



BADGE *OF* HONOR

A 7-DAY SCRIPTURE JOURNEY

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WHO AM I?

Pray

Dear God, thank you that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Let me know who I am in you first—before my job, role, or title. Give me a firm identity as your beloved child. Let me rest in the assurance that my life is hidden in Christ with God. Fix my eyes on things of you, not of this earth. Amen.

Read

Psalm 139:13-14:

You created every part of me;
 you put me together in my mother's womb.
 I praise you because you are to be feared;
 all you do is strange and wonderful.
 I know it with all my heart.

Colossians 3:1-4: “You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory!”

1 John 3:1: “See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children—and so, in fact, we are. This is why the world does not know us: it has not known God.”

Reflect

God created each of us—fearfully and wonderfully. Even in our mother's womb, God formed us and knew us. Our very breath proclaims God's marvelous works. When we clear away distractions and listen quietly, our souls know this well. We are beloved children of God.

As God's children, we are first and foremost God's own. This is our identity before any job, role, or responsibility. While your job requires uniforms, badges, and other elements that signify your role to others—these things don't define you.

Think of the freedom this realization offers you! Your real life is hidden with Christ in God. While you regularly encounter the world's corruption through violence, natural disasters, even through living in bodies that are vulnerable to decay, you are being raised to life with Christ. As you keep your eyes fixed on things in God's throne room—where God's glory is fully expressed—you can live into the fullness of who God created you to be. You can rest assured that God knows and loves you. Your true identity is made possible in Christ. Everything else follows.

Respond

In the New Testament Jesus addresses God as “Abba.” This is a name like “Daddy” or “Papa.” It speaks of tender endearment and mutual love. Take a moment to sit quietly and settle into your body. Pay attention to your breathing. Try saying “Abba” as you inhale and exhale. Breathe in and say, “Ah.” Breathe out and say, “bah.” Say it repeatedly until it becomes as natural as breathing. Let this prayer connect you to God, your beloved Father. Let it remind you that you are God's beloved child. Try this simple exercise throughout your work shift. Whether in a moment of conflict or in downtime, let your breath root you in your deeper identity, as God's own.

JUSTICE

Pray

Dear God, make your definition of justice the center of my work. Let me love what you love; hate what you hate. Empower me to carry out this biblical call—to defend the weak, vulnerable, outcast and oppressed. Give me the strength and courage to live out your values, and follow in Jesus' example. Amen.

Read

Isaiah 61:8a: “The LORD says, ‘I love justice and I hate oppression and crime.’”

Micah 6:8: “No, the LORD has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.”

Luke 4:18-19: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free the oppressed
and announce that the time has come
when the Lord will save his people.”

Reflect

As we live out of the awareness that we are God's beloved children, our values shift. We begin to love the things that God loves and hate the things God hates. Scripture is clear about what these things are: God loves justice and hates oppression and crime. We are called to carry out God's values through our behaviors. The prophet Micah summarizes God's instructions for life: “to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.” This requires action.

What does justice look like? Jesus describes his own call to justice at the beginning of his public ministry by quoting the prophet Isaiah. He says he has come to bring good news to the poor. Liberate the captives. Restore sight to the blind. Free the oppressed. Announce that God has come to save. We see these words come to life throughout Jesus' ministry, as he defends the weak, vulnerable, outcast, and oppressed. We see it as he brings fullness of life—to all people—through healings, teachings, and relationships. We see it ultimately in his sacrifice that invites every person into new and unending life.

As leaders in public service, you are in a unique position to follow Jesus in carrying out God's call to justice. You have an opportunity to defend the oppressed, vulnerable, and outcast. As you make God's justice the center of your work, you have a chance to enforce what God loves through working against oppression and crime.

Respond

How do people in your field define justice? What vows did you make when accepting your position? Think through constitutional and statutory rights and duties. Now look back over these Bible verses. How does God define justice? How are these two definitions compatible? Are they different? What are some concrete ways you can use your position to carry out this biblical call?

CALL OF DUTY

Pray

Dear God, thank you for using each of us to build up the church. Thank you that I have unique gifts to contribute. Let me serve you through my work. Make my role in public service a vehicle to unify the body of Christ, impacting others in the world. Give me the grace I need to do this well. Amen.

Read

Romans 12:4-12: “We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body. So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we should do it according to the faith that we have; if it is to serve, we should serve; if it is to teach, we should teach; if it is to encourage others, we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do it generously; whoever has authority should work hard; whoever shows kindness to others should do it cheerfully.

“Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good. Love one another warmly as Christians, and be eager to show respect for one another. Work hard and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion. Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times.”

Colossians 3:23: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people.”

Reflect

Working in public service is more than a job. While many people spend their days in offices, you are frequently in life or death situations, day and night. The demands on you are varied and intense—from people and crises encountered in the field to bureaucracy and politics behind the scenes. Your work requires devotion, sacrifice, and perseverance.

Scripture tells us that we each play a valuable role in the body of Christ. While we serve different functions, each function is necessary. Carrying out your role strengthens the entire faith community. Paul says some people speak, some encourage others, some serve, some teach. But whatever you do, do it wholeheartedly. Work hard. Perform your duties cheerfully. Love with sincerity. Patiently persist through difficulties.

This same principle can be applied to your work in public service. Your job is an opportunity to apply your spiritual gifts in the public sphere. This can impact people far beyond the community of faith, just as all creation is being brought together in Christ (Ephesians 1:10). Approached this way, your work takes on a different focus. Even though your daily tasks are challenging, you work for the Lord and not for people. As you set your mind on Christ, God can renew your fervor and order your decisions.

Respond

Take a moment to reflect on why you are in public service. What prompted you to pursue this line of work? Did you sense a need or a vocational calling? Now identify some ways you can use your job to build up the whole church. How can serving Christ through your role impact the community of faith and express God's love to your neighbors?

GOVERNMENT

Pray

Dear God, make love the rule of my life. Help me use my position in the government to carry out your higher Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Amen.

Read

Romans 13:1-2: “Everyone must obey state authorities, because no authority exists without God’s permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God. Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered; and anyone who does so will bring judgment on himself.”

Galatians 5:13-15: “As for you, my friends, you were called to be free. But do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires control you. Instead, let love make you serve one another. For the whole Law is summed up in one commandment: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” But if you act like wild animals, hurting and harming each other, then watch out, or you will completely destroy one another.”

Reflect

In the Old Testament, God established an intricate system of laws for Israel to follow. These laws helped the people live in relationship with God and one another. They provided order and structure. They enabled ragtag humans to interact with a holy God. While detailed and at times complicated, Paul tells us here that the Law can actually be summed up quite simply: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Loving others as ourselves orders our actions. It brings structure to chaos. We are no longer living like wild animals and driven by lustful desires. Paul says even the things he wants to do he cannot carry out (Romans 7:15)! Instead, we have a rule that keeps us all free to love God and to live fully under God’s reign. God’s way is better than our ways—it brings shalom, wholeness, and flourishing.

God’s Law affects how we live in the world. Paul tells the church: respect your authorities! Don’t bring judgment on yourself! Before his conversion, Paul used his authority to persecute Jesus’s followers. Now he says the government exists through God’s authority—and can be used for God’s purposes.

As civil servants, you can use government structures to carry out God’s higher Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” You can actively engage in God’s shalom—wholeness, peace. You can bring order to chaos, hold people accountable to ethical standards, enforce laws that protect the vulnerable and oppressed. You can help us live as citizens of the kingdom of heaven even while we are wayfarers on earth.

Respond

Who in your life is difficult to love? This may be a coworker, supervisor, or family member. It may be people you encounter on the field—a perpetrator, those in a particular neighborhood, even people from a certain culture. Talk with God about this. Confess your struggle to love this person or people. Ask God to help you follow the higher Law and love your neighbor as yourself. When you notice negative thoughts or feelings about others, take a moment to say a brief prayer. “God, help me love this person as I love myself. We are both made in your image.”

LAMENT

Pray

Dear God, the burden of my work is heavy. I see so many things that are too much to carry on my own. Be my comfort and give me a reprieve from painful emotions. You hear my cry for help. You are faithful to answer. Amen.

Read

Psalm 18:6:

“In my trouble I called to the LORD;
I called to my God for help.
In his temple he heard my voice;
he listened to my cry for help.”

Psalm 61:1-3:

“Hear my cry, O God;
listen to my prayer!
In despair and far from home
I call to you!
Take me to a safe refuge,
for you are my protector,
my strong defense against my enemies.”

Psalm 86:1-7:

“Listen to me, LORD, and answer me,
for I am helpless and weak.
Save me from death, because I am loyal to you;
save me, for I am your servant and I trust in you.
You are my God, so be merciful to me;
I pray to you all day long.
Make your servant glad, O Lord,
because my prayers go up to you.
You are good to us and forgiving,
full of constant love for all who pray to you.”

Reflect

A man is shot while walking down the street. A woman dies in a car accident. An argument escalates into domestic violence. A family’s home is ravaged by fire. You are often on the frontlines of these events, witnessing the painful effects of a fallen world. You are the person who delivers difficult news to loved ones. You stand next to people in times of crisis. You encounter loss, tragedy, and evil in ways other people rarely do.

How do you process these experiences? Where do you take this pain?

The Bible gives us an outlet for painful emotions through laments that give voice to deep suffering. In 67 of the Psalms, in Lamentations, in several of the prophets, the writers are comforted as they cry out to God. Many times in the Psalms the writer begins in desolation and ends in hope. *I called to God for help and he listened!*

Articulating our experiences to God invites God to comfort us in them. We are encouraged to name our despair, helplessness, weakness, trouble—and ask God to intervene. We can approach God with great assurance that God will hear and answer.

Respond

Try bringing a painful experience before God by praying a psalm of lament (Psalm 10, 44, 60, 61, 74, 79, 80, 85, 86, 90). Think of something you have encountered in your line of work—this could be today, last week or a year ago. Read through the psalm and see if it describes your feelings. What words stand out to you? What images can you relate to? Use these words to express your own emotions to God. You may want to add some of your own prayers or petitions. Try making this a regular practice when you encounter something painful or difficult to process.

GOD - WITH - ME

Pray

Dear God, every time I go to work I face real threats. At times, I fear being caught in the backlash of people who oppose the government. I enter into situations that are risky. Go with me. Let me know you as my light and salvation. Be my shelter and strength. Protect and guard my life. Amen.

Read

Psalm 27:1-3:

“The LORD is my light and my salvation;
I will fear no one.
The LORD protects me from all danger;
I will never be afraid.
When evil people attack me and try to kill me,
they stumble and fall.
Even if a whole army surrounds me,
I will not be afraid;
even if enemies attack me,
I will still trust God.”

Psalm 46:1-3:

“God is our shelter and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble.
So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken
and mountains fall into the ocean depths;
even if the seas roar and rage,
and the hills are shaken by the violence.”

Ephesians 6:14-17: “So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight around your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, and as your shoes the

readiness to announce the Good News of peace. At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you.”

Reflect

When was the last time you felt afraid? Your job requires great courage in the face of threatening situations. It involves calculated risks and unknown outcomes. You may perceive danger in a house, a car on the side of the road, or a blazing fire. You may encounter danger in physical attacks. And rather than turning in the other direction, you go towards it!

King David knew about fearing danger. In fact, a large portion of his reign was spent escaping the threats of his enemies. His predecessor King Saul chased him all over Israel, forcing David to hide in caves. Throughout the Psalms, David cries out to God asking for protection from the assaults of surrounding nations. Enemies lurked—internally and externally—lying in wait for his life.

But David also professes deep confidence in God’s ability to save him. He calls God “my light and my salvation” and “our shelter and strength.” David didn’t have to fear his enemies, because he served a much more powerful God. He knew that everything is under God’s dominion—including his enemies and all of creation.

Respond

In Ephesians 6:10-18, Paul describes putting on spiritual armor to protect us against the threats of the enemy. He reminds us that our battle is not against human beings, but we can equip ourselves for this battle with the things of God (see verses 14-17). Every day before leaving for work, read through this passage. Put on each piece of your armor, asking God to equip you for the things you will face that day.

LIVING A WHOLE LIFE

Pray

Dear God, thank for caring about every aspect of who I am. Help me show myself the same care. Teach me to guard my heart—physically, emotionally and spiritually. Let my heart be a wellspring that my work, relationships and daily tasks flow out of. Amen.

Read

Deuteronomy 6:5: “Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”

Proverbs 4:23 (NIV): “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

Romans 12:1: “So then, my friends, because of God’s great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer.”

Reflect

In Scripture the heart is much more than a bodily organ. It is the center of being. God writes the law upon our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33). God fills our hearts with happiness (Acts 14:17). Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:17). And everything we do flows from our hearts (Proverbs 4:23). The heart informs all of our actions, thoughts, and emotions.

This is why Proverbs says guarding the heart is of utmost importance. Guarding our hearts doesn’t just mean staying physically healthy. It includes tending to all the parts of who we are as God’s beloved creation. We have minds, bodies, and feelings. Each facet informs the other. Each is important to God. Each leads us into a deeper awareness of God’s presence.

As a public service officer, guarding your heart can be particularly challenging. Many people in your fields find it difficult to invest energy into areas outside of work. The demands of the job can be all-consuming, leaving little time for anything else. But Scripture is clear that we need to take care of ourselves, in all our dimensions. We may be called to meaningful work, but we cannot carry out our tasks if our heart isn’t healthy.

Respond

What practical things can you do this week to strengthen other areas of your life? Is there a relationship you can invest in? Make a phone call, schedule a coffee date, or set aside an evening to spend time with your family. Do you need more emotional or psychological support? Find a support group or therapist. Consider exercising, spending time outside, or going to a movie. Be intentional to guard your heart this week by investing in yourself and others.



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