



Heart MATTERS

A LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

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A brief explanation of Lent:

The time of Lent is roughly the 40 days before the resurrection of Jesus which we call Easter. Lent means “Spring” or “lengthening of days.” It begins on Ash Wednesday, when some churches burn palm leaves from Palm Sunday the year before, and anoint Christians on their foreheads with those ashes. It is a vivid reminder that Lent has begun.

During those 40 days before Easter, Christians are challenged to assess their walk with Jesus Christ. In essence, it is a time for prayerful introspection. But the 40 days do not normally include Sundays. Sundays are meant to focus on worshipping Jesus, and so on those days we should not be focusing on ourselves.

Some Christians fast or give something up during this time, and replace it with increased devotion time or Christian service. One lady, who gives up chocolate and coffee each year, said that she looks forward to the day when she craves Jesus as much as she craves chocolate and coffee during Lent. Many take the money they save in their fasting and give that money to the needy.

Lent leads up to Holy Week, which includes Maundy or Holy Thursday. The word Maundy is so ancient that its exact meaning is unknown. Many think it is a corruption of the word *mandatum*, meaning 'commandment,' a reminder of Jesus saying "a new commandment I give to you that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (John 13:34)" But that is only a guess. Thus some churches prefer to call it simply Holy Thursday. Since it commemorates Jesus' last supper with his disciples, many churches have communion services that night. Some churches even host a Christian Passover service that night to give the congregation a better understanding of the Scriptures describing the events of that supper.

This is followed by Good or God Friday, when Christians recognize Jesus' suffering and death for our sins. Some churches have a special service that day often featuring what is called the 7 last words of Jesus. That term 'words' is misleading, since they are technically the 7 last things spoken by Jesus while he hung on the cross, culminating in the words "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. (Luke 23:46)"

Even if you do not attend a church that celebrates or recognizes Lent, this is still a great opportunity to use this time to examine your Christian walk, and take steps to strengthen it. If that is what you desire, then this devotion is for you.

Day 1 – A Living, Active Word

Breath Prayer (for today):

Inhale: "Search my heart, Lord."

Exhale: "Set my heart on you."

Connection Point:

The season of Lent begins with ashes. It reminds us that we are dust, temporary and fragile, and yet deeply loved by the God who formed us from the stuff of stars and His own breath. We are not just bodies. Hebrews 4:12 pulls us open like a surgeon's scalpel. It tells us we are soul and spirit, joints and marrow. We are both physical and spiritual, seen and unseen.

When we talk about "heart posture" in this plan, we are not just talking about feelings. We are talking about the direction of our inner life. Where our thoughts are looking. How our emotions respond. The choices we make that no one else sees. The Word of God is not a dead book sitting on a shelf. It is living and active. It reaches into the deepest parts of who we are and gently exposes our motives, our fears, our pride, and our hidden hurts.

During Lent, many of us give something up. Chocolate. Social media. Gossip. Those can be good practices. But if our heart posture does not change, we come out of Lent a little thinner or a little more "together," but not more like Jesus. This season is an invitation to let God's Word do deep work in us, cutting through the noise and self-protection so He can heal what is beneath.

Over the next weeks, you will meditate on Scripture, hear stories from Christian military women and wives, and breathe Psalm 131 in and out. The goal is not to add one more thing to your to-do list. The goal is to come out of this season with a heart that is humbler, quieter, more trusting, and more full of hope in the One who gave everything for you.

Journal Prompt:

When you think about Lent, what has your heart posture typically been? Duty? Guilt? Curiosity? Avoidance? Describe a specific moment or year that shows you what your "default" posture has been.

Scripture:

Hebrews 4:12 (AMP)

For the word of God is living and active and full of power [making it operative, energizing, and effective]. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as the division of the soul and spirit [the completeness of a person], and of both joints and marrow [the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and judging the very thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Prayer:

Father God, thank you that your Word is living and active. Thank you that you care enough to search and expose the thoughts and intentions of my heart. As I begin this Lenten journey, give me courage to let you in. Use your Word to transform my inner life, not just my outward habits. Prepare my heart to remember Jesus' sacrifice with deeper humility, gratitude, and love. In Jesus' holy name, amen.

Day 2 – Pilgrims of the Heart

Breath Prayer (for today):

Inhale: "Search my heart, Lord."

Exhale: "Set my heart on you."

Connection Point:

Psalm 131 is called a "Song of Ascents," a pilgrim song. God's people would sing it as they physically climbed the road up to Jerusalem, step after step, festival after festival. Their feet were moving, but so were their hearts. They were journeying toward God.

Lent is also a kind of ascent. We are not walking up a stone road, but we are moving toward the cross and empty tomb with our attention, our habits, and our desires. Psalm 131 gives us a picture of the heart posture that fits that journey: not proud, not chasing after everything that feels big or impressive, not straining to sit in God's seat and understand all the "whys."

For many of us in military life, our posture is the opposite. We are trained to anticipate, to plan, to evaluate risk, to be strong, to handle it. That can easily slide into a proud heart and "haughty eyes"—a quiet belief that we know what is best, that we can muscle through, that we don't really need help. We rush into great matters and things too wonderful for us, trying to control what only God can see.

This short psalm gently invites us to step down. To remember that we are not the Commander of the universe. We are pilgrims. We are children. We are dust, loved by a God who knows more than we ever will. As you begin to carry Psalm 131 with you this Lent, ask the Lord to start here: with your heart, your eyes, and your need to know and control.

Journal Prompt:

Where do you see "proud heart" or "haughty eyes" show up in your life? Think of one recent situation where you felt the need to control, fix, or understand everything. How might it look to step down from that and let God be God?

Prayer:

Lord, I confess that I often try to live beyond my limits. I act like I know more than I do and like I see more than I can. Forgive my quiet pride and the ways I try to take your place. Teach me to be a pilgrim instead of a controller. As I walk through this Lenten season, lower my heart and my eyes so that I can see you clearly. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scripture:

Psalm 131:1 (CSB)

Lord, my heart is not proud;
my eyes are not haughty. I
do not get involved with
things too great or too
wondrous for me.

Day 3 – Seen, Known, and Held

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Search my heart, Lord.”

Exhale: “Set my heart on you.”

Connection Point:

The image God gives us here is not of a frantic infant, desperate for milk, but of a weaned child—still small, still needy, but resting. Picture a toddler who climbs into his mother’s lap not for food, but for comfort, closeness, and trust. That is the posture of a calmed and quieted soul.

Scripture:

Psalms 131:2–3 (CSB)

Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Israel, put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever.

Our lives rarely feel calm. The calendar is full. Orders change. Health diagnoses surprise us. Relationships strain. In those moments, our inner life can feel like a screaming infant: urgent, frantic, convinced that if we do not get what we want right now, everything will fall apart. Lent gently asks us: what if your soul could learn to be like a weaned child instead?

Calming and quieting your soul is not pretending everything is fine. It is not numbing out. It is choosing to sit in the lap of the One who loves you, even when you do not understand what He is doing. It is shifting your hope from outcomes you can see to the God who holds your story now and forever.

This whole plan will keep circling back to this image. Humility, peace, trust, and hope are not abstract concepts. They are what it looks like to live with a calmed and quieted soul in real life, in real military marriages, in real deployments, in real PCS moves and hard diagnoses. Lent is our practice ground.

Journal Prompt:

Think of a time you felt “weaned-child safe”—not because your circumstances were easy, but because you felt securely held by God. What helped quiet your soul in that season? If you struggle to think of a time, write honestly about that too.

Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for inviting me to come to you like a child. I bring you my noise, my anxiety, my questions, and my exhaustion. Help me to learn how to calm and quiet my soul in your presence. Teach me to put my hope in you now and forever, not in my own strength or plans. Amen.

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Search my heart, Lord.”

Exhale: “Set my heart on you.”

Day 4 – When All Things Don't Feel Good

Connection Point:

This verse is so familiar that it can start to sound like a slogan instead of a lifeline. In military life, “all things” covers a lot of ground: the deployment you did not want, the PCS that tore you away from community, the diagnosis you never saw coming, the job you lost, the child who is struggling, the marriage that feels fragile.

Lent is a season when we look long and hard at sin and suffering. We remember that our wrongdoings have real cost. We also remember that the world is broken. Romans 8 does not tell us that all things are good. It says that God works in all things for the good of those who love Him.

The difference matters.

This promise invites a different heart posture. Instead of reading your life as random or cruel, you can begin to look at your story like a field God is cultivating. Even the painful parts, even the places you wish you could erase, can become ground where God grows something beautiful, holy, and eternal.

During Lent, you are invited to bring specific “all things” to Jesus: your gluttony, your lack of self-control, your numbing patterns, your self-reliance, your anger, your grief. Not to excuse them, but to let Him work even there. His cross proves that He can take the worst thing and turn it into the door of salvation.

Journal Prompt:

Name one “all things” situation in your life right now that does not feel good at all. Write honestly about it before God. Then, ask Him: “Where might you be working for my good even here?” Jot down any thoughts, scriptures, or small shifts that come to mind.

Prayer:

God, you see the parts of my life that feel anything but good. I confess that sometimes I doubt your goodness when I look at my circumstances. Forgive my unbelief. Help me trust that you are at work in all things, even the hard ones, for my good and your glory. Show me one small way you are working in this situation today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Search my heart, Lord.”

Exhale: “Set my heart on you.”

Scripture:

Romans 8:28 (NIV)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Day 5 – Examining Our Ways

Connection Point:

Lent is not about vague sadness. It is about specific repentance that leads us back to a very specific Savior. Lamentations 3 comes from a book written in the middle of national disaster. God's people were suffering the consequences of long-standing sin, and it was costly. Right in the middle of the grief, there is this invitation: examine your ways, test them, return to the Lord.

Examining your ways is more than feeling bad. It is paying attention. What do you run to when you are stressed? Food? Scrolling? Entertainment? Overworking? Shutting down? How do you speak to your spouse when you are tired or disappointed? How do you talk about others? How do you treat your own body, mind, and soul?

Testing your ways means holding them up against God's Word and asking: does this align with His heart? Is this helping me love Him and others more, or is it drawing me away? In this plan, you are letting Scripture and the Spirit expose those patterns not so you can sit in shame, but so you can return—again and again—to the Lord who loves you.

Returning is not a one-time event. It is a posture. A repeated turning of your face and your feet back toward Jesus when you notice you have wandered.

Journal Prompt:

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you one specific pattern in your life that He wants to address this Lent. Write about what triggers it, how it shows up, and how it affects you and others. Then write a few sentences about what “returning to the Lord” might look like in that area.

Prayer:

Lord, I do not want to rush through this season without letting you search me. Help me be honest as I examine my ways. Show me where I have drifted, and give me courage to return to you. Thank you that your mercies are new every morning and that you welcome me back with grace. In Christ's name, amen.

Scripture:

Lamentations 3:40 (NIV)
Let us examine our ways
and test them, and let us
return to the Lord.

Day 6 – Sins Remembered No More

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: "Search my heart, Lord."

Exhale: "Set my heart on you."

Connection Point:

Lent is honest about sin, but it is not about living under a cloud of condemnation. God's plan has always been to deal with sin in such a way that His people could truly know Him. In Jeremiah 31, He promises a new covenant where His law is written on hearts, not just stone, and where forgiveness runs so deep that He "remembers sins no more."

God's forgetfulness is not like ours. He does not misplace information. He chooses not to hold our forgiven sins against us.

He does not continually rehearse them in His mind or relate to us as if we are still defined by them. The cross of Jesus makes this promise possible. He bore the penalty so that we could stand before God clean.

As you let God examine your ways this Lent, you may uncover things you would rather keep buried: harsh words, secret habits, moments of faithlessness, ways you have wounded others. Bring them into the light with confidence. Confession is not the end of the story. It is the doorway into deeper intimacy with the God who has already decided, in Christ, not to remember your sins.

Knowing you are forgiven changes your heart posture. Instead of hiding, you can be honest. Instead of striving to earn God's love, you can rest in it. Instead of being defined by your worst moments, you can live as a beloved daughter who is being transformed.

Journal Prompt:

Is there a sin, failure, or season in your life that you still feel defined by, even though you have confessed it to God? Write it down. Then underneath it, write: "In Christ, you remember this no more." Ask the Lord to help your heart agree with what He says is true.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the new covenant secured by Jesus' blood. Thank you that you forgive my wickedness and choose to remember my sins no more. Where shame still clings to me, wash me with the truth of your Word. Help me to live as someone who is truly forgiven, free to love and obey you with my whole heart. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scripture:

Jeremiah 31:34 (NIV)

"...No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Day 7 – Trusting More Than You Understand

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Search my heart, Lord.”

Exhale: “Set my heart on you.”

Connection Point:

By now, you’ve spent a week looking at heart posture through Hebrews 4, Psalm 131, and several other passages. Proverbs 3 gathers the pieces together. Trust. Heart. Ways. Paths. This is the shape of a life turned toward God.

Leaning on your own understanding can look very “put together” from the outside. It can sound like careful planning, strong opinions, or wise caution.

But underneath, it often means this: “I will only feel safe if I understand, control, or predict what happens next.” In military life, there is almost always something you do not understand or control. That can either fuel anxiety and anger, or drive you deeper into trust.

Trusting the Lord with all your heart does not mean you shut your brain off. It means you decide that His character is more solid than your analysis. It means you submit your ways—your decisions, your habits, your schedule, your dreams—to Him day after day. It means you let Him straighten your path, even when you would have chosen a different route.

As you close this first week of Lent, consider this: God is not just asking you to give something up. He is inviting you to give Him your whole inner life—your thoughts, your emotions, your fears, your hopes. This is where real transformation happens. This is where heart posture shifts.

Journal Prompt:

Where are you currently leaning hard on your own understanding? Name one situation where you are relying more on your analysis, planning, or fear than on God’s character. What would it look like in practical terms to trust the Lord with all your heart in that one area?

Scripture:

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not
on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make
your paths straight.

Prayer:

Lord, I admit that I often trust my own understanding more than I trust you. I hold tightly to what I can see and predict. Today, I choose to submit my ways to you. Straighten my path as you see fit. Teach my heart to rest in Who you are, not in what I can control. As I continue this Lenten journey, keep shaping my heart posture toward humility, peace, trust, and hope in you alone. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Day 8 – The Mindset of Christ

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Make me humble like Jesus.”

Connection Point:

Humility is not just about thinking less of yourself. It is about thinking like Jesus. Paul invites us into something huge here: “have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.” Jesus knew exactly who He was. He was not confused about His power or His glory. Yet He laid it down. He took on flesh, lived in an ordinary body, submitted to human parents, and walked dusty roads. The One who created the universe learned to hold a hammer and wash feet.

In military life, humility can be misunderstood.

We often hear “be strong,” “be resilient,” “handle it.” That can quietly turn into a mindset where we believe we should never need anything, never show weakness, never admit we are overwhelmed. But the Son of God did not cling to His rights. He chose the lower place. He chose obedience over comfort, service over status.

Humility is not pretending you don’t have gifts or calling—that you are less than you are. It is bringing all that you are under the leadership of Jesus, willing to be poured out as He directs. Lent is a perfect time to examine where your mindset has drifted away from His.

Journal Prompt:

Where does your mindset look different from the mindset of Christ in Philippians 2:5–8? Write about one specific area where you cling to your “rights,” reputation, or control instead of choosing the lower, obedient way.

Scripture:

Philippians 2:5–8 (NIV)

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death

— even death on a cross!

Prayer:

Jesus, you had every right to stay on the throne of heaven, but you chose to come near. You humbled yourself for my sake. I confess that I often cling to my comfort, my plans, and my image. Teach me your mindset. Shape my thoughts and desires so that I become more willing to serve, obey, and lay myself down for others. Amen.

Day 9 – Doing Nothing out of Selfish Ambition

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Make me humble like Jesus.”

Connection Point:

“Do nothing” is strong language. Paul does not say “try to limit” selfish ambition. He says do nothing from it. Selfish ambition and vain conceit show up in subtle ways: needing to be admired, wanting to be seen as the most capable, saying yes to things mainly to protect how people see you.

In a military context, it can look like chasing every opportunity, position, or recognition at the cost of your soul, your family, or your walk with God. It can also look like spiritual pride: serving in every ministry so no one can say you are not “all in,” while secretly resenting others who do not do as much.

Humility does not erase your interests. It reorders them. It allows you to look at the people around you and genuinely ask, “What would be good for them?” It frees you to step back when needed, to let another person shine, to serve quietly without applause. Lent gives you time to notice the motives beneath your actions, and to ask God to purify them.

Journal Prompt:

Think about an area of service, work, or ministry in your life. What honestly motivates you there? Write about any traces of selfish ambition or “vain conceit” you notice, and how humility might reshape your approach.

Scripture:

Philippians 2:3–4 (NIV)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Prayer:

Lord, you see my motives more clearly than I do. Reveal where selfish ambition or vanity is driving my choices. I do not want to serve for my own glory. Teach me to value others above myself and to look to their interests with a sincere heart. Help me walk in true humility today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 10 – “I’ve Got This”

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Make me humble like Jesus.”

Connection Point (Melissa’s Story, Part 1):

“When I married my husband,” Melissa remembers, “I wasn’t too worried. I grew up in an Army family. I thought I knew what I had signed up for.” At their first duty station, when her husband disappeared into the field for weeks at a time, she repeated a quiet motto in her heart: “I’ve got this.”

On the outside, it looked healthy. She joined a supper club, went to chapel Bible study, served as a middle school Sunday school teacher, subbed at the on-post schools, adopted a dog, and learned to manage a home. Her calendar was full of good things. Check, check, check.

But underneath, something else was going on. Those good and healthy actions were not flowing from a heart deeply dependent on God and connected with His people. They were fueled by self-sufficiency. Melissa could help others, but she would not ask anyone to help her. She walked through a painful health struggle without letting anyone in, not even to pray for her.

Humility is not just about how you see other people. It is about how you see yourself in relation to God and His Body. If you always live by “I’ve got this,” you quietly cut yourself off from the encouragement, comfort, and shared life Paul describes in Philippians 2. Lent gives you space to ask: Am I pretending to be independent when God designed me to live in dependence on Him and in community with others?

Journal Prompt:

Where do you find yourself saying “I’ve got this” to God or to others? Write about a specific area where you resist asking for help or prayer. What would it look like to practice humility there?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank you for uniting me with yourself and with your people. Forgive me for the ways I live as if I do not need help. Show me where self-sufficiency has replaced dependence on you and community with others. Give me courage to ask for prayer and support when I need it. Amen.

Scripture:

Philippians 2:1–2 (NIV)

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Day 11 – Hidden Pride and Honest Grace

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: "My heart is not proud, Lord."

Exhale: "Make me humble like Jesus."

Connection Point (Melissa's Story, Part 2):

Melissa's season of "I've got this" did not look obviously sinful from the outside. She was serving, leading, and showing up. Yet she knew what was happening in her heart. She did not want to need anyone. She did not want to appear weak. She carried pain in silence, assuming she could manage it on her own.

This is one of the sneakiest forms of pride. It rarely shows up on a list of "big sins," but it creates distance between us and God, and between us and others. When we insist on carrying everything alone, we are quietly saying, "I do not really need you." James gives a different invitation. Humble yourselves before the Lord. Let Him be the One who lifts you up.

Humbling yourself starts with honest agreement with God. It is telling Him the truth about your limits, your weakness, your fear, and even your motives. It is admitting that you are not the savior of your family, your unit, your church, or your friends. You are a beloved child who is allowed to need.

When Melissa finally began to admit her need and ask others to pray, she was not crushed. She was lifted. She experienced God's care through the hands and words of the women around her. The same God who calls you to humble yourself promises to meet you there with grace.

Journal Prompt:

What keeps you from humbling yourself before the Lord and others? Is it fear, shame, image, culture, past hurt? Write honestly about what makes humility feel risky to you.

Prayer:

Father, I confess that hidden pride often keeps me from asking for help or admitting my need. I have tried to carry things I was never meant to carry alone. Today I humble myself before you. I need your strength, your wisdom, and your people. Lift me up in your way and your time. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scripture:

James 4:10 (NIV)

Humble yourselves
before the Lord, and he
will lift you up.

Day 12 – Being Transformed, Not Performing

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Make me humble like Jesus.”

Connection Point:

Pride tells us we must perform our way into worth. Humility remembers that transformation is God’s work.

Paul paints a picture of believers with unveiled faces, looking at the glory of the Lord and, over time, being changed into His image. Notice who does the transforming. It “comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

Scripture:

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Many of us treat humility like another self-improvement project. We see our pride and decide to “fix it” by trying harder to act humble. That often leads to spiritual performance: saying the right words, deflecting compliments, serving past your limits while resenting it inside. Real humility is not a costume you put on. It is the fruit of beholding Jesus and letting His Spirit work in you.

During Lent, you are not just scrutinizing your own heart. You are looking at Christ. You are remembering His life, His death, and His resurrection. You are contemplating His glory in the Scriptures and in the stories of His people. As you look at Him, the Spirit slowly, steadily makes you more like Him. That includes His humility.

This means you can relax your grip on image management. You do not have to “act humble” to impress God or others. You are invited to keep turning your face toward the Lord and trusting that He is at work, even when you only see small changes.

Journal Prompt:

Where do you feel pressure to perform spiritually, to “act humble” or “act strong” rather than simply be honest before God? How might contemplating Christ and relying on the Spirit change your approach?

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, thank you that transformation comes from you. I cannot remake my own heart. As I look at Jesus, change me. Strip away my need to perform or manage my image. Grow in me the kind of humility that looks like Christ, from the inside out. Amen.

Day 13 – Walking Humbly with Your God

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Make me humble like Jesus.”

Scripture:

Micah 6:8 (NIV)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Connection Point:

Sometimes we want a complicated answer to what God expects from us. Micah gives a simple, weighty summary: act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with your God. Humility here is not a one-time decision. It is a way of walking, a daily journey.

Humility shapes how you see yourself, but it also shapes how you treat others. Acting justly means refusing to use your power, rank, or position in ways that harm or overlook the vulnerable. Loving mercy means delighting to forgive, restore, and care for those who are struggling. Walking humbly means doing all of this with a constant awareness that you, too, are a recipient of grace.

In military life, there are many opportunities to either step on others or stoop to serve them. You encounter hierarchies, systems, and stress that can bring out the worst in people. Humility keeps you grounded in who God is and who you are. You are not above anyone. You are a sinner saved by grace, called to reflect God’s character in your small corner of the world.

Lent is a good time to ask whether your heart posture toward others reflects the justice, mercy, and humility God loves.

Journal Prompt:

Where in your current context can you “act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly”? Think of one relationship or space where God might be inviting you to live this out more intentionally.

Prayer:

God, you have shown me what is good. I want to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you. Show me any ways I have been harsh, unfair, or proud in my relationships. Give me a soft heart, clear eyes, and willing hands to reflect your justice and mercy today. Amen.

Day 14 – Exalted in the Right Time

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Make me humble like Jesus.”

Connection Point:

This week began with Jesus stepping down from heaven’s glory. It ends with a promise: when you humble yourself under God’s mighty hand, He will lift you up in the right time. The lifting is His job. The humbling is yours.

Peter tells us to clothe ourselves with humility. It is an image of getting dressed on purpose. In the morning, you choose what to put on. In the same way, you can ask the Lord to help you choose humility as you interact with your spouse, children, coworkers, leaders, and neighbors. You can choose to listen more than you speak, to serve without needing credit, to admit when you are wrong, to submit your plans to God.

Scripture:

1 Peter 5:5–6 (NIV)

All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

The warning is real. God opposes the proud. Pride puts us in direct conflict with His heart. The promise is also real. He gives grace to the humble. He favors those who know they need Him. In due time, in His way, He lifts them. That lifting might look different than what you would have chosen, but it will be for your good and His glory.

As you close this week, bring your pride, your self-sufficiency, and your fears to Him again. Ask for the grace to keep walking this road of humility through the rest of Lent.

Journal Prompt:

Looking back over this week, where have you seen God nudging you toward humility? Where do you sense Him asking you to “clothe yourself with humility” in a very practical way?

Prayer:

Mighty God, I do not want to live in a way that you oppose. I want to live under your mighty hand, trusting your timing and your lifting. I humble myself before you again. Show me where I still cling to pride. Give me grace to clothe myself with humility in my relationships. Thank you that you see me and will lift me up in due time. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Day 15 – A Towel Around His Waist

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Teach me to serve like Jesus.”

Connection Point:

John does not want us to miss this: Jesus knew exactly who He was. He knew the Father had given Him all authority. He knew His origin and His destiny. And yet, knowing all of that, He wrapped a towel around His waist and knelt to wash dirt, sweat, mud, and filth from between His disciples’ toes.

Power did not make Jesus proud. Identity did not make Him unreachable. Being rightfully worshiped in heaven did not keep Him from serving on earth.

For many of us in military life, we are surrounded by rank structures, command authority, and roles of responsibility. We are trained to make decisions, take charge, and move toward mission accomplishment. Those are good and necessary things. But Jesus shows us a different kind of command presence—one that kneels.

Serving is not beneath Him. It is who He is. Humility is not a downgrade. It is glory expressed in love.

Lent invites you to see service not as an extra burden on an already stretched life, but as a Christ-shaped expression of your identity as one who belongs to Him.

Journal Prompt:

Where is God inviting you to take up a “towel and basin” in this season—at home, in your unit, your workplace, your church, or your neighborhood?

Scripture:

John 13:3–5 (NIV)

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Prayer:

Jesus, you knew your authority and still chose the floor. Shape my heart to see service not as loss, but as love. Give me willingness to do the unseen work, the quiet work, and the work no one thanks me for. Make me more like you. Amen.

Day 16 – “What Can I Do?” vs. “Someone Else Will Handle It”

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Teach me to serve like Jesus.”

Scripture:

John 13:14–15 (NIV)

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Connection Point (Melissa’s Story – The Crying Baby):

Melissa tells a story from a chapel Bible study:

A baby began to cry. Many of the women turned and gave gentle smiles. Melissa felt sympathy, but internally shrugged, “What can I do?”

Then the leader—herself a mother of four with heavy responsibilities—quietly walked to the young mom and reached out her arms to hold the baby so she could rest.

No announcement. No praise. No spotlight. Just Christlike service.

Melissa remembers her shock. The leader did not think about status, rank, schedule, or fatigue. She simply saw a need and moved toward it. The crying stopped. The mother exhaled. Worship resumed.

This is what it means to wash feet in real life. Sometimes service is not about solving everything—it’s about noticing and stepping in with presence and compassion.

Journal Prompt:

Think of a recent moment when you noticed a need but didn’t respond. What held you back—uncertainty, inconvenience, fear, exhaustion, pride? Invite the Spirit to rewrite that hesitation into readiness.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, train my eyes to see needs rather than assume someone else will meet them. Make me responsive, interruptible, and willing. Give me a heart like yours—full of compassion and action. Amen.

Day 17 – The Weaned Child and The Quiet Servant

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: "My heart is not proud, Lord."

Exhale: "Teach me to serve like Jesus."

Connection Point:

Service is often noisy—needs, tasks, demands, interruptions—but Jesus teaches us that true humility flows from a calmed and quieted soul, not frantic self-sacrifice. A weaned child comes for the presence of her mother, not performance.

Lent forms us into people who serve without resentment and without the silent scorekeeping that whispers, "Does anyone see what I do?" When serving flows from a soul at rest in God, we stop competing and start loving. We don't serve to earn belonging but because we already belong.

Journal Prompt:

How would your service change if you served from rest instead of pressure? Write one sentence that describes the difference.

Scripture:

Psalm 131:2 (CSB)
Instead, I have calmed
and quieted my soul
like a weaned child
with its mother;
my soul is like
a weaned child.

Prayer:

God, quiet my soul so that my serving is rooted in your love, not striving. Let my heart be like a content child—secure, loved, and free to give. Amen.

Day 18 – The Servant Who Sees the Dirt and Still Bends Down

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Teach me to serve like Jesus.”

Connection Point:

Jesus washed the feet of all twelve disciples—including Judas. He saw the betrayal, the denial, the abandonment coming. Still, he served.

Scripture:

Mark 10:45 (NIV)

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Humility is not naïve. It does not deny the dirt. It kneels anyway.

You will be called to serve people who may never say thank you, who misunderstand you, who have hurt you, who take more than they give. Jesus shows us that serving others does not mean approving their actions. It means reflecting His heart.

Sometimes the most Christlike service is forgiving while you fold laundry, praying while you pour coffee, choosing not to retaliate, or helping someone who has wounded you.

Journal Prompt:

Is there someone you struggle to serve because of past disappointment or hurt? Ask Jesus what a safe and obedient next step might look like.

Prayer:

Jesus, you served those who failed you, denied you, and betrayed you. Make my heart more like yours. Show me where service and boundaries meet, and teach me to serve in love without bitterness. Amen.

Day 19 – Abiding Before Doing

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Teach me to serve like Jesus.”

Connection Point:

Without abiding, service becomes exhaustion.

We cannot serve like Jesus without living connected to Jesus. Humility admits this:

I cannot love well on my own.

Remaining in Christ means:

- pausing before reacting,
- praying before speaking,
- asking before acting,
- resting before overcommitting.

Scripture:

John 15:5 (NIV)

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

Branches do not strain to produce grapes. Fruit grows because of connection.

Lent invites us to slow down enough to ask:

Am I serving from overflow or emptiness?

Journal Prompt:

What is one daily moment or routine where you can intentionally “remain” in Christ (e.g., a breath prayer while washing dishes, a Psalm before checking messages, silence before replying)?

Prayer:

Vine of Life, apart from you I can do nothing. Connect me to your heart so my serving bears real fruit, not burnout. Let everything I do be done with you, not just for you. Amen.

Day 20 – The Blessing in The Doing

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “My heart is not proud, Lord.”

Exhale: “Teach me to serve like Jesus.”

Connection Point:

Jesus ends the foot-washing not with symbolism, but with invitation: Do this.

Not just know it. Not just admire it. Do it.

Some blessings can only be found on our knees with a towel in our hands. There is joy in hidden service, presence in ordinary tasks, and transformation in the small yes.

You may never wash literal feet, but you may:

- wipe a tear,
- hold a baby,
- bring a meal,
- drive a friend to an appointment,
- sit beside someone in grief,
- volunteer quietly,
- serve your spouse in a moment when you feel empty.

These acts are not small in the Kingdom. They are the shape of Christ’s love.

Journal Prompt:

Ask the Lord to show you one specific act of service to do in the next 48 hours. Write it down. Commit to it.

Scripture:

John 13:17 (NIV)

Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you that blessing is tucked into obedience. Give me grace to do what you are teaching me, not just think about it. Make me eager to serve and slow to seek recognition. Amen.

Day 21 – The Quiet Glory of The Low Places

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: "My heart is not proud, Lord."

Exhale: "Teach me to serve like Jesus."

Connection Point:

Your service is not identical to anyone else's. God's grace comes in "various forms." For some, serving looks like leading. For others, interceding. For some, cooking meals. For others, offering childcare during deployment. For some, teaching Scripture. For others, offering patient friendship during a PCS season.

Humility frees you to serve without comparison. It lets you step into the low places without believing you are unimportant. The low places are often where God's glory shines most beautifully.

Jesus washed feet. That means no act done in love is ever beneath you.

Journal Prompt:

What gifts has God given you that you may have undervalued because they are quiet, domestic, unseen, or ordinary? How might God want to use them for His glory?

Prayer:

Giver of every good gift, help me steward what you have given me to serve others. Remove comparison, competition, and insecurity. Let me serve joyfully in whatever ways you call me. Make me a faithful steward of your grace. Amen.

Scripture:

1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Day 22 – Too Great and Too Wonderful

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Be still, my soul.”

Exhale: “God holds my future.”

Scripture:

Psalm 131:1 (CSB)

Lord, my heart is not proud;

my eyes are not haughty.

I do not get involved with things
too great or too wondrous for me.

Connection Point:

Some things are simply too great and too wondrous for us—too vast, too unknown, too complex to solve, fix, predict, or control. Yet many of us spend emotional energy living in a future we cannot see or repairing a past we cannot change.

Peace begins with accepting our limits.

In military life, many circumstances are outside of our control: orders, timing, deployments, medical results, school transitions, housing availability, and support systems that come and go. Lent invites us to release our clenched mental grasp on what is too great for us and entrust it to the God who knows all.

Peace is not passive. It is a chosen posture:

I will not rule the world in my imagination.

I will rest in the One who actually does.

Journal Prompt:

Write down one situation in your life right now that feels “too great and too wondrous” for you. What do you gain by trying to control it? What do you lose?

Prayer:

Lord, teach me to recognize when I am stepping into matters that belong to you alone. Humble my mind and steady my emotions. Help me release what I cannot hold so I can receive the peace you give. Amen.

Day 23 – When Anxiety Becomes The Plan

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Be still, my soul.”

Exhale: “God holds my future.”

Connection Point (Marissa’s Story, Part I):

Marissa shared, “Like Melissa marrying her sweet husband, I thought I knew what I was in for when I started a PhD program in literature. I already have a master’s degree, loved writing, and loved reading—how hard could it be?” In the midst of motherhood, it turned out to be exhausting—a semester marked by long research hours, multiple papers due within days of each other, a sick child, and mounting anxiety. To combat the anxiety, she made a detailed timeline—a plan to control the future. Every morning she would wake up, check the timeline and work, get her child prepped for school, work, and then when the family was home, she would glance repeatedly at the schedule wondering if she would get it all done—a liturgy of anxiety. She was missing the joy of the present moment in fear of a failure that was imagined. And when her daughter got sick she learned a critical lesson, the timeline couldn’t hold her anxiety.

Scripture:

Matthew 6:34 (CSB)

Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Jesus tells us not to worry about tomorrow—not because tomorrow will be easy, but because *He will still be Lord when tomorrow arrives.*

She was not wrong for planning; planning is wise. But anxiety, through habit, became the plan. Worry became the strategy. And when her daughter became ill, the future she was clinging to collapsed alongside a timeline she could no longer meet. In that collapse came surrender, and through surrender came peace.

Journal Prompt:

When has planning crossed into anxiety for you? What were the warning signs?

Prayer:

Father, I confess that I often use worry as a shield, as if anxiety could prepare me for what may come. Teach me to plan with wisdom but trust you with the outcome. Anchor me in today. Amen.

Day 24 – The God Who Multiplies Strength

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Be still, my soul.”

Exhale: “God holds my future.”

Connection Point (Marissa’s Story Part II):

With her timeline to tackle three 20-page papers due on three distinct topics within a one-week period shattered by family needs, Marissa was breaking under the burden of doing everything in her own strength. She needed help. And turned to God. She began to pray, not for perfection, but for enough. Reminding herself that the manna came every day in the wilderness and it was just enough for each day. Enough clarity to write, enough calm to mother, enough time to finish. And God met her not with judgment, but with multiplication. As He will meet you in your own struggle when you turn it over to Him.

He strengthened her mind when it was foggy.

He gave her humor in a married-kitchen-moment when she expected resentment.

He revealed connections in her paper during a 2 AM moment of unexpected clarity.

Grace multiplied. Effort did not. And it was a holistic blessing that touched every bit of her life, not just her work. Because we are more than our work. We are wholly human made in the image of a Holy God.

This is the difference between peace and pressure: peace comes from trust, not performance.

Journal Prompt:

Where have you seen God multiply something small in your life—your time, your energy, your faith, your capacity?

Scripture:

Galatians 3:4–5 (AMP)

Have you suffered so many things and experienced so much all for nothing—if indeed it was all for nothing?

So then, does He who supplies you with His marvelous Holy Spirit and works powerfully and miraculously among you do so on the grounds of your doing what the Law demands, or because of your believing, adhering to, and trusting in Him?

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, thank you that you supply power, not pressure. Thank you for multiplying what I cannot increase on my own. Teach me to trust your provision and abandon self-sufficiency. Amen.

Day 25 – The Present is Where God Is

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Be still, my soul.”

Exhale: “God holds my future.”

Scripture:

Matthew 6:26 (CSB)

Consider the birds of the sky: they don't sow
or reap or gather into barns, yet your
heavenly Father feeds them.
Aren't you worth more than they?

Connection Point:

When anxiety is high, the present moment feels like a thief. We either run back to the past, rewriting it, or sprint ahead to the future, bracing for impact. But Jesus keeps calling us back to now.

Birds are fed in the present.

Lilies are clothed in the present.

You are loved in the present.

In her PhD story, the moment Marissa stopped staring at the whiteboard calendar and began noticing God in each single day, peace grew. Not because the semester changed, but because she was finally in the same place that God was working—the present moment.

Journal Prompt:

What keeps you from living in the present moment: regret, distraction, fear, busyness, or something else? What helps you return to here and now?

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for meeting me in this day. Not the day I wish for, not the day I fear, but this one. Slow my mind and settle my spirit so I can experience your presence here. Amen.

Day 26 – When The Timeline Breaks

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Be still, my soul.”

Exhale: “God holds my future.”

Connection Point:

This verse almost sounds like Jesus is smiling when He asks it. Has worry ever added anything? Extended life, strengthened relationships, improved sleep, increased joy? No. Worry shrinks life.

It contracts our imagination until all we can see is danger.

Scripture:

Matthew 6:27 (CSB)

Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying?

When Marissa’s daughter became sick and the semester pressure intensified, the timeline fell apart. The plan was no longer possible. It was in that valley that she found peace—not in control, but in surrender.

Sometimes God allows the timeline to break so trust can begin.

Journal Prompt:

Write about a time when something breaking (a plan, a timeline, an expectation) led to spiritual growth or deeper trust.

Prayer:

God, I have believed the lie that worry prepares me for life. But your Word tells me it only steals from me. Break what needs breaking so that trust can grow in its place. Amen.

Day 27 – Be Still

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Be still, my soul.”

Exhale: “God holds my future.”

Connection Point:

“Be still” is not a gentle whisper in this psalm. It is a command to stop striving, stop fighting the story, stop playing God, and remember who actually runs the universe.

Scripture:

Psalm 46:10 (NIV)

“Be still, and know that I am God,
exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth.”

God is not just present. He is exalted.

Your peace is not rooted in your ability to hold things together. Your peace is rooted in the character and reign of God.

Be still does not mean be inactive. It means be anchored.

Journal Prompt:

Where are you internally striving—mentally, spiritually, emotionally? What might it look like to obey God’s command to “be still” in that area?

Prayer:

God, you are exalted. Not my fear, not my imagination, not my timeline. You alone are my peace. Train my heart to stop fighting and know that you are God. Amen.

Day 28 – Peace That Changes Our Posture

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Be still, my soul.”

Exhale: “God holds my future.”

Connection Point:

Peace is not the absence of responsibility or hardship. It is the presence of trust. At the end of her semester, Marissa reflected: “I did not have to sacrifice my family at the altar of my anxiety. I had to sacrifice my anxiety at the altar of Christ.”

That is peace:

A re-ordered altar.

A re-directed sacrifice.

A re-postured heart.

She was still writing, still caregiving, still carrying weight. But peace changed the way she carried it. And multiplied her efforts.

As Lent continues, we follow Jesus toward the cross—the place where the future was secured, the past redeemed, and the present filled with grace. You can be at peace in this moment because Jesus holds every moment.

Journal Prompt:

What altar have you been sacrificing your peace on—control, fear, productivity, image, approval, outcomes? Write a prayer of release.

Scripture:

Galatians 3:7 (AMP)

So then, those who are the people of faith are blessed and favored by God.

Prayer:

Prince of Peace, reorder my heart. I lay down my anxiety, my demand to know the future, my fear of not being enough. I receive your peace, purchased at the cross, given through your Spirit, steady and sufficient for this day and every day ahead. Amen.

Day 29 – Like a Weaned Child

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Lord, I trust you.”

Exhale: “Hold me like a child.”

Connection Point:

Trust is not theoretical. It is embodied. It looks like a child leaning into a parent’s chest, no longer frantic for milk, no longer panicked by hunger, but quieted by presence alone.

Scripture:

Psalm 131:2 (CSB)

Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is like a weaned child.

In military life, the future can feel like shifting ground. Orders change, deployments extend, timelines collapse. But Scripture gives us an image that is not tied to our circumstances—a weaned child resting, safe and settled.

A weaned child does not come for what the mother can give but for who she is. Trust says: I want you, not just your solutions.

I rest in you, not in what you provide.

This is the inner stillness Lent offers. Not denial of hardship, but a steadying of the heart in the arms of God.

Journal Prompt:

Describe a moment in your life when you felt safe, held, or protected—by God or another person. What did trust feel like in your body and emotions?

Prayer:

Lord, quiet my soul like a weaned child. Teach me to rest in who you are, not in what I can control. Make trust my posture and your presence my peace. Amen.

Day 30 – When The Orders Drop

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Lord, I trust you.”

Exhale: “Hold me like a child.”

Connection Point (Stephanie’s Story, Part 1):

The moment her husband said, “I got my orders,” panic gripped Stephanie’s heart. She knew they had to move, but she didn’t want to. Her thoughts went straight to the worst-case scenarios:

The kids won’t make friends.

The house will have problems.

Deployment will come immediately.

We will be alone.

Sleep fled. Fear grew. The future felt like a storm she could not stop.

Then her husband gently said,

“You need to live in the present. Look at all God has done for us.”

Trust shifts our gaze. It does not pretend the future is easy; it remembers that God is already there.

Journal Prompt:

Where has fear about the future been stealing your ability to live in the present? Write honestly about it.

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Prayer:

Father, you see the places where my imagination runs toward fear instead of faith. Pull my attention back to your presence and your past faithfulness. Teach me to trust you with what I cannot see. Amen.

Scripture:

Proverbs 3:5–6 (CSB)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own
understanding;
in all your ways know him,
and he will make your paths straight.

Day 31 – Remembering What God Has Done

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Lord, I trust you.”

Exhale: “Hold me like a child.”

Scripture:

Psalm 3:3 (CSB)

But you, Lord, are a shield around me,
my glory, and the one who lifts up my head.

Connection Point (Stephanie’s Story, Part 2):

Stephanie began to remember. She wrote down the long list of God’s past provisions. Again and again, through moves, deployments, loneliness, and uncertainty, God had held them.

As she remembered, her heart quieted. Her head lifted. The move ahead was still unknown, but she was no longer facing it alone.

Sometimes trust begins not with new information, but with remembering what God already proved true.

He has shielded you before.

He has lifted your head before.

He has brought you through before.

He will again.

Journal Prompt:

List at least five specific ways God has provided, protected, guided, or comforted you in past seasons.

Prayer:

Lord, you are my shield and the lifter of my head. Where I have forgotten your goodness, restore my memory. Let remembering lead me back to trust. Amen.

Day 32 – His Power in Our Weakness

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: "Lord, I trust you."

Exhale: "Hold me like a child."

Connection Point:

Military families often feel pressure to "hold it together." But the gospel does not require strength as a precondition for God's help. Weakness is not a disqualification. It is an invitation to experience grace.

God does not wait for you to be unafraid before
He becomes your refuge.

He does not wait for you to be strong before
He becomes your strength.

When you feel overwhelmed, under-supported,
or undone, trust sounds like this:

"I cannot carry this, but you can."

Scripture:

2 Corinthians 12:9 (CSB)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness." Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me.

Journal Prompt:

Where do you currently feel weak, inadequate, or weary?

Write a prayer of surrender inviting God's power into that place.

Prayer:

Jesus, your grace is enough for me. I release the pressure to be strong on my own. Let your power rest on me in my weakness. Amen.

Day 33 – What We Cannot See

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Lord, I trust you.”

Exhale: “Hold me like a child.”

Connection Point:

Military life is full of visible challenges—boxes, orders, separation, reintegration, new schools, new doctors, unfamiliar roads, hard goodbyes. It is tempting to believe that what is visible is most real.

But Scripture flips the lens:

The unseen is more permanent than the seen.

Trust shifts our focus from:

What if this goes wrong? -- to. – What if God is doing something eternal here?

The move that feels like a setback may be setting the stage for deep growth. The waiting that feels wasted may become the place you learn to hear God’s voice more clearly.

Journal Prompt:

Where is God inviting you to look beyond what is visible and trust that He is working in ways you cannot yet perceive?

Scripture:

2 Corinthians 4:18 (CSB)

So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Prayer:

Lord, train my eyes for the unseen. When I am overwhelmed by what I can see, remind me that you are working in eternity, not just in this moment. Amen.

Day 34 – Content in Any Season

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: “Lord, I trust you.”

Exhale: “Hold me like a child.”

Connection Point:

Contentment is learned, not automatic. It grows through seasons of unpredictability. It matures through experiences that require faith instead of control.

A weaned child is content not because life is easy, but because presence is enough.

Trust says:

Even here, you are with me.

Even here, you will provide.

Even here, I can rest.

Journal Prompt:

What is one circumstance in which God is inviting you to practice contentment rather than resistance?

Scripture:

Philippians 4:11–12 (CSB)

I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself... In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content.

Prayer:

Father, teach me the secret of contentment—not denial of pain, but confidence in your presence. Let my soul be settled in you. Amen.

Day 35 – In His Hands, Not Ours

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: "Lord, I trust you."

Exhale: "Hold me like a child."

Connection Point:

We close this week where we began—with a mother and a weaned child.

Scripture:

Psalm 131:2 (CSB)

I have calmed and quieted my soul... like a weaned child.

With stillness.

With trust.

With rest.

Stephanie shared about a PCS move where her children cried, asking, "Are we going to be okay?" She gathered them in her arms, holding them through their fear. And she knew: I am not holding them alone. Christ—in His infinite kindness, gentleness, mercy, and compassion, was holding all of them.

This is trust.

Not the absence of tears, but the awareness of the presence of a God who lifts our heads.
Not the guarantee of easy outcomes, but the promise of eternal care.

When you do not feel strong, look up.

When you cannot see the future, lean in.

When you are weary of being brave, rest like a child in the arms of God.

Journal Prompt:

Finish this sentence in prayer form:

"Lord, I am like a weaned child because ____."

Prayer:

Jesus, thank you that I do not walk into the future alone. You go before me, you stay beside me, and you carry me when I cannot keep moving. Teach me to trust you more deeply, more freely, and more like a child. Amen.

Day 36 — A Living Hope

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: Your cross is love.

Exhale: Your resurrection is coming.

Scripture:

1 Peter 1:3–5 (CSB)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Connection Point:

Military life can stretch us thin with relocations, separations, deployments, unpredictable orders, and the fear of losing what feels like home. But Peter calls our hope living—not theoretical, not fragile, not circumstantial.

Living hope cannot be uprooted because it is not planted in a zip code, a medical outcome, a deployment timeline, a promotion, or a housing assignment. Our hope has a name, and His name is Jesus.

This living hope is:

- imperishable — it won't rot or be ruined by loss
- undefiled — no trauma, betrayal, illness, or war can stain it
- unfading — it won't weaken with age, exhaustion, or disappointment

Where the world offers temporary reassurance, Jesus offers eternal inheritance. You are being guarded by God's power. Not by your plans. Not by your readiness. Not by your strength.

Journal Prompt:

Where has your hope been attached to something that can fade? What would it look like to reattach it to Jesus?

Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for a living hope that no circumstance can diminish. Guard my heart with your power, and teach me to rest in the inheritance that cannot be lost. Amen.

Day 37 — For a Little While

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: Your cross is love.

Exhale: Your resurrection is coming.

Connection Point (Shelley's Story):

"A few years ago, not only was our family facing the "normal" military stressors, but I began experiencing a horrible series of health battles. Even with the hope of heaven as a believer, my present circumstances were miserable." For the next two years, Shelley suffered with an undiagnosed autoimmune disease—every bit of food causing reactions. Yet, while her emotions threatened to join the fray of suffering she held onto the verses you read today from 1 Peter. Words like 'now,' 'in the last time,' and 'for a little while' anchored her against the dark season. An anchor that she would need in future health struggles to come.

She says, "The ship began to right itself against the waves. And then ... I was diagnosed with breast cancer."

She asked: Lord, isn't one health battle enough?

Scripture does not deny the pain of trials. Instead, Peter phrases suffering within the timeline of eternity:

"for a short time"

"for a little while."

The suffering may feel endless while we are in it, but in God's measure of time, it is temporary. Not meaningless. Not wasted. Not abandoned. Temporary.

Gold is refined through fire. So is faith.

Military families understand "a little while" living:

- A little while until homecoming
- A little while until orders arrive
- A little while until the next move
- A little while until the medical results return
- A little while until the tearful becomes joyful again

Our hope is not that hardship will never touch us, but that it cannot destroy what Christ is forming in us.

Journal Prompt:

Write about a season of "a little while" suffering in your life. What did God refine in you?

Prayer:

Lord, do not let my suffering be wasted. Refine my faith until it reflects your glory, and hold me close while I wait. Amen.

Scripture:

1 Peter 1:6–7 (CSB)

You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Day 38 — Holy(Maundy) Thursday Conclusion: Hope on The Edge of Glory

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: Your cross is love.

Exhale: Your resurrection is coming.

Scripture: John 13:1–15 (CSB)

Psalm Thread: Psalm 131:2–3

Connection Point:

Lent began with heart posture. We have walked through humility, peace, trust, and hope. Now we come to the upper room, where Jesus kneels with a towel around His waist. The King becomes the Servant.

In John 13, Jesus knows what is coming: betrayal, arrest, beating, abandonment, crucifixion. And knowing all of this, He does not withdraw from love; He moves closer. He bends down. He washes feet that will run away from Him that very night.

This is hope: not escape from suffering, but love that endures through it.

Psalm 131 taught us to quiet our souls like a weaned child. Here, in the upper room, we see that child resting against the One who kneels to serve. Our hope is not theoretical; it takes the form of a Savior on His knees.

Military life teaches us something about Holy Thursday. We know the long night before the battle, the waiting before the deployment, the ache before the goodbye. We know what it is to hold our breath in the dark, not yet seeing the victory. But Scripture tells us: *Israel, put your hope in the Lord, both now and forevermore.* (Psalm 131:3)

Holy Thursday is the edge of that “now and forevermore.” It is the threshold between promise and fulfillment. Between sorrow and resurrection light. Hope is not naive optimism. Hope is a Savior with a basin and a towel, whose hands will be pierced within hours. Hope is holiness and humility in the same breath. Hope kneels.

As Jesus washes Peter’s feet, Peter resists. But Jesus says:
“Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

We are not saved by standing strong, but by being washed. We are not redeemed by self-sufficiency, but by surrender. Hope is not something we achieve. It is something we receive. And so we rest like a child, like a disciple with damp feet, like a heart learning to trust that Sunday is coming even though Friday is near. Let this be our Holy Thursday posture:

Not proud. Not haughty. Not striving for matters too great and too wondrous.
But quieted. Weaned. Anchored. Washed. Loved.

Journal Prompt:

Where in your life do you need Jesus to wash your feet—your fear, your control, your exhaustion, your shame, your striving? Write a prayer of surrender.

Prayer:

Jesus, Servant King, on this holy night you knelt in love and washed the feet of those who would fail you. Wash me too. Quiet my soul like a weaned child. Anchor me in hope as I wait for the dawn of resurrection. Your cross is love. Your resurrection is coming. Amen.

Day 39 — Anchored Hope

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: "Your cross is love."

Exhale: "Your resurrection is coming."

Connection Point:

PCS moves can feel anchorless.

Deployments can make home feel unmoored. Medical emergencies, grief, transitions, and spiritual battles can leave us drifting in uncertainty.

As Jesus is led to the cross, suffers and dies, the disciples become unmoored, drifting in uncertainty. They have fled for refuge, but where will they find hope?

They don't know what we do.

But Scripture does not say hope is a life preserver. It calls hope an anchor. Anchors do not remove storms, they hold us steady inside them.

Hope does not promise:

- easy assignments
- safe deployments
- painless diagnoses
- perfectly timed orders

Hope promises:

We will not drift from the One who holds us.

Journal Prompt:

What storm in your life needs an anchor right now?

What would it look like to seize the hope set before you?

Scripture:

Hebrews 6:18–19 (CSB)

We who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

Prayer:

Lord, be the anchor of my soul. When everything around me shifts, steady me in your unchanging love. Amen.

Day 40 — Hope That Waits

Breath Prayer:

Inhale: "Your cross is love."

Exhale: "Your resurrection is coming."

Connection Point:

The women who traveled with Jesus immediately got busy with the tasks of death and caring for Jesus' body. But, God's commandment forced them to wait. What thoughts went through their minds in those long hours of waiting.

Military life requires waiting: for orders, for safe returns, for phone calls, for medical answers, for doors to open, for hearts to heal. What thoughts go through your mind as you wait?
We know what those women didn't as they waited.

We know that our hope lives.

Waiting can feel like the opposite of progress, but biblically, waiting is the work of hope. If we could see the whole story, hope would not be needed. Waiting is evidence that hope is alive.

Hope says:

I don't see it yet, but God is already there.

I don't feel it yet, but God is already working.

Waiting becomes sacred when we learn to wait with God, not just wait for God.

Journal Prompt:

Where are you waiting right now? How might God want to meet you in the waiting itself?

Prayer:

God, train my heart to wait with patience, not despair. Turn my waiting into worship and my uncertainty into trust. Amen.

Scripture:

Romans 8:24-25 (CSB)

Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

Luke 23:54-56 (CSB)

It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed along and observed the tomb and how his body was placed. Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

Heart MATTERS

A LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Final Prayer

*We thank you Jesus for loving us so much.
Help us bear our crosses.
To love you enough to sacrifice.
To value you more than anything - even if it hurts.*

*Lord, break our wills.
Break our hearts.
Break our pride and self-sufficiency.
Whatever it takes to make us see.*

For you are worth everything.

~Amen.

ABOUT PLANTING ROOTS

Women in uniform and military wives find themselves:

- Frequently uprooted, yet longing for community.
- Constantly in limbo, yet longing for certainty.
- Consistently weary, yet longing for hope.

We get it.

We understand all the challenges (and the feelings that come with them). As women in uniform and military wives, we also live “in the trenches.” Some for a few years and some for many more. Combined we’ve served hundreds of years in the military community as women in uniform (active, guard, and reserve) and as military wives (or both), representing all branches of service. We have lived the life and continue to do so, experiencing all that it has to offer.

While we would agree that it can be hard, wearisome, and challenging, we also believe it has given us a front row seat to see God at work. We’ve seen hope, certainty, and community come to life as we walk out our faith, trusting the One who holds us all.

We don’t plant our roots in the dirt where we live. Instead, we plant our roots deeply in Christ Jesus. We’d love to testify that military life was a walk in the park as we live and walk with the Holy Spirit, but it’s not. Life can still be hard, seasons can be heavy, challenges still come, but we know who pours grace, mercy, and peace over it all.

Over the years, we’ve learned to study God’s Word, build community with other Christian women, and share the stories of God’s faithfulness. It’s what we do at Planting Roots. Here we provide **resources** to grow in faith, **community** so we don’t do it alone, and **events** that grow courage in us to keep going.

We believe God made us to do this life **TOGETHER** – and who better to “get your life” than those who walk it too? Our prayer is for all uniformed women and military wives to be deeply rooted in Christ, living in the hope and joy only He can provide, and sharing that hope with others.

We are Planting Roots.



WANT MORE?

Dig deeper in your faith through these
Planting Roots Bible studies available on Amazon

