



21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# BREAK UP THE GROUND

SEASON OF RENEWAL

WEEK 1

BREAK UP THE GROUND  
OF OUR HEARTS

## Day 1 - Break up the Ground

“I said, ‘Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love. Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you.’”

(Hosea 10:12, NLT)

In the early years of the 20th century, the fertile farmland of the Great Plains was devastated by a combination of over-farming and a massive drought, leading to what is now known as the Dust Bowl era of the 1930s. Continuing to rely on the same unsustainable practices was a significant part of the problem. The scene across America’s heartland was desperate, with many losing their livelihoods. Over 750,000 family farms were lost to bankruptcy or foreclosure.

Eventually, the land became thriving farmland again, but this revival required two key qualities from those who stayed: a determination not to give up and a willingness to change their methods.

If we want to see a harvest of righteousness, the barren ground of our hearts must also be broken up. Over the next 21 days, we will join together in prayer, asking God to break up the hard and dry ground in our hearts, in our church, and in our community. The process must begin here, within each of us. Like the farmers of the Dust Bowl, we cannot keep doing what we have always done.

Take time today to reflect on this passage and pray for God to start breaking up the ground in your own heart, planting the seeds of something new.

### **Questions to Consider:**

- What does it mean to "break up the fallow ground" in your spiritual life?
- What specific areas of your heart might need God's transformative touch?
- What changes in your routines might be necessary to allow God to work in your heart?

### **Action Step:**

Begin a fast to accompany the 21-day prayer emphasis. Fasting can be a powerful spiritual catalyst in your life.

## Day 2 - Heart Transplant

“And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.”  
(Ezekiel 36:26, NLT)

How did Laura Baker—a young nursing student who once ran half marathons—become so sick that she needed an advanced medical device to keep her alive? The diagnosis was cardiomyopathy, a condition in which her heart tissue thickened and became rigid, leading to severe impairment in its ability to pump blood effectively. In essence, her heart had physically hardened and could no longer function as it should. The solution? A heart transplant. With a new heart came a new beginning for Laura, transforming her life in extraordinary ways.

Just as a physically hardened heart can only be restored through a transplant, spiritually, the same is true. When our hearts grow hard—whether through sin, complacency, or the struggles of life—we lose sensitivity to God’s voice and His work in our lives. Like unyielding stone, we resist His transformative touch.

Yet, God’s promise in Ezekiel offers hope. He desires to replace our hardened hearts with hearts of flesh—ones that are soft, responsive, and open to His will. But this process requires repentance: a turning away from the attitudes and actions that have caused our hearts to harden. Just as a farmer breaks through rocky soil to prepare it for planting, we must invite God to break through the stoniness in our lives.

Repentance is not merely an admission of guilt; it’s an act of surrender. It’s saying, “God, I can’t do this on my own. I need You to do the work only You can do.” As we humble ourselves and

turn back to Him, God begins to transform us from the inside out, replacing our hearts of stone with vibrant, living hearts that beat in rhythm with His.

Today, reflect on [Ezekiel 36:26](#) and ask God to reveal any areas of hardness in your own heart. Invite Him to begin His work of softening and renewing you.

### **Questions to Consider:**

- What does it mean to have a hardened heart?
- Are there specific sins, habits, or hurts that have caused areas of your heart to grow unresponsive to God?
- What steps of repentance can you take today to allow God to renew your heart?

### **Action Step:**

Spend 10 minutes in quiet prayer, asking God to reveal areas of hardness in your heart. Write down what He shows you, and pray specifically for His renewing work in those areas.

## Day 3 - Just a Little Bit Off

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” (Psalm 139:23–24, NLT)

In the 1700s, sailors relied heavily on the stars for navigation during long sea voyages. Without accurate tools like the modern chronometer, even a small miscalculation in their position could lead them hundreds of miles off course. It was the invention of the marine chronometer by John Harrison in the mid-18th century that revolutionized navigation, allowing sailors to pinpoint their longitude and stay on course.

In a similar way, we may think we are navigating life well, but we often fail to see how far off course we are without God. We have to recognize that our measuring tool (our heart) is usually way off ([Jeremiah 17:9](#)). Only He can truly "search us and know our hearts." Through His guidance, He reveals the thoughts, attitudes, and sins that hinder us, aligning us with His purpose.

Today, ask God to examine your heart. Like a skilled navigator, He can correct what is hidden and guide you back on course.

**Questions to Consider:**

- Have you taken time to ask God to search your heart today? Take a moment to listen and let Him show you what needs realignment.
- Are there any areas where you're relying on your own guidance instead of His?

**Action Step:**

Spend time in prayer, specifically asking God to reveal areas where you need His guidance. Write down anything He shows you.

## Day 4 - Our Way or His

“My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20, NLT)

In Greek mythology, Icarus flew too close to the sun despite his father’s warnings. His wings, made of wax, melted, leading to his downfall. Icarus’s ambition overpowered his wisdom, and he paid the ultimate price for his pride.

Similarly, selfish ambitions can cause us to "fly too close to the sun," placing our desires above God’s plans. Galatians 2:20 is a reminder that we are called to die to ourselves in order to live for Christ. This means we surrender our ambitions and agenda, allowing Christ to take the lead in our lives. This surrender is not about losing ourselves but about discovering a greater purpose through Him.

Take time today to reflect on what ambitions might need surrendering to God. When we let go, we make room for His perfect plans.



**Questions to Consider:**

- What ambitions or goals have taken priority over God's will in your life?
- How can surrendering these to Him lead to deeper fulfillment?

**Action Step:**

Write down one area where you feel resistance to surrender. Pray about it and ask for God's strength to let go.

## Day 5 - Get Low

“And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.” (James 4:6–10, NLT)

John Newton, the author of the hymn “Amazing Grace,” is a profound example of humility. A former slave trader, Newton’s life was radically transformed when he encountered Christ. He spent the rest of his days serving as a pastor, writing hymns, and advocating for the abolition of slavery. Despite his influential role, Newton often referred to himself as a “wretch” saved by grace, never losing sight of God’s mercy.

Humility isn’t about thinking less of ourselves; it’s about recognizing God’s greatness and our need for Him. This scripture assures us that when we humble ourselves, God lifts us up. On the other hand, it also says our pride makes us opposed to God and blocks his work in our life. True humility not only opens the door for God to move in powerful ways but also allows us to receive His grace fully.

Today, ask God to cultivate humility in your heart, allowing His grace to work in and through you.

**Questions to Consider:**

- How can recognizing God's greatness help you cultivate humility?
- Are there areas in your life where pride might be hindering your relationship with God?

**Action Step:**

Write a prayer of humility, acknowledging specific ways God has shown His grace in your life.

## Day 6 - What Do You Think?

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

(Romans 12:2, NLT)

Neuroplasticity, a concept in modern science, reveals that our brains are capable of rewiring themselves through intentional thought patterns. Studies show that consistent, focused effort can help break negative cycles and form healthier habits. However, negative habits and thought processes can also rewire the brain.

If we spend our time focused on the things of the world through entertainment, news, social media or other methods, we will be rewiring our mind to think like the world thinks. This makes it hard for us to be a light in a dark world. It’s no wonder that God calls on us to renew our minds. —shifting from worldly thinking to his truth.

This transformation isn’t an overnight process; it requires daily submission to God’s Word and intentional effort to align our thoughts with His. Just as neuroplasticity rewires the brain, God’s Word has the power to rewire our spiritual perspectives.

Today, make a conscious effort to replace one negative thought with a biblical truth. This small step can lead to profound transformation over time.

**Questions to Consider:**

- What thought patterns might God be inviting you to renew?
- What are you feeding your mind that might be shaping unhealthy or worldly thought patterns??

**Action Step:**

Identify one negative thought you struggle with. Find a verse that counters it and meditate on that truth throughout the day.

## Day 7 - Always Thankful

“Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NLT)

Corrie ten Boom, a Holocaust survivor, recounts in her book *The Hiding Place* how she and her sister Betsie gave thanks for fleas in their barracks. While it seemed absurd at first, they later discovered that the fleas kept guards away, allowing them to hold Bible studies and minister to others in secret. Their gratitude, even in suffering, became a source of strength and hope.

Gratitude shifts our focus from what we lack to what we have, aligning our hearts with God’s will. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 calls us to give thanks in all circumstances—not just when life is easy, but even in the challenging seasons. Gratitude shifts our focus from what’s wrong to what’s good, opening our hearts to God’s peace and joy. Like Corrie and Betsie, we can choose gratitude as an act of faith, trusting that God is working even in the hardest times.

Gratitude has a unique way of breaking up the hard ground in our hearts. When we choose to give thanks, even in difficult circumstances, we allow God to work in areas where bitterness, fear, or doubt might have taken root. Gratitude shifts our focus from the obstacles we face to the blessings we’ve been given, paving the way for healing and renewal. It is through this practice of thanksgiving that God cultivates a fertile heart ready to receive His truth and grace

Today, practice gratitude by naming three things you are thankful for, even if they seem small.

**Questions to Consider:**

- How can gratitude change your perspective in difficult situations?
- What blessings might you have overlooked in your current circumstances?

**Action Step:**

Write a list of three things you're thankful for today. Reflect on how God has worked through those blessings.

