "lock" their wings and glide effortlessly above it without using their own energy.

We, too, can "lock" our trust on God when we face life's storms. The Bible promises us that if we put our hope in God, He will renew our strength and cause us to "soar" on wings like eagles, to run and not grow weary, to walk and not faint.

—Sandra Kay Chambers

Lord, when I face storms in my life, help me to "lock" my faith on You so I can soar above them like the eagle.



bond

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. —Ephesians 4:2–3 (NIV)

Bonding is a vital element for many things to work properly. Whether it's affixing two surfaces or bonding human hearts, both need to be joined to work together in harmony.

It's interesting that heat or pressure is often used as a binding agent for adhesives. Isn't that like personal relationships? Often when we face fiery trials or life's pressures with others, it creates bonds. We hear of this all the time with war comrades and police officers.

Paul urges us to strive for that goal among fellow believers. Without the same connection to our brothers and sisters in Christ, we cannot please the Lord. Maintaining peace and love with one another is what binds us, nurtures true fellowship, and models Christ's love to the watching world.

—Tez Brooks

*Lord, forgive me if I have neglected or avoided godly fellowship.
Help me bond closely to my spiritual family. Amen.*



knit

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. —Psalm 139:13 (NRSVUE)

A country store hereabouts sells knitted items—mittens, socks, stocking caps—made from locally produced wool. In a side room, you can watch as three women operate foot-pedal spinning wheels, turning clouds of wool into yarn in a process as old as the Bible. You can smell the lanolin. On the wall behind the women there hangs a wooden sign: I Knit, Therefore I Am.

To knit is to make a garment, but in a broader sense the verb means to unite, to interlock, to mend. My one-word prayer for today is: *knit*. For fractured family relationships, O Lord: knit. For the churches in my community, too long separated into competitive camps, O Lord: knit. For the disparate impulses and motives of my life, pulling me this way and that, instead of uniting in a desire to seek first the Kingdom of God, O Lord: knit.

—Lou Lotz

*God of grace, who knit me together in my mother's womb,
knit my thoughts, words, and deeds into a single passion
to live for You. Amen.*



hair

And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
—Matthew 10:30 (NIV)

Hot water cascaded down on my head. If only it could wash away the worries swirling in my mind. Grabbing the shampoo bottle, I poured the thick, white liquid onto my palm and applied it to my hair.

After rinsing the cleaner off, I opened my eyes and happened to notice strands of hair strewn on the shower floor. *Great. Now I'll have to clean up what I'd shed.* All I saw was another item for my already lengthy to-do list.

Later, kneeling to remove the hair, my perspective changed. While I saw a mess to clean up, I realized that God saw how many hairs had fallen. He knows me intimately, down to the number of hairs on my head. If He knows that fact, He knows my concerns and desires, and He knows how to guide me as I face them. Why pull my hair out with worry when He is there for me?

—Alice H. Murray

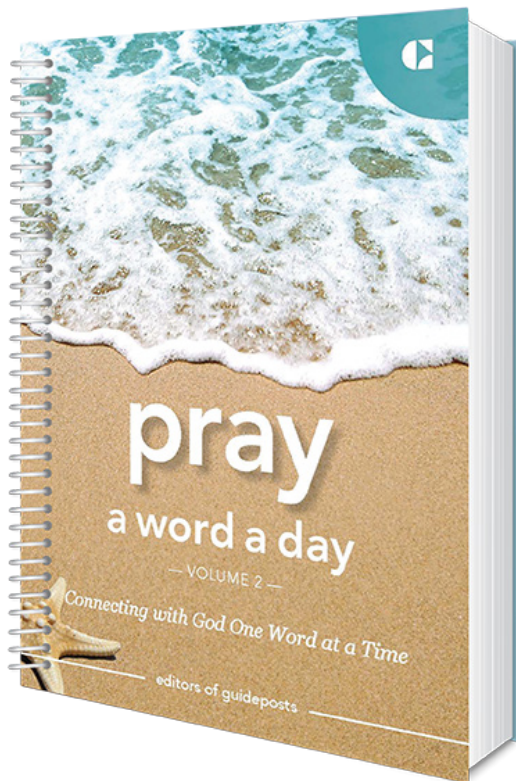
Dear God: No one knows me better and cares for me more than You. I am blessed that nothing about me, even the number of hairs on my head, escapes Your notice and concern. Amen.



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