

DAY 1: STAND ON UNSEEN PROMISES

SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 11:1 (ESV)

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

WHO & WHEN

Written by Paul (with Luke’s help) around **AD 64** in **Rome**, under Emperor Nero’s brutal persecution of Christians after the great fire of AD 64.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **Temple Worship:** In Jesus’ day, Jewish faith centered on daily sacrifices at the Jerusalem Temple—visible signs of God’s presence.
- **Nero’s Persecution:** Nero blamed Christians for Rome’s fire and unleashed a wave of executions. Believing in Christ meant risking everything on promises you couldn’t see.

WORD STUDY

- **Assurance** (*hypostasis*): “That which stands under”—think of the hidden foundation supporting a massive arch.
- **Conviction** (*elegchos*): “Proof”—faith is grounded in God’s unbroken track record from Sinai to the empty tomb.

MILITARY PARALLEL

Picture a **WWII paratrooper** boarding a C-47 Skytrain in England on June 5, 1944. As he leaps into pitch-black skies over Normandy, he trusts his training and briefed drop-zone coordinates, not his eyes. Waiting for perfect sight would have jeopardized D-Day. Faith works the same way: we step forward on God’s “coordinates,” not our comfort.

PERSONAL STORY

After two years serving the **Midwest region** for a national ministry, I had to leave overnight. The founder’s words pinned me back in childhood—bringing back that ache of being “the kid from the other side of the tracks” and making me feel like a joke, lesser than him. His public mockery in front of colleagues drove my family and me to the breaking point. At a **Soldier, KS** “Silence & Solitude” retreat with CBMC Midwest—where I’d been building relationship for six months—a fellow member heard my heart. He’d walked similar scars and prayed over me before quietly giving my family a large sum that carried us through the next six months. That gift felt like God’s precise supply drop in our darkest fog.

HOW TO APPLY (INDUCTIVE)

1. **Observe:** Identify one “drop-zone” decision you face—career move, family crisis, or call of God—where you lack clear sight.
2. **Interpret:** Write Hebrews 13:5—“I will never leave you nor forsake you”—on a 3×5 card and carry it with you.
3. **Apply:** Each morning this week, read it aloud before your coffee and journal one way it strengthened your courage or peace.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS (NEPQ)

- **Situation:** What step are you hesitating on because you can't see the outcome?
- **Problem:** How has that uncertainty cost you—missed opportunities, stress, or doubt?
- **Pay-Off:** If you fully trusted God's invisible promises, what bold move would you make by Sunday?

PRAYER

“Father, when I cannot see the way, build my faith on Your unshakeable promises so I step forward with courage.”

ACTION STEPS

- **Accountability:** Text your Hebrews 13:5 card to a veteran friend and ask them to follow up on your journal entry next week.
 - **Visual Reminder:** Create a phone wallpaper of Hebrews 11:1 using Canva so every unlock renews your resolve.
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DAY 2: BUILDING A LASTING LEGACY

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 13:22 (ESV)

“A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, but the sinner’s wealth is laid up for the righteous.”

WHO & WHEN

Written by King Solomon around **950 BC** in **Jerusalem**, during Israel’s golden age—when wealth and wisdom went hand in hand.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **National Prosperity:** Under Solomon, Israel saw unmatched peace, trade routes, and the Temple’s completion. Yet Solomon warns that riches alone won’t secure future generations.
- **Generational Blessing:** Israel’s laws (Numbers 27) protected land transfer to sons; Solomon extends that vision—true inheritance impacts grandchildren and beyond.

WORD STUDY

- **Inheritance (*yarash*):** To “possess” or “appoint” a blessing, not just receive wealth.
- **Children’s children:** A Hebrew phrase stressing multi-generational scope, not just immediate heirs.

CULTURAL PARALLEL

In ancient Rome, elite families insured estates passed smoothly using legal scrolls and guardians. Yet without guiding values, heirs often squandered fortunes. Solomon urges passed-on faith and wisdom alongside assets.

PERSONAL STORY

I met a Navy Reservist in **Ohio** over **Zoom**, walking him through benefits from Service Member Benefits and the National VFW for funeral, final-expense, and estate planning. He’d recently divorced, missed his kids, and confessed he didn’t know where his mother lived. We sat quietly until he shared his pain. Though he couldn’t afford a policy then, I stayed on the call an extra 20 minutes—no pitch, just listening. Before we signed off, I reminded him: “Legacy isn’t only policies; it’s knowing someone sees you and will walk through the hard times with you.” I then asked him to keep my number and reach out whenever he needed to talk.

HOW TO APPLY (INDUCTIVE)

1. **Observe:** List your “legacy items”—legal docs, policies, and personal stories you’ll pass on.
2. **Interpret:** Ask, “Which items truly ease my family’s burden or lift their hearts?”
3. **Apply:** Select two tasks this week—perhaps update a beneficiary form and record a 2-minute video sharing a core family value.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS (NEPQ)

- **Situation:** What part of your legacy feels most incomplete—legal plan, financial security, or emotional connection?
- **Problem:** How would your loved ones struggle without clear instructions or your personal story?
- **Pay-Off:** How would peace of mind and remembered values change their journey?

PRAYER

“Lord, give me wisdom to steward my resources and my story so that generations ahead inherit faith, hope, and love.”

ACTION STEPS

- **Create a Video:** Film a short (2–3 minute) message on one value you want your grandchildren to live by, then save it where your family can easily access it.
 - **Schedule Planning:** Block two times this week—one to review/update a legal or financial document, another to sit down and draft a personal letter or video prompt for your heirs.
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DAY 3: CAMARADERIE AND UNITY

SCRIPTURE

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 (ESV)

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

WHO & WHEN

Written by Solomon around **935 BC** in **Jerusalem**, near the end of his reign, when political and family divisions threatened Israel’s unity and strength.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **Solomon’s Golden Age:** Early in Solomon’s rule, Israel enjoyed unprecedented peace and prosperity. Yet as tribes drifted apart, he counseled that unity—rooted in shared purpose—is vital for endurance.
- **Wisdom Literature:** Ecclesiastes blends reflective poetry and real-life observations to show that human connections—family, friends, faith communities—are God’s design for resilience.

WORD STUDY

- **Reward (*tov*):** A “good return” on effort—shared work yields more than going solo.
- **Lift up (*sama’*):** To raise or restore—when one falters, another reaches down.
- **Cord (*habbul*):** A rope—three strands twisted together bear far more weight than each alone.

CULTURAL PARALLEL

Roman legions organized in ***contubernium***—squads of eight soldiers sharing tents, meals, and missions. Their survival depended on mutual care. Solomon points us to the same truth: we thrive when we stand together.

PERSONAL STORY

Last **September**, I attended a **CBMC Midwest** “Silence & Solitude” retreat at a remote Kansas farmhouse. For most of the weekend, we observed complete silence—praying and reflecting alone. Each morning, we gathered for a short group discussion, and each evening we shared a

simple meal before a brief breakout reflection. Those moments of shared presence—without small talk—taught me the power of bearing one another’s burdens.

Three Julys ago, I went fly-fishing at **Lake Ogallala, Nebraska**, with a mentor from **Project Healing Waters Leavenworth**. My guide, a seasoned fly fisherman originally from Hawaii now living in Omaha while his wife completed nursing school, showed me how to cast across the still water. When I felt the line tug and reeled in my first carp on a fly rod, I realized that life—like fishing—is best lived in patient community, guided by others who cheer you on.

HOW TO APPLY (INDUCTIVE)

1. **Observe:** Identify one area where you’ve struggled alone—work stress, family hardship, or faith doubts.
2. **Interpret:** Reflect on how shared prayer or honest conversation could lighten that load.
3. **Apply:** Invite two men—a CBMC brother or fellow veteran—to a weekly 30-minute check-in (phone, Zoom, or coffee). Share one win, one struggle, and pray together.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS (NEPQ)

- **Situation:** When have you most felt isolated in your challenges?
- **Problem:** How did going it alone impact your resilience and peace?
- **Pay-Off:** What breakthroughs might come from genuine, mutual support?

PRAYER

“Jesus, weave our hearts together so that when one of us stumbles, another lifts him up. Help us form cords of faith and friendship that never break.”

ACTION STEPS

- **Set the Call:** Today, send calendar invites for your weekly 30-minute check-in with two trusted brothers.
 - **Engage:** This month, attend one CBMC event or Project Healing Waters outing—and bring a friend who needs community.
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DAY 4: LEAD THROUGH SERVICE

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 2:3–4 (ESV)

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

WHO & WHEN

Penned by the Apostle Paul around **AD 61** from a Roman prison to the believers in **Philippi**, a veteran colony where rank and status defined daily life.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **Philippi’s Veteran Culture:** Founded in **42 BC** for Roman soldiers, Philippi prized honor and patronage—so Paul’s call to humble service was revolutionary.
 - **Early Church Example:** In a world of patron-clients, Paul holds up Jesus (Phil 2:6-7) as the model servant-leader who “emptied Himself.”
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WORD STUDY

- **Selfish ambition (*eritheia*):** “Party spirit”; seeking personal gain or recognition.
 - **Humility (*tapeinophrosune*):** “Lowliness of mind”; genuinely valuing others above yourself.
 - **Count others significant:** Actively “look to the interests of others,” not just your own.
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CULTURAL PARALLEL

Roman centurions earned loyalty by caring for wounded soldiers and sharing rations. Their leadership by service kept legions steadfast. Paul urges us to reflect Christ’s example: serve first, then lead.

PERSONAL STORY

Through **Veteratti**, I mentored a veteran who'd faced prison and needed a fresh start. I helped him build a resume, introduced him to hiring managers, and coached him on interview skills. Weeks later, he called to share that he'd landed a stable job—and that our conversations gave him confidence to move forward.

Separately, I reconnected with **Josh**, a fellow vet I hadn't seen since the 2019 Military Influencer Conference in DC. We met at our favorite local burger joint; instead of work talk, I simply asked, "How are you really doing?" Josh opened up about challenges at home and hopes for his kids. By putting my agenda aside and listening, I built trust deeper than any sales pitch could.

HOW TO APPLY (INDUCTIVE)

1. **Observe:** Identify someone in your circle who needs help or a listening ear.
 2. **Interpret:** Ask, "What practical or emotional support could ease their burden?"
 3. **Apply:** Schedule a "serve and listen" meal or call—lead by asking, "How can I help?" then listen without pitching.
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REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS (NEPQ)

- **Situation:** Who in your life needs humble service right now?
 - **Problem:** How has busyness or self-interest kept you from serving?
 - **Pay-Off:** What doors might open when you serve without agenda?
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PRAYER

"Lord Jesus, shape my heart to serve others with genuine humility. Teach me to value others above myself and lead by love."

ACTION STEPS

- **Serve & Listen:** Invite one veteran or colleague for a meal or call this week with the sole purpose of asking, "How can I help?"
 - **Reflect:** After your meeting, jot down how focusing on their needs shifted the conversation and your connection.
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DAY 5: STRENGTH FOR EVERY MISSION

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 4:13 (ESV)

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

WHO & WHEN

Written by the Apostle Paul around **AD 61** from a Roman prison—chains on his wrists but confidence in his heart—as he encouraged the church at **Philippi** to rely on Christ’s power rather than their own.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **Roman Chains:** Paul’s imprisonment in Rome meant he depended on supporters for food and comfort, yet his letters overflow with hope in Christ’s sustaining strength.
 - **Early Church Trials:** Facing social exclusion, economic hardship, and persecution, early believers discovered their sufficiency wasn’t in circumstances but in God’s empowering grace.
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WORD STUDY

- **Strengthens (*endunamoo*):** “To be empowered from within”—God’s own power working in your spirit.
 - **All things:** Every trial, task, or obstacle falls under His enabling grace.
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CULTURAL PARALLEL

Roman legions trained relentlessly, but their true morale came when they carried the emperor’s standard before them. Likewise, Christ’s presence within us empowers every step far beyond what we can muster alone.

PERSONAL STORY

On **July 22, 2017**, I ran the **Psycho Summer 50K** around **Wyandotte County Lake, KS**, under a blazing **99°F** sun. After topping up my water with powdered electrolytes at the Wyandotte Triangle aid station, I realized I’d been ignoring my body’s warnings. Rather than risk disqualification from overheating or not being able to finish due to exhaustion, I chose to walk the muddy dirt trail to **Shelter 14**. There I paused for a full minute—leaning on Philippians 4:13—before resuming a steady run. Hours later, exhausted yet exhilarated, I crossed the finish line and saw my wife and kids cheering

me on. In that moment I knew it wasn't my grit but His sustaining strength that carried me through the heat, the mud, and the miles.

HOW TO APPLY (INDUCTIVE)

1. **Observe:** Identify a “heat wave” in your life—a project, crisis, or relationship that’s draining your energy.
 2. **Interpret:** Notice where you’ve pushed too hard without pausing for rest, hydration, or prayer.
 3. **Apply:** Before tackling that challenge today, pause and pray Philippians 4:13 aloud, take a true “aid-station” break (hydrate, rest, reflect), then proceed—and journal one way you sensed God’s strength in that moment.
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REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS (NEPQ)

- **Situation:** What “race” are you running right now that’s left you exhausted and off-balance?
 - **Problem:** How has ignoring your need to pause or refuel harmed your progress or well-being?
 - **Pay-Off:** If you paused first to receive His strength, what different step or pace would you choose?
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PRAYER

“Lord Jesus, when I’m overwhelmed and running on empty, infuse me with Your power. Teach me to pause, pray, and press on in Your strength.”

ACTION STEPS

- **Strength Breaks:** Schedule three “aid-station” pauses today—pause, pray Philippians 4:13, hydrate with water and electrolytes, and note one truth that refuels you.
 - **Reflection Journal:** Tonight, write one sentence describing how God’s strength showed up during one of your pauses.
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DAY 6: FINDING JOY IN TRIALS

SCRIPTURE

James 1:2–4 (ESV)

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.”

WHO & WHEN

Written by James, leader of the Jerusalem church, around **AD 50** to Jewish Christians scattered under persecution across the Roman Empire.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **Diaspora Hardships:** Jews turned Christians faced economic hardship, social rejection, and violent oppression. James reframes suffering not as punishment but as a refining fire.
 - **Wisdom Tradition:** Uncut observations of life like Proverbs; here James blends instruction and encouragement to show that trials cultivate spiritual maturity.
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WORD STUDY

- **Trials** (*peirasmōs*): Tests that prove and refine genuine faith.
 - **Joy** (*chara*): A deep gladness rooted in God’s character, not in circumstances.
 - **Perseverance** (*hypomone*): Endurance under pressure that leads to maturity and completeness.
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CULTURAL PARALLEL

Roman athletes welcomed the *agon* (contest) and its discipline because each hardship made them champions in the arena. James shows that our spiritual arena works the same way: every trial breeds enduring faith.

PERSONAL STORY

After completing the **Master Resiliency Trainer Course** at **Fort Belvoir, VA**, while serving as First Sergeant and then Regimental Sexual Assault Response Coordinator for the **3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (“The Old Guard”)** at Joint Base Myer–Henderson Hall, I faced a season of overwhelming responsibility. To recalibrate, I began a daily **gratitude journal** each morning and night. Instead of simply naming three blessings, I noted **why** each one mattered—like the steady support of my wife during long deployments or the thrill of learning a new leadership skill that would help my soldiers. Within weeks, my mindset shifted: dread became anticipation, and burnout gave way to resilience. That simple practice turned my trial into triumph, teaching me that joy and growth walk hand in hand.

HOW TO APPLY (INDUCTIVE)

1. **Observe:** Identify a current trial—stress, conflict, or fear—that’s testing your faith.
 2. **Interpret:** Ask, “What virtue is God producing in me through this trial—patience, wisdom, or compassion?”
 3. **Apply:** Start or renew a **gratitude journal**: each morning and evening, write one blessing **and why** it matters. Note how your heart responds.
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REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS (NEPQ)

- **Situation:** What difficulty or circumstance is pressing your faith right now?
 - **Problem:** How has resisting or resenting this trial affected your peace or perspective?
 - **Pay-Off:** If you embraced it as a path to growth, what character quality would you gain?
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PRAYER

“Father, grant me the joy that transcends pain and the perseverance to grow through every test. Help me see Your refining hand in each trial.”

ACTION STEPS

- **Gratitude Journal:** Today, record one morning and one evening entry—each “blessing” paired with its deeper impact on your life.
- **Trial Reflection:** At week’s end, review your entries and list two ways God has used your trials to strengthen you.

DAY 7: SOWING GENEROSITY

SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 9:6–8 (ESV)

“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

WHO & WHEN

Paul wrote this around **AD 55** to the church in **Corinth**, a prosperous trade center where believers often wrestled with sharing their resources freely.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **Corinth’s Prosperity:** Perched on major trade routes, Corinth’s churches had access to wealth, yet Paul urged generosity as the truest measure of faith.
 - **Jerusalem Collection:** He organized aid for struggling Jewish Christians in Judea, showing that our giving mirrors Christ’s sacrificial grace (2 Cor 8:9).
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WORD STUDY

- **Sow (*speiro*):** To “plant seed” generously—initiating blessing in others’ lives.
 - **Reap (*therizo*):** To “gather a harvest”—God’s return on our generosity.
 - **Cheerful (*hilaros*):** Giving with gladness and willingness, not out of reluctance or duty.
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CULTURAL PARALLEL

Roman patrons funded games and public works for honor. Paul flips this: Christian giving springs from sacrificial love, not for acclaim, reflecting Jesus’ choice to become poor so we might become rich in grace.

PERSONAL STORY

During one of my visits to **Ulysses, KS**, I was invited as a personal guest of the Church of Christ’s pastor. After worship, he invited me and about ten members to lunch at a local Mexican restaurant. Unbeknownst to them, I’d arranged with the restaurant beforehand to cover the entire bill. When the check arrived, their

surprise and overflowing gratitude made it clear: generosity isn't about personal acclaim or ministry agendas—it's about using the resources God has provided to bless others unexpectedly and joyfully.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

- **Christ's Example:** "Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich." (2 Cor 8:9)
 - **Stewardship:** Our time, talent, and treasure are seeds for God's Kingdom—multiplied when sown cheerfully and without strings.
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HOW TO APPLY (INDUCTIVE)

1. **Observe:** Notice a "table" opportunity—someone in your life who would be uplifted by an unexpected act of kindness.
 2. **Interpret:** Ask, "How can I steward what God's given me to bless them freely?"
 3. **Apply:** This week, plan one act—cover a meal, buy coffee, or lend a resource—then give with genuine joy and no expectation of return.
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REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS (NEPQ)

- **Situation:** Who around you could be surprised and encouraged by a no-strings gift?
 - **Problem:** How has hesitation or fear of cost kept you from giving freely?
 - **Pay-Off:** What relationships and hope might blossom when you sow generosity with a cheerful heart?
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PRAYER

"Father, cultivate in me a generous spirit. Teach me to give with joy and extend unexpected blessings, reflecting Your abundant grace."

ACTION STEPS

- **Plan Your Gift:** Identify one person to invite for a meal or coffee this week, arrange to cover the cost, and bless them without them knowing ahead of time.
 - **Reflect:** After your gift, journal how their surprise and gratitude revealed God's kindness and deepened your own thankfulness.
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