



Flourish

Living a Fruitful Life

YouVersion
Devotional Plan

PLAN OVERVIEW

Just as a farmer prepares soil, plants seed, and trusts God for growth, so our lives flourish when we steward the seasons of our soul. Based on timeless agricultural wisdom and Scripture, this 7-day plan will help you deepen your roots, cultivate spiritual fruit, and discover the joy of living a truly fruitful life.



The Soil

Rest *Equips* Us For Fruitfulness

Reading:

When does your day start? Most of us think it's at sunrise, when we wake up and begin our activities. However, Jewish culture views the day as beginning with sunset, meaning their day starts with rest first, then work and activities. This practice originated in Genesis 1, where it repeatedly says, "And there was evening, and there was morning-the first day" (verse 5), etc, with each day being described as beginning at evening.

We also read that on the sixth day God created humans, and then He rested from His work of creation on the seventh day. Newborn humanity started their existence by joining Him in this rest.

In the Old Testament, God not only models rest, He commands a day of rest each week (called "Sabbath") in Exodus 20:8. God had done miracle after miracle to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and into freedom, providing everything they need needed as they journeyed through the wilderness. But like many of us today, instead of savouring God's provision and enjoying His rest, the Israelites sinned and disobeyed God.

Farmers have a practice called "fallowing" where they intentionally allow their land to have periods of rest - not producing crops. They know that unrested ground will struggle to maintain the nutrients it needs to produce healthy crops and will require more external chemical interventions such as fertilizers and pesticides. By allowing the soil seasons of rest, farmers can sustainably maintain the fruitfulness of their land over long periods of time.

While it's true that God created humanity to do good works, to rule over creation with Him, we too need intentional rest to continually flourish throughout our lifetimes. Author Dave Adamson wrote, "When God commanded His people to practice sabbath, it wasn't primarily about rules but about freedom-a weekly declaration that they were no longer slaves. Slaves work without ceasing. Free people rest without guilt."

True flourishing doesn't come from constant work and hustle, it flows out of a life of holy rhythms that restore our spirits, minds, and bodies. When we rest in God, we live from a place of strength, not striving.

The Soil

Rest *Equips* Us For Fruitfulness

Scriptures:

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Exodus 20:8-11

He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
He refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

Psalms 23:2-3

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30

Reflection:

Are you working from rest or resting from work?
What does a soul at rest look like for you, and what rhythms do you have in place (or could you) to cultivate this?

The Plough

Loosen Up and Change!



Reading:

Can you believe God told a man to marry a prostitute? Come again?! Yep, this is the story in Hosea, and it serves as a reminder of God's unfailing and deep desire for intimacy with us, despite our tendency to seek validation and satisfaction in other places. As God is calling Israel to repentance, restored relationship with Him, and fruitfulness in the land He had given them, He says in Hosea 10:12:

"Sow righteousness for yourselves,
reap the fruit of unfailing love,
and break up your unploughed ground;
for it is time to seek the Lord,
until He comes and showers
His righteousness on you."

After allowing their land to fallow (rest and not produce crops for a season), farmers will then "plough" the soil to prepare it for new seeds to be planted. Using a tool called a plough, farmers will turn over and break up the soil. This process introduces fresh air, improves drainage and nutrient absorption, reduces weeds, incorporates nutrient residue from previous crops, and makes the soil more fertile.

Sometimes as we sink into the routines of our everyday lives, we can develop mindsets, rhythms, or relationships that become hardened. We may even see weeds crop up – pesky little habits that we never intended to plant but have taken root and will quickly multiply if we don't address them.

As beneficial as ploughing is, it's not a gentle process – but it is necessary to restore fruitfulness. Likewise, sometimes we need to allow God to turn over and break up areas in our lives to make room for new growth (or as Paul says in Romans, to be transformed by the renewing of our minds). This change can be uncomfortable, but without it, we stay stuck.

As Christians, one of the main tools that God uses to plough the soil of our hearts and prepare us for new growth is the Bible. When the Israelites were transitioning from the wilderness into the promised land, God said they would flourish by obeying His commands in the Book of the Law (Joshua 1:8). As we spend time in His Word we gain new perspective, become aware of crippling mindsets, and are equipped with everything we need for healthy growth.

Flourishing requires us to loosen our grip and embrace change, allowing the fresh wind of the Holy Spirit to prepare us for the fruitfulness that He longs to bring in our next season.

The Plough

Loosen Up and Change!



Scriptures:

Sow righteousness for yourselves,
reap the fruit of unfailing love,
and break up your unplowed ground;
for it is time to seek the Lord,
until He comes
and showers His righteousness on you.

Hosea 10:12

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Joshua 1:8

Reflection:

In what part of your life is God asking you to loosen your grip and allow Him to bring change? Will you let Him plough that ground of your life and prepare it for healthy growth?

The Roller Pressed but Not Crushed



Reading:

Let's be honest. Sometimes biblical truths can be frustrating. Like when you're going through a tough season and a well-meaning friend drops James 1:2-3: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." This verse may not feel so joy inducing at those times, but despite our initial reaction, it is true...right?

After having allowed their fields to fallow (rest) and then ploughing the ground to break up any hardened soil, farmers will then roll the ground. Using giant rollers, they firm the seedbed and smooth out clumps of soil into more manageable pieces. This process improves seed-to-soil contact, giving seeds better access to nutrients and moisture; reduces the risk of damage from debris, small stones, and other objects that might interfere with planting or harvesting by pushing them further away; and diminishes weed growth.

Have you ever felt like the pressures of life were rolling over you? Maybe what you're going through feels like more than you can bear. Even Jesus, as He faced the realities of what His earthly purpose would entail said in Luke 12:50, "I have a terrible baptism of suffering ahead of me, and I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished."

Sometimes we feel pressured due to the consequences of our mistakes, and sometimes we are burdened by the weight of doing the right thing, fulfilling His purposes and the opposition that can bring. Paul felt this weight as well, as he describes in 2 Corinthians 4:8, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair".

Pressure has a way of revealing what's beneath the surface. When you face trials, are you pressed into deeper trust or deeper fear? Either way, how we respond to the pressures we face determines whether we deepen or derail. Press into God and allow Him to use what you're facing to weed out fear and strengthen your connection with Him, the source of all you need.

Of course, James was right. He goes on to say in James 1:4, "Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." When we persevere through difficult circumstances, we develop resilience and wisdom that could not have come any other way. Flourishing often comes not despite pressure but because of it.

The Roller Pressed but Not Crushed



Scriptures:

But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed!
Luke 12:50

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;
2 Corinthians 4:8

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:2–4

Reflection:

What pressure are you facing right now?
How might God be using this to deepen your connection with Him and strengthen your resolve?

The Seed

Flourishing Through Intentionality



Reading:

What picture comes into your mind when you hear the word “flourish”? Maybe you imagine lush grass and a garden full of colourful flowers. Or maybe the idea of flourishing brings to mind healthy relationships, a thriving career with opportunities galore, and financial wealth.

Regardless of how we define this goal, we will only ever flourish when we pursue it with intentionality. If you want to grow strawberries, you plant strawberry seeds. This seems obvious. Yet for some reason, many of us unintentionally spend our days planting seeds that are not in line with the flourishing lives we hope to cultivate. Aimlessness will never lead to purpose and meaning. If we want to overflow with more love and joy, then we can’t allow our minds and hearts (and social media feeds!) to continually focus on our frustrations and dislikes.

When Paul wrote in Romans 10:9, “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved”, he wasn’t saying that Jesus is Lord is the secret password at the gates of heaven that will save us from eternal damnation in some later reality. Paul was letting the Romans in on a new way of framing their lives that would save them from the hopelessness and oppression that our broken world continually subjects us to. When we affirm with our mouths is that Jesus is Lord (He is the authority in our lives, our first priority!), and when our hearts are full of faith in a God who brings the dead to life and can do all things, the natural fruit of this will be lives that overflow with hope and freedom - bringing His Kingdom into our world here and now.

Similarly, when Jesus says in Matthew 6:33 NLT, “Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need”, He’s not inviting us to make a transaction with God - you give me that and I’ll give you this. Jesus is actually explaining that when our greatest desire is to know and reflect Him in all that we do, we will plant seeds of the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). In turn, not only will our earthly survival needs be met, but these seeds will produce a way of living that allows us to thrive and flourish.

The Seed

Flourishing Through Intentionality



Scriptures:

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:9

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:33

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Galatians 6:7-8

Reflection:

Will the seeds that you are planting today grow into the fruit that you want to harvest tomorrow?



The Weather

Trusting God with the Growth

Reading:

How often do you check the weather forecast? Weekly? Daily? More? Why are we so obsessed with the weather? Perhaps because it is one of the few things over which we have no control, but are all affected by. We may not be able to dictate the weather, but by anticipating what's coming, we can do our best to prepare for it. (Unless of course our predictions turn out to be wrong.)

Of the many professions out there, farmers are among those most affected by weather conditions. The success or failure of their crops, and thus their livelihood and financial security, can be highly affected by this force over which they have no control. Nonetheless, they continue to prepare their soil, plant their seeds, and trust this uncontrollable force to help bring about favourable conditions that will feed and grow their crops.

The sovereignty of God refers to the aspect of His nature where God has all power and authority over all things. This is a quality which only God possesses. When it comes to flourishing in our lives, we can only do our part, and then wait and trust God with the rest. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow."

If we were uncertain about God's thoughts towards us, the idea of God's sovereignty might make us anxious in our seasons of waiting. But because we know how deeply He loves us, how relentlessly He pursues us, we can rest in His sovereignty. In Luke 12:25-28, Jesus comforts us with the reminder that if God takes care of the flowers, He will even more so take care of us.

Charles Spurgeon said, "When you go through a trial, the sovereignty of God is the pillow upon which you lay your head."

There will always be factors out of our control that can make or break the fruitfulness of our efforts. This can either leave us feeling doubtful and vulnerable to unforeseen circumstances, or it can be a catalyst for the patience, faith, surrender, and peace that comes when we are dependent on the only One who controls all things, our good Father.

A background image of pink flowers, possibly cherry blossoms, against a clear blue sky. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing multiple layers of petals. A small white floral icon is visible in the upper right corner of the image.

The Weather

Trusting God with the Growth

Scriptures:

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? “Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

Luke 12:25-28

“The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people.

Zechariah 8:12

Reflection:

Where do you sense God inviting you to trade control for trust? How does leaning into His sovereignty and love help you with this?

The Harvester

People Are Our Purpose



Reading:

You've done so much work already...dealing with change and pressure, planting and watering seeds - well done! And now it's time to chill. Nope, not quite - now it's time for a harvest! As Christians, this idea of reaping a harvest isn't just about gaining possessions or amassing wealth. For us, it's about fulfilling our God given purpose on earth.

Can you imagine a farmer who's done all the work that it takes to get to the point of having a field full of crops ready to harvest, and then at that point, they grow weary and don't reap the harvest?

If you feel that you've grown weary by the time it's harvesting season – you're not alone. That is completely normal! Even Paul says in Galatians 6:9, "So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up."

You may have heard Matthew 9:37: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few." What type of harvest is Jesus referring to? Leading up to this verse, Jesus had been travelling around, healing diseases and having compassion on the crowds. It's clear in these verses what His idea of a harvest is: people – minds and bodies healed, souls set free by the Gospel, and confusion and helplessness replaced by clarity and purpose. This is why He prays in verse 38 for the Lord to send more workers into "His fields".

Are you mindful of the fact that you are working in His fields? In John 15:16, Jesus encourages us, *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you."*

Where do you find yourself today? What fields are you in? Jesus says that YOU have been chosen and appointed to bear lasting fruit there! To "harvest" actually means to gather a crop. You may even find yourself in fields where others have planted seeds, but you have been placed there to gather the fruit. Who are the people around you who need to be invited into a flourishing way of life?

Don't grow weary, don't give up, and remember that you have been specifically chosen and appointed. Wherever He's planted you, that's His field that He's inviting you to cultivate and harvest.

The Harvester

People Are Our Purpose



Scriptures:

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."

Matthew 9:35-38

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:9

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

John 15:16

Reflection:

In what fields Has God placed you? What will it look like to see a flourishing harvest there - who will that affect and how?

The Silo

Overflowing with Blessing



Reading:

Can God trust you to steward a significant harvest well?

In Genesis 37-50 we read Joseph's roller coaster of a story that starts with him having a dream that offended his brothers, leading them to sell him into slavery in Egypt. Through a wild series of events, Joseph finds himself second in command to Pharaoh. Through his leadership, they managed to store up 7 years of abundant crops in a way that saved the lives of Egypt, his family, and beyond, when the 7 years of famine came.

In a world that encourages overindulgence and rewarding ourselves because we "deserve it", the idea of being disciplined can be countercultural. But how we steward the harvest we've been given today will greatly determine whether or not we're able to enjoy that harvest tomorrow and beyond, and how many others will enjoy it too.

Some Christians suggest that poverty is a desired spiritual discipline, so as not to get attached to material possessions and all the downfalls that come with their pursuit. (In the words of philosopher Notorius B.I.G., "Mo money mo problems.")

Dallas Willard takes a different approach, advocating that Christians are indeed called to steward wealth and resources in a way that honours God. He writes, "to assume the responsibility for the right use and guidance of possessions through ownership is far more of a discipline of the spirit than poverty itself. Our possessions vastly extend the range over which God rules through our faith."

When we experience more margin in our calendar, increased mental capacity (such as periods of space to sit with our own thoughts), a bonus at work, or any other growth in resources, we quickly realise that it takes more discipline to steward this well than to squander it.

God's desire is for you to enjoy the fruit of your labour and bless others with it. This includes your time, energy, finances, relationships, gifts and any other resource or capacity that you are entrusted with.

Be encouraged by the fact that the dreams God has planted in your heart are not just to benefit you, but also those who you influence. So dream big and confidently pray bold prayers. When the seeds you've diligently sown reap a plentiful harvest – ask Him to help you steward it with wisdom, discipline, and sensitivity to His guidance. God wants to love others through you.

The Silo

Overflowing with Blessing



Scriptures:

Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure...

The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."

When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.

Genesis 41:48-49, 53-57

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.

Proverbs 3:9-10

You crown the year with a bountiful harvest; even the hard pathways overflow with abundance.

Psalms 65:11

Reflection:

In what ways are you already wealthy or anticipating a harvest in the future? How can you steward these blessings for His glory?