

# ::every GENERATION::

SHADES MOUNTAIN  
BAPTIST CHURCH

Dr. Danny Wood, Pastor



## 20 Day Prayer Journal



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# FULFILLING NEEDS FOR EVERY GENERATION



*Every Generation* is the name and theme of the 2007–2010 Capital Campaign for Shades Mountain Baptist Church.

It is also a theme for much of our faith journey as Christians. From Noah to Abraham, Moses to Jesus, the Bible is filled with stories demonstrating “Leaps of Faith” among God’s people and His faithful response.

Today we see our God creating new ministry opportunities of service for each of us. We will have a part to play during the next few weeks as we join together in our personal prayer time and seek His face. This devotional guide has been prepared to assist you in going to the next level in your walk of faith. May your time spent with our Lord during these next few weeks give you peace and wisdom. May God also bless you with discernment, bold creativity and action with results that can only be explained as “God did it!”

We pray that your joy will be profound and complete.

## PRAYER

Father, we pray that Your vision for the impact and growth of Your church on this mountain will be revealed to me in these coming weeks and that I may be obedient in following You.

## REFLECTION

As you journey through these prayer suggestions and thoughts these next few days, how do you think our Lord will lead you?

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# DAY 1



*“With a leap, he stood upright and walked!”*

*—Acts 3:8*

As Peter and John entered the temple to pray, they encountered a man, lame from birth. After Peter said to the man, “In the name Jesus Christ, walk...” he responded by leaping and praising God. All the people who saw him were filled with wonder and amazement at seeing God move in their presence.

This man had just had a touch from God which changed his life forever. We pray that these days of seeking God’s direction for your involvement in this mission-expanding opportunity will be as joyous and thrilling for you as for the man in this story. Each of us has a part to play, whatever way He directs.

## PRAYER

Lord, open my mind and heart as I seek your will and goal for this new mission opportunity.

## REFLECTION

Use these twenty devotions over the next few weeks to connect, through prayer, with our Father’s heart as He leads each of us to discern His specific will for us.

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## DAY 2



*“I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”*

*—Jeremiah 17:10*

When we exercise, we stay fit. It takes motivation to be consistent and to improve. It is all for our well being. The children of Israel weren't consistent in obeying and following God. If He blessed them, they were content to follow—for awhile. But if He tested them they would complain. They could not always see the value of maintaining a close relationship with God. Obedience and close fellowship don't guarantee an easy life, but perseverance in the Christian run of life will yield eternal rewards. That eternal mindset provides motivation for our obedience. David Jeremiah said, “Make worship the guiding goal of your life mission and you will know love as you've never known it.”

### PRAYER

Lord, when Your call challenges me, it is easy to excuse myself. Reach me! Compel me to respond to Your call in whatever ways I can. Amen.

### REFLECTION

How can you exercise your faith and obedience? Write down three obstacles preventing you from obediently responding to God.

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## DAY 3



*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

*—Ephesians 2:10*

God is preparing you for a unique role in service, and He’s preparing beforehand the work He’ll give you in His timing. You are, right now, in God’s classroom for future service. Joseph’s prison term prepared him to be God’s man on Egypt’s throne. Moses’ years in Pharaoh’s court equipped him for his task as leader of Israel. Paul’s years in Arabia were readying him for years of missionary service.

God’s giving you experience that is training you for future service. He equips us with what we need to serve Him. Major Ian Thomas said, “All there is of God is available to the man who is available to all there is of God.”

### PRAYER

Thank you Father, that you are sovereign and that as we yield ourselves to you, you are in control of our direction and will reveal it.

### REFLECTION

Think of your circumstances today in God’s Seminary and how He can use you.

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## DAY 4



*“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.”*

*—Psalm 127:1*

Years ago, before Josh McDowell was the well-known author he is today, he joined a ministry and received his first assignment at their headquarters—washing floors in the lobby of the former hotel. While he thought he was going to be working with the ministry’s leaders, he was relegated to watching them walk by as he scrubbed the floors they were walking on. Later, he said it was one of the most important lessons he ever learned. It takes preparation to be used by God. Moses learned that lesson, spending forty years in the Midian wilderness as a shepherd before leading God’s people. Periods of difficult preparation are God’s way of saying, “Only I know what you need to know to be successful. Trust Me.”

Max Lucado said, “A season of suffering is a small price to pay for a clear vision of God.”

### PRAYER

We want a servant’s humble spirit, Father, so we can please You.  
We want to be empowered by Your Holy Spirit.

### REFLECTION

What more can I do to hear the voice of God and get His view and direction?

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## DAY 5



*“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”*

*—Romans 8:32*

Every child of God lives with the assurance that He who met our greatest need through the gift of Christ will also surely meet every need we have. In no one’s life is God’s constancy in meeting needs more apparent than in Joseph’s life. Joseph needed to get out of prison. When Pharaoh needed someone to interpret his dreams, the only person on earth who knew Joseph could interpret dreams told Pharaoh about him. So Pharaoh ordered Joseph’s release and he never returned to prison. Joseph trusted God, waited patiently and then watched as God miraculously met his needs.

Imitate Joseph’s trust in God. Wait patiently and watch expectantly. And don’t forget to give God time.

### PRAYER

Father, let me be patient as I wait expectantly for You to grant me my petition, according to Your will. Thank You for Your word that assures me of Your favor.

### REFLECTION

How does Joseph’s life encourage you? What requests have you raised to our Lord that follows Joseph’s example? Are you totally trusting God with your life, agenda and resources?

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## DAY 6



*“I know You can do everything.”*

*—Job 42:2*

John Newton wrote many hymns. One of those hymns was a lifelong favorite of Ruth Bell Graham:

“Thou art coming to a King  
Large petitions will thee bring  
For His grace and power are such  
None can ever ask too much.”

There is nothing wrong with asking God for blessings and favors. He delights in doing things for us. Jeremiah 32:27 tells us, “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for me?” Jesus added, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Luke 18:27).

Bring your impossible problems and needs to Him. He is the King. Amy Carmichael said, “When you are facing the impossible, you can count on the God of the impossible.”

### PRAYER

Thank you, Father, that we can approach Your throne with our needs and the needs of others. You are faithful to us; may we be the same for You.

### REFLECTION

What mission needs do you have? Consider the means our God will use to supply these mission needs! Is your God big enough to fulfill these needs?

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## DAY 7



*“And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.”* —Luke 11:9

Most of us are good at the first baby steps of prayer. It is easy to ask God for something. In asking God to guide us in our giving for *Every Generation*, we are opening ourselves to God’s will and to what God wants for us and for His church. The first step is critical. We need to ask in order to receive His guidance. Asking is just the first step.

Simply asking demands little of us. Seeking means searching for God’s will in our lives. Knocking on the doors that God would open to us may well lead us down paths that we never imagined! We do not know what God has in store for us as we begin this journey; but one thing is certain—such a journey of prayer will change our lives. Changing us has always been the real power of prayer.

### PRAYER

Father, open my heart and my mind so that I may hear Your words and discern the direction my path should take in this new mission.

### REFLECTION

How has God opened the door of your heart with these words?

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## DAY 8



“Go therefore and make disciples.”

—Matthew 28:20

When a church enters a capital campaign, everyone seems to have one train of thought: What are we building? What does it look like? What color will the carpet be? And many others!

The most important question is not “What?” but “Why?” Why are we building, and why is Shades Mountain Baptist Church expanding its ministries at this time?

The last commandment Jesus spoke for every Christian was “Go...make disciples of all nations...teach them all I have commanded you.” Every church and every Christian has a God-given purpose. WHY: To be and do what God calls us to be and do. *Every Generation* is not simply about buildings or finances. It is about reaching and changing lives of people with the good news of Jesus Christ. The resources raised provide the necessary tools to help us better reach, better teach and more effectively change lives.

You needed Christ. Your life has been changed by the witness and ministries of our church. Would you like for other people to have a story of faith to tell and a purpose for their lives?

### PRAYER

Lord, grow my passion for Your purposes in my life and in Your church. You brought me here for a reason. Show me what You would do through me. Amen.

### REFLECTION

List why these projects are important in changing the lives of others.

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## DAY 9



*“They need not go away; give them something to eat.”*

*—Matthew 14:16*

Jesus had been with the crowds all day, ministering to people’s needs. It was getting late, past suppertime. The disciples were tired of dealing with all these people. “Send the crowds away,” the disciples told Jesus. Let them go home and take care of themselves for awhile. Surely you do not expect us to take care of the needs of this crowd of more than 5,000. How can we meet their overwhelming need? Phillip says in John’s account, “Six months wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get even a little bit!”

A little boy had his lunch of five loaves and two fish, and gave it. It must have taken composure for the disciples to gratefully accept the boy’s gift. This small gift for so many people. Jesus took it, blessed it and the crowd of more than 5,000 was fed.

Every miracle begins with a person making a gift of the best they can offer. Jesus will bless and use that gift. The need may seem overwhelming. Your gift may appear to be inadequate. All Jesus asks is the best you can offer. Expect a miracle.

### PRAYER

Lord, with Your blessing and grace, let me share my resources to make more of a difference than I could ever imagine. Amen.

### REFLECTION

Begin to think about your part—your gift—to *Every Generation*. Write your thoughts below.

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## DAY 10



*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*  
—Matthew 6:19-21

We are uncomfortable when we talk about money at church. Why? Are decisions about how we live and how we use our resources unimportant? Is our faith supposed to be separate from our finances?

Jesus knew that our treasures and our hearts are inseparably linked. For Him, talking about treasure was to reach more completely for the full allegiance of people’s hearts. Jesus knew that dealing with our financial resources is one critical place where the practicality of our faith is tested. Maybe we are uncomfortable with talk about money because that conversation is getting awfully close to the heart of our faith.

### PRAYER

Father, teach me to love You with all my heart and with all my life. Let my love for You shine today!

### REFLECTION

Sketch a simple budget of where your treasures are and where your resources go. Write down your giving today and where God is leading you for the future.

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## DAY 11



*“Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.”*

*—1 Samuel 3:10*

According to Scripture, in Samuel’s time “the word of the Lord was rare in those days, and visions were not widespread.” It is easy for people to feel the same today. Most people think that the word of the Lord is rare, that the word of the Lord only comes to people like ministers who are somehow especially “called.” Most people seem to think that God has no word, no calling and no vision for them. Like the boy Samuel, we simply are not listening well. We hear something calling our name and tugging at our heart, and assume that something is just somebody at church, a family member or a neighbor wanting our help. Perhaps it is not a word from God that is rare, but faithful listening from those who would serve.

Every Christian has a calling, as well as the God-given gifts, grace and blessings to respond to those callings.

There is a word for the Lord for you in the *Every Generation* campaign. There is a God-given vision of all Shades Mountain Baptist Church’s members in this campaign. “Speak to me, Lord. I am Your servant. I am listening to hear from You.”

### PRAYER

Lord, teach me not only to say Samuel’s prayer, but to actually listen for Your word and to do Your word. Amen.

### REFLECTION

Are you listening for God’s word? Make a list of the ways God may be speaking to you now.

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*“They gave themselves first to the Lord, and by the will of God, then to us.”*  
—II Corinthians 8:5

Have you ever watched a T-ball game where the children are just beginning to learn baseball? Have you ever seen a child so excited to hit the ball off the tee that he or she runs directly to third base and then races back to home plate to score?

Too often we think of giving as a financial decision rather than as a stewardship decision. Like the child running directly to third, we shortcut the ground rules. We rush in the wrong direction; we hurry the process. As a result, we may make a donation to our church, but we do not make a stewardship commitment.

*Every Generation* is a dramatic step in the life and mission of Shades Mountain Baptist Church. To make a stewardship decision, we have to go all the way around the bases and touch them all. Reaching first means making a faith decision before we even consider the financial aspect of our giving. Reaching first means calling to account our lives of faith before doing any financial accounting. Making a stewardship decision means responding to a deeper calling of faith, not reacting to a quick accounting. A stewardship decision is not a financial calculation; it is first and foremost, a commitment of faith.

## PRAYER

Lord, first let me give myself more fully to You. Then let my decisions grow out of what I believe, and what You call me to be and to do. Amen.

## REFLECTION

First things first: What does God call me to be? What does God call me to do? What is God doing at SMBC? What could God do through me? How can I give myself more fully to God?



*“Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury: for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned.”* —Mark 12:43-44

After a long morning of teaching in the temple courtyard, Jesus took a break with His disciples. Sitting right across from the treasury, their gazes drifted over to observing many people who were making their offering.

Never one to miss a teachable moment, Jesus asked His disciples about what they had seen. “Who put in more?” is the implied question. The answer is obvious to anyone reading or watching: Those who gave the greatest sums put in more. Jesus was teaching His disciples an important principle in giving. Giving is not measured by dollar amounts; giving is measured by how much we truly give of ourselves. Some who gave large amounts offered out of their surplus gifts that they would never even miss. But although the widow’s offering was just a penny, her gift affected her life. Not every member of Shades Mountain Baptist Church has the ability and opportunity to give as much as others. But, every member can invest themselves in what God is doing through *Every Generation*.

## PRAYER

Lord, each and every gift makes a difference to Your church. Teach me to give in ways that make a difference in my life.

## REFLECTION

God leads us all in many different ways to honor and serve Him! As the widow honored Him, so can each of us. How will you?

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*“Every branch that bears fruit (God) prunes to make it bear more fruit.”* —John 15:2

Grapevines will naturally overextend themselves with prolific branching and leaf growth every year. If grapevines are not pruned, all of the branching and leaf growth can completely cover an arbor in as little as two growing seasons.

Unchecked, branching growth—while great for simply covering space—is terrible for bearing fruit. Such overgrown grapevines will bear tiny, unusable fruit, if it is able to bear fruit clusters at all. The extensive branching and leafing drains the resources and energy of the vine from its primary purpose: *bearing fruit*.

Look at pictures of a well-kept vineyard whose purpose is to bear good fruit. You will see thick, decades-old grapevines pruned back so that all the energy of the plant is focused on growing great grapes. Pruning—heavy regular pruning—is the key to bearing good fruit.

**PRAYER**

Lord, show me where I need to bear fruit. Open my eyes to help me see your desires. Re-shape my life to glorify God.

**REFLECTION**

Are you bearing good fruit? Look deep into your life and examine your fruit.

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## DAY 15:



*“The owners said, ‘Why are you untying the donkey?’ (The disciples) said, ‘The Lord has need of it.’”* —Luke 19:33-34

Our work is doing the will of God together. Jesus really does not have need of anything—He could call 10,000 angels to fulfill any work. His desire for us is to work together as his church. He has given us The Word to obey, and we must work together to fulfill His Plan.

God’s plan will not be thwarted. Jesus rode His donkey into the city with the praises coming from the crowds. When the Pharisees tried to get Jesus to make the crowds be silent, He replied, “If they kept quiet even the stones would cry out.”

We are empty vessels. As we come to Jesus, He fills us and prepares us for use in His Kingdom. We must submit our lives to His use—this is the working of His Church (His Bride) in getting ready for things to come. We must work together to get things accomplished for the furtherance of God’s Kingdom.

God has blessed us with every spiritual and material blessing. Are we using these blessings to bless others or are we hoarding what moth and rust will destroy?

God desires the best for us. He wants us free from things that tie us down. He wants us to work together to accomplish His will.

### PRAYER

Lord, what is it in my life that is tying me down to this world and not setting my mind on you? Help me to work with the church body to accomplish your will. Give me the strength to obey you.

### REFLECTION

Are there things (or attitudes, habits) that you need to remove from your life to become a more useful vessel? How can you partner with His church family to accomplish His will?



*“There was a man named Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means ‘Son of encouragement’).”* —Acts 4:36

In Hebrew, the name Joseph means “God’s added blessing.” This was the cherished son of the patriarch Jacob. This also was the name of Jesus’ earthly father. So why did the apostles feel the need to change his name to Barnabas?

Barnabas, Acts tells us, means “Son of encouragement.” Apparently, this Joseph was such an encouragement that a new name was in order. When the early church needed money to underwrite its ministries, Joseph sold a field he owned and gave the money to the apostles. When Saul of Tarsus (renamed Paul) needed to be welcomed into the church he once persecuted, it was this Joseph who nurtured Paul. When the church needed someone to encourage the new believers among the Gentiles, they sent this Joseph. When young Mark needed someone to believe in him and to give him a second chance to serve as a missionary, Joseph encouraged him. No wonder that all of Joseph’s friends called him Barnabas, “Son of encouragement.”

## PRAYER

Lord, help me to be an encourager like Barnabas. Help me to be sensitive to the needs of others. Make me a witness for your Glory. Amen.

## REFLECTION

Let us all be a Barnabas! Look for ways to encourage the faith of others by your witness, passion, and your faith. In doing so, you multiply God’s grace and the faithful response of others.

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*“The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease.”*  
 —John 3:29-30

John the Baptist attracted many disciples and crowds, as well as the attention of kings and queens. Many who heard his passionate preaching repented and were baptized. To “fulfill all righteousness,” he baptized Jesus. When Jesus came, John remained steadfast in his sense of place within God’s plan. He rejoiced in the following that Jesus attracted, and encouraged his own disciples to join with Jesus.

John 3:29-30 is John’s explanation of his role to his disciples. “He (Jesus) must increase, and I must decrease.” Have you discovered this truth yet? Most of us think that our joy—our position (in the church or in the world), our good works, wealth, prestige, power, influence—increase as we increase. But in fact, just the opposite is true. True joy is not found at the top of the mountain or at the pinnacle of power. It is found where John the Baptist found it—by finding your place in relation to Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER

Lord, O that I may decrease and that You may increase. Search my heart and show me where my priorities lie. Help me to have the joy of my Lord in my everyday life. Amen.

## REFLECTION

Make a list of the things that you think bring joy to your life. Ask yourself if they give you abundant life and true joy. Rather, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are what give that joy. Let us be willing to share those gifts with others. List the fruits of the Spirit.

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*“But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone; why are you troubling her? She has done a good and beautiful thing to Me [praiseworthy and noble].’”*

*—Mark 14:6*

Picture the scene. This was a tense setting. Word was out that the authorities were looking for ways to arrest Jesus.

This was a place for serious conversation and for invited guests. Then came this woman with the expensive perfume. Who had invited her? And who gave her permission to pour the entire contents of the perfume jar on the head of the guest of honor? Can you imagine the smell? And why waste so much expensive perfume? As some said, it could have been sold and the entire money given to the poor.

This woman had been ordained of God to prepare our Lord’s body for burial. She had obviously experienced the forgiveness, love and mercy of Jesus and felt such gratitude that she wanted to find a way to bless Him and express her thanks.

## PRAYER

Lord, remind me daily of the forgiveness you have granted me. Enable me to forgive others in that same way. I thank you and praise your Holy name for all you have done for me. Amen

## REFLECTION

Have you experienced Jesus’ forgiveness, mercy and love? Are prepared to express your gratitude to Him in a sacrificial way? It is good spiritual exercise to write your testimony and express your gratitude to our Lord and Savior as this woman did.

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*“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”* —II Corinthians 9:7

As we are praying and asking God’s wisdom in our giving for *Every Generation*, we each need to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up our own mind what we will give. To purpose in our heart means we must pray and pray and pray—and make sure we listen to what God desires for us to do. This will protect us against giving out of peer pressure or compulsion. God loves for us to delight in our giving.

Galatians 6:7 tells us “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.” God will pour out blessings in astonishing ways. Are we ready to do more than what needs to be done? God owns it all anyway, so what is our responsibility with what He has given us? Our God is a generous God. He gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for our meals, and He is more than extravagant with us. He gives to each of us something we can then give away, and we are to show our gratitude through our generous gifts as He directs us.

## PRAYER

Lord, forgive me for any stinginess found in me. I know you desire a heart sold out totally to You. Give me wisdom to understand exactly what you desire for me to commit to *Every Generation*. Thank you for all you have given to me and enable me to follow Your will for my life. Amen.

## REFLECTION

Either we choose to believe God and take Him at His Word or we do not really trust Him. How will you choose today?

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*“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”*  
*—II Corinthians 8:9*

When God created us in His image, He gave us the power to conform to His image. So how do we conform to the image of a perfect God?

Jesus was our example as a human being. He was put on earth by His heavenly Father so that we—as mere mortals—could relate to Him. His example of everyday living is our path for following and becoming more like God’s image.

Jesus Christ left the perfection and riches of heaven to live a perfect life in an imperfect world. He chose a humble, meager existence. He was poor by our standards. He was born in a stable and lived His final three years with no place to call home.

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:5-7). Jesus relied totally on God for His every need. It is because of this poverty we have the opportunity to become rich.

## PRAYER

Lord, conform me to your image. Create in me a clean heart so that I can be salt and light in this world. Amen.

## REFLECTION

How then do we live? Are we working to become like Christ and die to self daily? Are we willing to share what He has given us?

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