



SEVEN DAYS OF SCRIPTURE AND PRAYERS

BASED ON *THE HIDDEN PRINCE*





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DEAR READER,

The past couple of years just about did me in. Between personal health challenges and the complexities of a disintegrating world, discouragement nipped at my feet every time I thought about the future. In fact, I even found myself struggling to pray.

During that time, I wrote a novel that asked the questions my own heart was wrestling with. What do you do when you feel like the future is bleak? What happens when your heart starts giving in to fear every time you think about tomorrow?

Something surprising happened as I wrote the story of Keren, a young Israelite captive in Babylon who loses everything and discovers that her destiny is forged in the midst of that loss. Keren's experiences in *The Hidden Prince* reminded me that the best is waiting around the corner, just a few steps beyond the worst.

While *The Hidden Prince* is in many ways an adventurous drama that I hope will make you smile and laugh, at its foundation it is a story of hope in dark times. A hope that leads to a renewal of trust in God while the future feels barren.

The following prayers and Scripture readings rose out of the journey of writing this book. I found that reciting these Scriptures and their promises helped me get back into my rhythm of prayer. If you're struggling as I was, I hope they might do the same for you. God has a destiny *for you*. It is part of his promise *to you*. I wrote these prayers to help your heart remember those promises. To remind your soul that you are not alone in this battle, to help set you free from fear and discouragement when you consider your future.

You can either read each daily selection or click on the links to access audio versions of me reading them. As I accompany you through each verse and short prayer, I hope your soul will find divine encouragement and strength until you find yourself looking forward to your future rather than feeling anxious at the thought of it.

Following the seven days of prayers, I've also included four of my favorite recipes inspired by the foods of ancient Babylon and Persia. You can try them out one at a time during your seven days of prayer or save them to enjoy as a celebration meal at the end!

Tessa



[Scan or click to download audio of all of the prayers](#)

DAY ONE

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

— PSALM 118:6 —

Dear Father, I have been living as though you are not on my side. As though I have to carve out the future by myself. As though I carry the responsibility for the safety of my loved ones. I have been growing more aware of my insufficiency than I am mindful of your sufficiency.

Help me, Jesus! Reestablish my trust in you. Remove the tendrils of fear from my deepest being. Let my thoughts be filled with the knowledge that I am your child. Loosen these bonds of fear from my thoughts. Let my conclusions about the future be formed by your Father heart, not by fear.

Lord, where I feel worn and fragile, help me remember you are my strength.

You *are* my strength.

Empower me where I feel weak. Where I feel fearful, counsel and quiet me. Where I feel I want to give up, enable me to rest in your love. Because your love is trustworthy.

Father, I choose to remember you are on my side!

In Jesus' name.



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DAY TWO

*Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work
of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!*

— PSALM 90:17 —

My Lord, remind me that you have a destiny for me. Remind me that the work of my hands matters to you. Establish that work upon me. Do not let the enemy rob me of my destiny or diminish it. Do not allow him to distort or destroy your plans for my future. In the name of Jesus, be a wall of fire round about me.

Father, let your favor be with me. As your Word promises, let your blessings come upon me and overtake me as I obey your voice. I surrender my desires to you. I trust you to establish the work of my hands. I trust you to be my provision in the coming days.

Where I have stopped believing that you have favor and blessing for my future, Lord, restore me. Forgive me for believing your enemy's lies about my future.

Today, God, I choose to turn to you. I long for your favor. I trust you to establish me in your security.

In Jesus' name.



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DAY THREE

But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.

— PSALM 3:3 —

Jesus, thank you that this wilderness is not the last word on my destiny.
You are.

You know the lies that have been coming against me: The lie that I am alone. The lie that it's all up to me. The lie that the future is not good anymore. The lie that I can't do this. The lie that you are not going to help me. I don't know when I started believing these lies. But I want to stop living as if they are the truth.

Jesus, you are the truth. You are the shield about me. You go before me and behind me. You hem me in. You lift up my head and heal me. Restore to me the joy of your presence, Lord. Draw me out of troubled waters and rescue me. Let my soul remember that you rescue me because you delight in me.

I entrust my future into your nail-pierced hands.

I will rest in you, Jesus.



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DAY FOUR

*Woe is me because of my hurt! My wound is grievous.
But I said, "Truly this is an affliction, and I must bear it."*

— JEREMIAH 10:19 —

Lord, you are my certainty. You are my security. Tend to my aching heart, my Lord. You know the source of my hurt. You know my wound. I sometimes feel that I cannot bear the weight of this uncertainty in our world. This anxiety is too great for me.

I lay my discouragement at your feet. Help me trust you to come through for my tomorrow.

Forgive me for my untrusting heart. Holy Spirit, I invite you to fill me now. Help me remember that I don't have to bear my hurts alone. I give you my burdens. Carry them, Lord. Break the weight of fear from me. Help me remember that you are a God who heals. Help me truly rest in the knowledge that my times are in your hand.

I will trust in your healing for my heart. I will trust my future to you.

In Jesus' name.



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DAY FIVE

*And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire
in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like
a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*

— ISAIAH 58:11 —

Father, help me grow strong in you. Let my faith rise up to remember that the future you have for me is good. You long to guide me continually. You long to satisfy my desire in the places that have been scorched over the past few years. You want to make the bones of my inner being so strong that the changes in the world no longer have the power to shake me.

Your intentions for me are good, Father! Jesus, help me remember that you intend to transform me into a well-watered garden.

Lord, I trust you with tomorrow. I will no longer be parched for peace. I will no longer be parched for joy. I will no longer be parched for strength. I will walk in your strength. I will impart blessing to others by your hand. And your favor upon me will not fail.

In Jesus' name.



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DAY SIX

*I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.*

— JOB 42:2 —

Lord, sometimes I forget that you can do all things. Sometimes, I act as if you are as limited as I am. As limited as this world is. Forgive my limited faith! Jesus, I can do all things through you, because you strengthen me in your love. Praise God!

Whatever purpose you have for my life, it cannot be thwarted. I invite you to take over every part of my future. Let nothing I choose block your purpose in my life. Release the fullness of your will for my future.

Father, help me to wait upon you without falling into disappointment, discouragement, or discontentment. Help me remember that your goodness will not bypass me. Help me take hold of your goodness right now, even in this hard place. I love you, Lord. I am your own beloved child.

With praise and thanksgiving, in Jesus' name.



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DAY SEVEN

*Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the victory and the majesty,
for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours.
Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all.*

— 1 CHRONICLES 29:11 —

Father, sometimes my view of you is so small. In my pain, I limit your greatness and power. Forgive me.

Now be exalted over my life. Rule over my dreams and plans. Rule over my sorrows. Rule over my broken pieces. Lord, rule over me. Reveal your glory to my inmost being.

Holy Spirit, guide me to remember at my very core that you will see me through. Today I commit to put you first and to follow you.

*I pray this in the name of the one to whom belongs
the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty
on this earth and in my life, even Jesus, my Savior.*





RECIPES TO ACCOMPANY

SEVEN DAYS OF PRAYER

Have you ever wondered what the foods of the Bible tasted like? The following recipes are inspired by the foods of ancient Babylon and Persia, from the biblical period between Jeremiah all the way through to Esther and Nehemiah.

Astoundingly, several recipe tablets from ancient Babylon survive, although they don't provide exact amounts, and a few of the words remain a mystery. The Persians have left us no surviving recipes from this ancient period, but I have included a couple of meals based on the foods I grew up with in my childhood. All of these recipes have been adjusted for the convenience of the modern cook.

Please remember to keep in mind any food allergies you or your guests may have.

STRAINED YOGURT WITH HERBS AND BREAD

FLATBREAD

Note: I use spelt and einkorn flours because they are ancient grains, probably closer in taste and texture to what wheat would have tasted like in the biblical era.

2 cups spelt flour
1 cup einkorn whole-grain flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ cup water (120–130°F)
2 tablespoons melted butter

Preheat oven to 500°F.

Mix the dry ingredients. Add water and melted butter and mix until completely incorporated. Cover and allow to rest for one hour.

Flour your work surface. Knead the dough until pliable and no longer sticky—about 5–7 minutes. Cover and allow to rest in a lightly oiled bowl for one more hour.

Divide the dough into 8 or 9 balls. Roll out the balls of dough into circles of about 6 inches or smaller in diameter.

Dust a baking sheet with flour and place two dough circles on it. Place the tray on the bottom rack of your oven and bake for 5–8 minutes. When they are almost ready, they will puff up. Allow an extra 30–45 seconds after that to make sure the inside is cooked. Repeat until all the flatbreads are baked.

Arrange your yogurt in the center of a large platter. Surround with fresh herbs and warm flatbread.

YOGURT

1 cup whole-fat yogurt with live cultures
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
Fresh herbs
Dried mint and chopped cucumbers (optional)

Line a colander with cheesecloth and set it over a bowl. Let the yogurt rest in the cloth overnight. Squeeze gently to remove any remaining water. Add salt. Voila! If you want a fancier version, you can add dried mint and chopped cucumbers.

Note: The leftover liquid is full of nutrients. I save it to cook rice in, although in ancient times the average person in the Middle East would not have had access to rice.





LAMB AND QUINCE STEW

1 fresh quince (you can find these in season,
around September–November)
2 tablespoons butter, divided
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, chopped
2 shallots, chopped

2 cloves of garlic, chopped
1 teaspoon turmeric
 $\frac{3}{4}$ pound lamb, cut in pieces
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon saffron, ground

Peel the quince and cut it into pieces roughly the size of an orange slice. Brown in 1 tablespoon butter. Be careful, as quince burns quickly. Set the quince aside.

Using the rest of the butter and the olive oil, fry the onions on low heat for a couple of minutes, then add shallots and garlic. Stir until golden. Add turmeric. Add lamb and brown it.

Add water and salt and cover. Simmer on low heat for 1 hour, or until lamb is tender enough to cut with a fork. Add additional water if necessary. You want a thick stew consistency.

After the lamb is cooked, add the saffron and quince and let simmer on low heat until the quince is tender, but not mushy (about 5 minutes). Enjoy with flatbread. If you want a more modern flavor, add the juice of half a lemon and serve with basmati rice.

Noosh-e-jaan! (Persian for “May it add pleasure to your life!”)



BABYLONIAN LAMB STEW

The following recipe is from a group of tablets that are almost four thousand years old!

ORIGINAL RECIPE

“Meat is used. You prepare water. You add fine-grained salt, *risnatu* [scholars think this might be a type of barley or emmer bread], onion, Persian shallot, and milk. You crush and add leek and garlic.”

RISNATU

Since the original directions do not tell you how to make these, I made up my own recipe.

1 cup flour (I used einkorn whole-grain flour)
½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons melted butter
⅓ cup warm water
Additional butter for frying

Mix flour, salt, melted butter, and warm water. Knead until no longer sticky. Divide into three balls. Roll out each ball to a ⅛ inch thickness.

Heat an iron skillet over medium heat. Add a small pat of butter. (Be careful to keep it from burning.) Cook the *risnatu* one at a time, flipping often until golden, about six minutes total.

STEW

1 lamb shank
3 tablespoons butter, divided
1 onion, finely chopped
2 large garlic cloves, minced
1½ cups water
3 shallots, chopped
¼ cup dried Persian shallots, soaked and finely chopped (see note below)
2 leeks, washed and chopped
Salt to taste
1 *risnatu* cake, crumbled by hand

(I skip the milk as they would have done in a Jewish household)





First, a note on Persian shallots: They are not shallots! They are a bit like elephant garlic but have a unique flavor. You can buy them in dried form. (I found them on Amazon.) Soak them overnight. After rinsing, cut off darker bits and they are ready to use.

Salt the lamb shank to taste, and brown it in a large skillet or saucepan. Set aside. Don't wash the pan!

The original recipe says "You prepare water." This is such a common part of Babylonian cooking that they don't explain how to do it. Here is how I prepared my water: In the same pan where you browned the lamb, combine 2 tablespoons butter, half of the chopped onion, and half of the minced garlic. Stir often over low heat until golden in color. Add the water and bring to boil.

Add the rest of the ingredients, including lamb, salt to taste, and *risnatu* crumbs. (I don't like raw garlic or leek, so I cooked mine first. You can save a little for garnish at the end, as per the original recipe.)

Cover and let simmer for 1 to 1½ hours, until the lamb is falling apart and can be cut with a fork. Serve the rest of your *risnatu* with the stew. Delicious!

Note: If you choose to add milk, wait until toward the end of the cooking time. Otherwise the milk will separate, which is not very pretty!



BABYLONIAN DATE CAKE

*Another ancient recipe, this date cake yields a very dense but satisfying sweet loaf.
The batter is heavy because of the fruit. Be sure to work out in a gym before mixing!*

1½ cups dates, finely chopped

⅓ cup raisins

½ cup butter, melted

⅔ cup mascarpone cheese

(or other white cheese of your choice)

1 egg (though the original recipe did not
include eggs)

1 cup spelt flour

1 tablespoon water

Preheat oven to 325°F. Spray a 9x5-inch pan and line with parchment paper.

Mix all the ingredients until thoroughly incorporated. Bake for 40–50 minutes, until the internal temperature reaches 205°F.





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