

WORDS
TO STRENGTHEN
YOU



A Collection of Reflective Poems
& *Devotional Workbook*

Franklin C. Edwards

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& Devotional Workbook

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When Faith Feels Fragile

- *The discipline of Scripture reading* • *The spiritual danger of worry*
- *Remembering God's past faithfulness* • *Fragile belief in difficult seasons*

When doubts feel louder than truths,
You have to count your blessings
And look at how far you've come.

When faith feels fragile,
You can't allow your heart to go numb—
Meaning you have to allow your heart
To be filled with the Holy Spirit.¹
You have to read your Bible and stay near it.²

You have to remember all the times
God brought you out of troubled waters.³
Remember to have childlike faith,
Because we are His sons and daughters.⁴

Remembering where God has brought you from
Always puts things into perspective.
You remember you've been here before,
Which makes moving forward more effective.

However, worrying
Always makes having faith defective,
So never worry about tomorrow;
Focusing on today should always be your objective.⁵

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Romans 5:5 — “The Holy Spirit fills the hearts of believers with God's love.”

² Psalm 119:105 — “God's Word is described as a lamp to our feet.”

³ Isaiah 43:2 — “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.”

⁴ Matthew 18:3 — “Unless you change and become like little children...”

⁵ Matthew 6:34 — “Do not worry about tomorrow...”

Reflection Question

When faith feels fragile, what spiritual habits help you stay grounded?

Journal Prompts

- What doubts are currently louder than your truths?
- What are some moments where God clearly brought you through?
- How does worry impact your spiritual peace?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why is remembering past breakthroughs so spiritually grounding?
- How does childlike faith differ from naive faith?
- What spiritual habits rebuild faith in times of uncertainty?

Prayer Prompt

*Lord, when my faith feels fragile,
remind me that You've never failed me before.
Help me release worry, trust Your Word,
and stay near to Your Spirit.
Amen.*

Challenge of the Week

Choose one “faith-building” habit (prayer, journaling, or Scripture reading) and commit to it every day this week—no matter how you feel.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

Loyalty vs. Enabling

- *Boundaries in relationships*
- *Speaking truth in love*
- *Discernment between support and enabling*
- *Spiritual accountability*

The line between standing by someone
And enabling their self-destruction
Is drawn at how pure your heart is.

If you have a genuine heart,
You'll never enable someone's downfall from the start.

As soon as you begin to notice a loved one's descent,
You call it out,
Help them reroute—
Not sit and watch them self-destruct.

If your spirit is real,
You'll interrupt.
You'll remind them to keep their head on straight and persevere.

As their peer,
You'll help their vision become clear
And speak the words they need to hear.

It's one thing to be loyal;
It's another thing to enable behavior that's fatal.
Be true to yourself, and do them a favor—
Remind them to pray to their Lord and Savior.¹

FOOTNOTE:

¹ *Titus 2:13 — Jesus is referred to as “our great God and Savior.” Prayer connects others to His help, not just your presence.*

Reflection Question

Where's the line between standing by someone and enabling their self-destruction?

Journal Prompts

- Have you ever stayed too long in a toxic dynamic under the name of “loyalty”?
- What does “genuine love” look like in accountability?
- When have you helped someone by confronting them?

Group Discussion Questions

- What makes it hard to confront someone in love?
- What's the difference between enabling and being patient?
- How do you protect your own spirit while helping someone in crisis?

Prayer Prompt

God, help me love others with courage.

Give me discernment when to speak, and compassion when I do.

Let me never enable destruction while calling it love.

Challenge of the Week

Have one honest conversation this week—with love—where you speak truth that may help someone course-correct.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

When Self-Care Becomes Avoidance

- *Self-deception through wellness* • *Avoidance disguised as “healing”*
- *Emotional responsibility* • *Distinguishing rest from retreat*

Wellness is usually something positively defined,
But it can be a tool to deceive your cognitive mind.

You can say you’re practicing self-care to improve,
While your subconscious knows it’s being used to remove—
To remove your mind
From the responsibility you don’t want to face.

You’re using self-care as a utility¹
That undermines your emotional stability.
Your wellness becomes a distraction,
Not a healing action.

Friends don’t question it,
Because it’s not drinking or smoking—
But the damage is still provoking.
Whether it’s workouts, spa days, or splurging on yourself,
You’re calling it “healing”
While sabotaging your health and wealth.

FOOTNOTE:

¹Romans 12:2 — “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Reflection Question

How can the wellness movement become another way to escape responsibility?

Journal Prompts

- What's one "self-care" habit you use to avoid uncomfortable emotions?
- What does true restoration look like to you?
- How can you return to God in the places you've been escaping?

Group Discussion Questions

- How can you discern between true rest and emotional avoidance?
- How do you know when "self-care" becomes self-sabotage?
- What's the line between compassion for yourself and unhealthy indulgence?

Prayer Prompt

*Lord, help me seek real healing, not the illusion of peace.
Show me where I'm using good things to avoid deeper pain,
And draw me back to You as the source of wholeness.*

Challenge of the Week

Identify one self-care routine that may actually be avoidance.
Replace it for one week with prayer or journaling through the emotion.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The Burden of Representing Your Whole Group

- *Racial representation and pressure*
- *Erasure of individuality*
- *Cultural bias and injustice*
- *Pride in identity despite social burden*

You become stripped of your identity,
And your race is magnified.
So every time you mess up,
You get crucified.¹

Every stereotype imaginable is cast upon you,
And at first, they love you—
Until it's time to shun you.

They love you for who you are
And hate you for the same reason.
Makes you wish race didn't matter,
And that we could all move in cohesion.

When you're the only one of your kind,
There is hardly any room for error.
They kill your identity
And leave you without a pallbearer.

There is no more you;
Instead, you're the face of your race.
And never once did you ask
To bear this responsibility in the first place.

The things you do,
They assume you all do—
Even though you know that isn't at all true.

The only thing you can do
Is try to represent your race with pride.
Since you're the only one,
Expect few people to be truly on your side.

FOOTNOTE

¹ *Galatians 2:20* — “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

Though used metaphorically here, “crucified” echoes unjust suffering and the loss of self for the sake of others.

Reflection Question

How does being “the only one” in a space distort personal identity?

Journal Prompts

- Have you ever felt burdened by having to “represent” your group?
- How has being marginalized affected your self-perception?
- Where do you find your identity outside of cultural labels?

Group Discussion Questions

- What are the spiritual and emotional effects of tokenism?
- How can we honor our identity without carrying cultural burdens alone?
- How can communities be safer for “the only one in the room”?

Prayer Prompt

*God, give me strength to represent with grace,
Even when I'm alone.
Remind me that my worth is rooted in You,
Not in how others judge what I represent.*

Challenge of the Week

Speak a word of encouragement to someone who often carries the burden of “representing” more than just themselves.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The Fear of Starting Over

- *Courage to begin again* • *Letting go of failed patterns*
- *New beginnings as spiritual growth* • *Trusting God with change*

Never fear starting over,
Because insanity is repeating the same actions
And expecting different results.

Starting over is actually a feeling you should exult.
Continuing the same actions with no improvement
Should leave you distraught.

Once you start over,
You'll realize it isn't as scary as you thought.

I get it—
Starting over can seem scary
Because your mind feels like you're throwing away
everything you worked for.

And if you start over,
That just means you're going to have to work more.

But life is all about perspective,
So remember this:
If you remain in the same predicament and never start over,
You'll never know what you might miss.

Starting over means another chance,
Another opportunity,
Another reason to live.

So relax, say a prayer,
Start over¹,
And give life all that you can give

FOOTNOTE

¹ *Lamentations 3:22–23* — “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

Reflection Question

What scares you more: failing at something new or staying stuck in the familiar?

Journal Prompts

- What is something God might be calling you to begin again?
- How have you seen fear hold you back from starting over?
- What could your life look like if you trusted God with a restart?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why does our ego resist starting over?
- What examples from Scripture show the power of beginning again?
- How can we encourage others to embrace new beginnings?

Prayer Prompt

*God, give me the courage to start again.
Help me trust that You make all things new—
Even when the path ahead is unknown.*

Challenge of the Week

Write down one thing you've been afraid to restart.
Commit to taking one step toward it this week.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

Transactional Love

- *Conditional vs. unconditional love*
- *The only source of true love*
- *Spiritual truth about how love functions in the world*
- *Hidden costs of emotional relationships*

The only unconditional love
You will ever feel
Is from your mother.

You will not feel it from a friend,
Nor will you feel it from a lover.

All other love is transactional
One way or another.

Whether you pay with time,
Effort,
Energy,
Or companionship—
You will either pay
Or you will suffer.

And sadly,
That's just the world we live in—
A world where any and everything costs.

And that, unfortunately,
Does not exclude love.

Conditional love always feels unconditional
Until certain lines get crossed.

So yes,
The love you and someone else reciprocate
Is probably bound together by an unspoken contract.

And if that unspoken contract is broken,
You'll most likely lose contact.¹

FOOTNOTE:

¹ 1 John 4:8 — “God is love.” Human love often fails, but divine love is never transactional.

Reflection Question

How often do relationships operate like unspoken contracts rather than authentic connections?

Journal Prompts

- Have you ever felt love disappear after a line was crossed?
- How does God's love differ from human connection?
- In what ways have you "paid" for affection?

Group Discussion Questions

- What makes unconditional love so rare?
- How can we model divine love in a transactional world?
- How do expectations affect the purity of love?

Prayer Prompt

Father, show me how to love without keeping score.

Teach me to receive Your love,

So I don't seek it in places that cost me my peace.

Challenge of the Week

Reach out to someone expecting nothing in return—
just to love them as God loves you.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The Fragility of Identity Rooted in Achievement

- *Self-worth tied to success* • *Identity vs. accolades*
- *God's judgment vs. the world's approval* • *Living beyond external titles*

Who are you outside of your degree?
If we stripped away your accomplishments,
What else would we see?

When you're not holding that prestigious title at your job,
Are you someone with integrity—
Or do you live like a slob?

It's great that you've built that business
And defied all odds,
But how will He judge you
When you stand in front of the One True God?¹

If you were stripped of all your accolades,
Who would you be?
Would you still have a pleasant personality
For the world to see?

If every last one of your accomplishments
Faded away today,
Could you still look in the mirror
And see someone you'd want a child to portray?

I admire the fact
That you've earned all these titles,
But when it's all said and done,
Who you are to your core is what's truly vital.

FOOTNOTE:

¹ *Romans 14:12* — “Each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.” *Earthly titles won't matter in heaven.*

Reflection Question

Who are you when the titles, accomplishments, and accolades fade?

Journal Prompts

- What part of your identity is most fragile when success is stripped away?
- Do you believe God values your resume or your character more?
- What are you afraid to lose because it defines you?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why do we attach worth to performance?
- What's the difference between identity and achievements?
- How can we define ourselves through faith, not titles?

Prayer Prompt

Lord, teach me who I am without the applause.

Let me be content in who You've made me to be—

Not in what I accomplish.

Challenge of the Week

Let go of one “title” you use to describe yourself.
Practice introducing yourself by your values, not your résumé.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The War Between Productivity and Peace

- *Culture of busyness* • *Inner peace as a foundation for success*
- *God's intention for labor and rest* • *Value vs. output*

The first book in the Bible
Says we will have to work for our food¹ (Genesis 3:19),
So naturally I try to stay a hard-working dude.

Because we all love to eat
And make sure that our life is sweet.

The more we work,
The more we can enjoy life's sweet treats.

So then hard work and busyness
Became synonymous—
The busier you are,
The more your life is viewed with prominence.

And with more prominence
Comes more dominance,
And the world convinces you
That to be profitless
Would be a misguided consequence.

So we view those who are always busy
As if they have more common sense,
And those who aren't busy
As if they're lazy or have incompetence.

But if your well-being is not intact,
It is a well-known fact
That you will lose everything you worked for—
No matter how hard you worked,
Or whether you wish you worked more.

So work hard,
But find a way to balance your inner peace.
And once you have eminent peace,
It's easier for your work ethic to increase.

FOOTNOTE:

¹ *Genesis 3:19* — “By the sweat of your face you will eat bread...” *God ordained work, but not burnout.*

Reflection Question

How does society condition us to measure worth through output, not well-being?

Journal Prompts

- When have you sacrificed peace for productivity?
- Do you feel guilty when resting? Why?
- What does “peaceful ambition” look like in your life?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why do we confuse busyness with value?
- What biblical examples show healthy rhythms of rest?
- How do you build a life where peace and productivity can coexist?

Prayer Prompt

*Father, don't let me chase success at the cost of my soul.
Help me work hard—but from a place of rest, not fear.
Let Your peace be my foundation.*

Challenge of the Week

Take one full day this week to rest—completely.
No work. No earning. Just being.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

Grace for Yourself, Not Just Others

• *Self-compassion* • *God's grace* • *Shame vs. understanding*

Because you have your own intimate self-consciousness
That nobody else can explain,
And only you feel the effects
Of what goes on in your brain.

You're the only one who fights these battles
That are keeping you sane;
Therefore, you tend to feel
An extra level of shame.

You know deep in your heart
Why you made the mistakes you made,
So you tend to call a spade a spade.

You know you'll be the only one
In the casket when you're dead and gone.
When talking to God,
Only you truly know
The reasons you've been sinning all along.¹

You try your best, but it's hard to stay strong,
Because here you are,
Singing the same sad old song.

You're embarrassed because you know
You have no good excuse for doing what's wrong.

So you're harder on yourself
Than you would be on others—
Because it's only you in that casket,
None of your sisters or brothers.

So it's harder to receive God's grace for your own sins,
But you tell others,
"In the Lord is where life begins."²

You remind them that God is merciful and always shows grace;
You need to look in the mirror
And preach what you tell others to your own face.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ *Romans 7:15* – “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”

² *Ephesians 2:8* – “For by grace you have been saved through faith...”

Reflection Question

Why is it harder to receive God's grace for your own failures than to extend it to others?

Journal Prompts

- Write about a time you offered grace to someone else but withheld it from yourself.
- What would it feel like to receive God's forgiveness without guilt?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why do we expect perfection from ourselves but not others?
- What practical steps can help us receive God's grace inwardly?

Prayer Prompt

*Ask God to help you forgive yourself.
Thank Him for loving you even when you don't feel worthy.*

Challenge of the Week

Each day, replace one negative self-thought
with a scripture about grace.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The Illusion of Control

• *Human pride and fear* • *Trusting God's sovereignty*
• *Surrender as spiritual freedom*

If you don't like being told what to do,
You're just like me—and I'm just like you.

We humans are obsessed over control
Because of our pride and ego.
God is the one who's in control,
But we treat Him like, "What does He know?"

So we hate to surrender control.
We feel like if we give it up,
Then we won't reach our goal.

We wonder,
"What if God doesn't catch me when I fall?"
Egotistical humans—we think we know it all.

But honestly, surrendering control is what's best.
Just control what you can,
And let God handle the rest.¹

The feeling is truly liberating—
No more pressure to dictate or start creating.
Because making your own path can be frustrating².
You sit back and let God do His thing,
Like a child waiting
On a parent to give commands.
Trust that God holds the whole wide world
In His hands.³

FOOTNOTES:

¹ *Matthew 6:34* – "Do not worry about tomorrow..."

² *Proverbs 16:9* – "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps."

³ *Isaiah 41:10* – "So do not fear, for I am with you... I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Reflection Question

Why do we resist giving up control, and what might surrender make possible?

Journal Prompts

- What is one area of your life where you're holding on too tightly?
- Write a prayer surrendering that area to God.

Group Discussion Questions

- Why does control feel safer than surrender—even when it clearly isn't?
- How can we tell the difference between healthy planning and unhealthy obsession?

Prayer Prompt

*Ask God to help you trust His plans even when you can't see the outcome.
Pray for the humility to let go and be led.*

Challenge of the Week

Identify one thing you've been trying to control.
This week, surrender it and intentionally trust God with the outcome.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

Inherited Identity vs. Authentic Self

- *Social and spiritual labels* • *Authenticity vs. expectation*
- *Identity beyond race, religion, or family*

You were told you are Christian, Muslim, Catholic, or Jewish—
But to have your own identity
Is actually your one true wish.

You were told you are Black, yellow, brown, or white,
But showing your true self
Would be your greatest delight.

The world labeled you before you had a say,
So by default,
Some battles were lost before the day.

These losses leave you deflated,
Devastated, jaded—
Judged before your birthday was even dated.

You're stuck in roles
These humans enabled.
Could you imagine a world
Where your spirit isn't labeled?

There's nothing wrong with being your race,
But it shouldn't overshadow your inner grace.
Your religion shouldn't blind the world to your light—
Because it's God who gives you your truest sight.¹

This world was tainted before you were conceived,
So don't blame yourself—
It will still be like this when you leave.

FOOTNOTE:

¹ Galatians 3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Reflection Question

How have inherited labels shaped your choices, beliefs, or sense of self?

Journal Prompts

- Write down all the labels you've been given. Which feel true? Which feel forced?
- Describe what your authentic identity would look like without those expectations.

Group Discussion Questions

- How do societal labels help or harm self-discovery?
- Can faith and individuality coexist?

Prayer Prompt

*Ask God to help you walk in the identity He gave you—
not the one others expect.*

Challenge of the Week

Practice introducing yourself without using titles, roles, or categories. Focus on who you are, not what you do.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

Unlearning False Humility

- *Misconceptions about humility*
- *Using vs. hiding your God-given gifts*
- *Boldness in purpose*

To be humble means shrinking yourself
To give God praise—because He is greater.¹
But false humility is acting like
You're not good at what you do,
When deep down,
You know the truth.

True humility says, "God gave me this."
False humility says, "I'm not special."

Truly humble people use their gifts
To serve others.
False humility hides them—
Out of fear or pressure.

True humility doesn't crave applause.
False humility quietly does.

One stands firm in purpose;
The other shrinks to feel modest.

All forms of false humility
Stem from a lack of confidence.

And fear isn't a virtue.
Someone needed the gift God put in you—
But you silenced it.
So it's like you partnered with the enemy
To let the lie sit.

But the power of Christ
Leaves Satan dead.

So walk forward in truth,
Boldness, and light—²
Be confident in your gift,
And watch your enemies take flight.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ James 4:10 – “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

² 2 Timothy 1:7 – “For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power, love, and self-control.”

Reflection Question

How often do you minimize your strengths to appear humble?

Journal Prompts

- Write down a gift or talent you've hidden from others. Why?
- What would it look like to use that gift boldly?

Group Discussion Questions

- How can confidence and humility coexist?
- Is false humility a form of pride?

Prayer Prompt

*Ask God to help you use your gifts with boldness
and surrender—not fear.*

Challenge of the Week

Do one thing this week that honors your gift.
Speak it, use it, or share it.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

Spiritual Bypassing

- *Avoiding emotions with religious clichés*
- *Processing pain honestly*
- *Faith includes grief, not denial*

Spiritual bypassing is harmful—
So proceed with caution.
People use religion like it's a Band-Aid.
They say, "God's got it,"
Without processing what "it" even is.¹
They say they're not worried—
Even when they are.

They tell others to look on the bright side,
While ignoring their scars.

You must confront your grief
Before relief.

Don't feel ashamed for being sad or mad.
Even Job questioned God when things got bad.²
Even Jesus wept.³

Don't bottle feelings—
Don't silence them with verses.
Bring your struggle, unfiltered.

Because when you deny your pain,
You deny your healing.

Faith doesn't mean fake it.
Faith means bring it—
All of it—
To the One who can redeem it.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Psalm 34:18 – "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted..."

² Job 3:11 – "Why did I not perish at birth?"

³ John 11:35 – "Jesus wept."

Reflection Question

When does faith language become a mask for emotional avoidance?

Journal Prompts

- Write about a time you used spiritual language to hide pain.
- What would it look like to bring your raw feelings to God?

Group Discussion Questions

- Can emotions and faith live in the same space?
- What's the danger in hiding behind religious phrases?

Prayer Prompt

*Ask God to help you be honest in your prayers.
Give Him your joy, your sadness, your doubts, and your anger.*

Challenge of the Week

Next time you're tempted to say "I'm fine,"
be honest—with God or someone safe.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

Healing Without Closure

- *Closure from God vs. people* • *Letting go of expectations*
- *Trust in divine timing*

You can heal without closure
Once you realize humans are flawed.
You may not get closure from people—
But you'll always get it from God.¹

Can you really be surprised
That the same person who hurt you
Didn't apologize?

To expect closure from broken people
Is not wise.
You can move forward
Because God always shows you the reason—
Even if not in this current season.²

It's easier to move on
When you trust that in time,
God will teach the lesson.

Even Jesus said in John 13:7:
"What I am doing,
You do not understand now,
But afterward you will."³
So while you're waiting on closure,
Be still.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Psalm 147:3 – "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."

² Ecclesiastes 3:1 – "To everything there is a season..."

³ John 13:7 – "...you do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

Reflection Question

Can you truly move forward when the apology or explanation never comes?

Journal Prompts

- Write about a situation where you never received closure.
- How did you see God bring peace or growth in its place?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why do we crave closure from people who hurt us?
- How can faith give us peace even without answers?

Prayer Prompt

*Ask God to give you emotional closure and deep peace.
Even without the apology, may your heart be free.*

Challenge of the Week

Release your need for closure in one situation.
Write down a prayer that declares your freedom from it.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

Identity Crisis in a Social Media World

- *Authenticity vs. digital image*
- *Attention vs. validation*
- *Spiritual grounding in a noisy culture*

You live your life for others—
And lose your identity.
Chasing approval from strangers,
Forgetting your soul is a sacred entity.

Before social media,
Identity came from faith,
Family,
And culture.

Now it's filtered images
And follower counts
That shape your posture.

Likes, comments, and shares
Become your measure.
You post perfection—
But in secret,
You're under pressure.

You're lonely,
Even though thousands watch.
Your heart longs for meaning—
But you're stuck on TikTok.

Authenticity doesn't trend.
But that's what God made you to be.¹
So unplug,
Look inward,
And return to being free.

FOOTNOTE:

¹ *Psalm 139:14* – “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...”

Reflection Question

How does constantly curating your life online erode your authentic identity?

Journal Prompts

- What parts of your online self feel real? Which feel forced?
- How has social media influenced your values?

Group Discussion Questions

- Can you be spiritually grounded in a digital culture?
- How do you reclaim your identity offline?

Prayer Prompt

*Ask God to remind you who you are—
without filters, followers, or praise.*

Challenge of the Week

Spend one full day off social media. Reflect on how you feel about yourself without an audience.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

God's Silence as a Test of Trust

• *Divine silence* • *Faith during uncertainty* • *Trust without evidence*

The teacher never gives answers
While you're taking the test.
Sometimes God is silent
While you're stressed.¹

Silence teaches that faith
Isn't built on emotional highs.
It's trusting when nothing around you
Feels wise.

Sometimes,
You either spiral
Or surrender.

Silence reveals what you truly believe.
Just because God is quiet,
Doesn't mean He'll leave.

He's working,
Even in the quiet.²
Stillness doesn't mean neglect—
Sometimes, it's a holy diet.

You're stripped of emotion,
Performance,
And pretense.

What remains
Is raw belief—
Will you still stay present?

FOOTNOTES:

¹ *Psalm 13:1* – “How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?”

² *Isaiah 30:15* – “...In quietness and trust is your strength...”

Reflection Question

Reflect on how divine silence can strengthen or fracture faith.

Journal Prompts

- When have you experienced God's silence? What did it teach you?
- What helps you trust God when He feels absent?

Group Discussion Questions

- What is the purpose of spiritual silence?
- How do you respond to seasons of uncertainty?

Prayer Prompt

*Ask God for patience, strength, and trust
when answers don't come right away.*

Challenge of the Week

Spend 10 minutes in complete silence every day.
Listen without expectation.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The Exhaustion of Constant Reinvention

- *Burnout from endless ambition*
- *Comparison culture*
- *The spiritual value of contentment*

They tell you,
“Shoot for the stars.”
But space never ends—
So where’s the finish line?

If I’m always leveling up,
I’ll never enjoy what’s mine.

If there are endless milestones,
When do you rest?
If you’re always climbing,
You’ll miss what’s best.

You’re not tired because you’re weak.
You’re tired because you sprinted
Up an endless peak.¹

And life has an expiration date.
So why are you racing time,
Just to keep your status great?

When will you rest?
When will you exhale?
When will you stop treating peace
As if it’s supposed to be stale?

FOOTNOTE:

¹*Matthew 11: 28-30 – “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest....”*

Reflection Question

Does society's obsession with "leveling up" rob you of contentment?

Journal Prompts

- What have you sacrificed in the name of "progress"?
- What would true contentment look like in your life?

Group Discussion Questions

- When does ambition become addiction?
- How can you define success by peace, not performance?

Prayer Prompt

*Pray for a heart that knows when to rest
and a spirit that values peace over praise.*

Challenge of the Week

Celebrate one current area of your life without trying to improve it. Just be present.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

Performing Strength for Survival

- *Emotional suppression*
- *Cultural/family expectations*
- *God welcomes our weakness*

Society says:
“Never let them see you weak.”
So you put on your armor
Every day of the week.
You’re the strong one in your family—
The solid foundation.
But inside you’re carrying
Heavy frustration.
You say “I’m fine”
When you’re not.
You smile in public—
But cry a lot.
You grieve, you ache,
You break in secret.
You forgot how to feel—
Because strength’s how you keep it.
You pray like a warrior—
Not like a child.
You trust God’s power,
But not His style.¹
Jesus wept.
Jesus bled.
Jesus asked for rest
Before He even fled.²
So why are you trying
To outperform the Savior?
When even He needed
Heaven’s favor?

FOOTNOTES:

¹ *Matthew 18:3 – “Unless you become like little children...”*

² *John 11:35 – “Jesus wept.” | Luke 5:16 – “...Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”*

Reflection Question

How does society pressure you to appear strong even when you're breaking?

Journal Prompts

- What emotions are you hiding from others—and yourself?
- What would change if you allowed yourself to be soft?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why is vulnerability seen as weakness?
- How can spiritual strength include emotional honesty?

Prayer Prompt

*Ask God to meet you in your honest weakness—
not your performance.*

Challenge of the Week

Tell one person the truth about how you're really doing.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The Difference Between Guilt and Conviction

- *Shame vs. spiritual redirection*
- *Satan's accusations vs. God's grace*
- *Moving from self-punishment to freedom*

Conviction and guilt—
Two sides of the same coin.
One keeps you stuck,
One leads you to rejoin.

Conviction says,
“This isn’t you—realign.”
Guilt says,
“You’re still broken. You’ll never shine.”

Guilt is control—
You punish yourself
Before anyone else.
Conviction invites
God’s loving help.¹

Guilt hides.
Conviction reveals.
Guilt says run.
Conviction heals.

Satan whispers,
“Not this time.”²
But grace whispers,
“You’re still Mine.”

David, Moses, and Peter fell—
But God still used them
To preach, deliver, and tell.³

Redemption doesn't pause you—
It rewrites the story.
So stop hiding in guilt,
And walk in glory.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Romans 8:1 – “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

² John 10:10 – “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy...”

³ Exodus 2:12; Psalm 51; Luke 22:61–62; Acts 2

Reflection Question

How do you discern healthy correction from destructive self-blame?

Journal Prompts

- Where in your life do you feel guilt instead of conviction?
- What would it feel like to release it?

Group Discussion Questions

- How can you tell the difference between God's voice and shame's?
- How does guilt disguise itself as spiritual responsibility?

Prayer Prompt

Ask God to silence the voice of shame and replace it with truth.

Challenge of the Week

Call out one lie shame tells you—and answer it with a verse.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

When Growth Feels Like Loss

- *Letting go of old identity* • *Grieving transformation*
- *The cost of becoming new*

I had to tell Satan
That his stay was over.
The old me died—
That's who I'm praying over.

But some days,
I miss who I used to be.
Life was simpler—
Even if I wasn't free.
I grieve my old habits.
My former friends.
The version of me
That didn't pretend.

You can't embrace
Who you're meant to become
If you won't let go
Of who you've been running from.¹

Make peace with your past
So you can move forward.
Even growth has a funeral—
And you must mourn it
To honor the reward.

FOOTNOTE:

¹ *Philippians 3:13* – “*Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead...*”

Reflection Question

Explore how evolving requires grieving old versions of yourself.

Journal Prompts

- What past version of you are you still emotionally tied to?
- What have you let go of that you secretly miss?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why is spiritual growth often accompanied by grief?
- How do you honor your past without returning to it?

Prayer Prompt

*Pray for peace as you grieve who you used to be.
Thank God for transformation.*

Challenge of the Week

Write a goodbye letter to one old habit, belief, or identity.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The Unlived Life

- *Missed paths and alternate futures*
- *God's restoration*
- *Trusting in divine timing*

God doesn't just redeem mistakes—
He restores your stolen identity.
You didn't live that life
Because it wasn't your destiny.

You mourn it
Because you wonder:
“What if I'd tried?”
But in God's hands,
Even dead dreams can be revived.

Sometimes what's buried
Isn't dead—
Just unnamed.¹

Sometimes what was unlived
Was protection
From what would've left you maimed.

The life you never lived
Holds loss, yes—
But also invitation.

To dream again.
To create again.
To say “yes” again
With new motivation.

FOOTNOTE:

¹ *Ezekiel 37:5 – “I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.”*

Reflection Question

Write about the version of you that never got a chance to exist.

Journal Prompts

- What unlived life do you grieve?
- What new beginning could still be waiting?

Group Discussion Questions

- How does God restore missed seasons?
- Can new dreams be born out of regret?

Prayer Prompt

*God, help me trust that what I've missed, You can still redeem.
Heal the parts of me that mourn the life I didn't live.
Teach me to release regret, reawaken forgotten dreams, and embrace
the story You're still writing in me. Let me walk forward with faith,
knowing nothing is wasted in Your hands.
Pray for restoration. Ask God to redeem what feels wasted.*

Challenge of the Week

Start one small thing you've always wanted to do—
but never gave yourself permission.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The Price of People-Pleasing

- *Emotional self-abandonment* • *Fear of rejection*
- *Freedom through boundaries*

People-pleasing costs you
Your voice,
Your truth,
Your peace.

You stay quiet
To keep the peace—
But never release.

You think love means disappearing,
So you start volunteering
To become invisible.

They love your compliance,
Not your honesty.
They reward you for staying silent.
But you know it's dishonesty.

You crave acceptance,¹
But it's not worth your soul.
Real love includes limits.
Real peace means whole.

FOOTNOTE:

¹ *Galatians 1:10* – “Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God?”

Reflection Question

What parts of yourself have you sacrificed to keep the peace?

Journal Prompts

- Where in your life do you abandon your truth for approval?
- What boundary do you need to set?

Group Discussion Questions

- What's the difference between peacemaking and people-pleasing?
- Why is saying “no” a form of self-respect?

Prayer Prompt

*Pray for courage to stop living for others' comfort
and start living in truth.*

Challenge of the Week

Say “no” one time this week when your spirit says no—
but your habits say yes.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

Redemption After Failure

• *Grace after mistakes* • *Biblical redemption* • *Freedom from shame*

Can I still be redeemed?
Not halfway—
But fully seen?

After everything I did,
Everything I said—
Can I come back
From being spiritually dead?¹

Yes.
Because redemption is God's promise.
Even your worst failure
Doesn't cancel your calling.

Jesus died
So you'd never think
You were disqualified.

David sinned.
Peter denied.
Moses killed.

Still, God supplied.²

Their stories weren't erased—
They were rewritten.

So what makes you think
You've been forgotten?

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Romans 8:38–39 – “Nothing can separate us from the love of God...”

² Hebrews 11 — “By faith...” introduces each of their stories.

Reflection Question

Can you truly believe you're worthy after your worst mistakes?

Journal Prompts

- What mistake have you convinced yourself God won't forgive?
- What do you think redemption would look like?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why do we trust God's grace for others but not ourselves?
- What can failure teach us about mercy?

Prayer Prompt

Ask for forgiveness.

Then ask for confidence in your second chance.

Challenge of the Week

Do one thing this week that your shame
told you you're unworthy of.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The Cost of Being Chosen Last

• *Rejection* • *God's unexpected calling* • *Confidence without recognition*

I was the strong one—
So they never asked how I was doing.
The quiet one—
So they assumed I was fine.

I was the overlooked.
The underdog.
The always-ready, never-called.

But I believed in Jesus.
And I believed in myself.¹

David was the youngest—
But God still chose him.²

Joseph was betrayed—
But God still rose him.

Jesus was rejected—
And became the cornerstone.³

So I'll keep my chin high
Even when I'm chosen last.
Because God is never late—
Even when people pass.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ *Jeremiah 29:11* – “For I know the plans I have for you...”

² *1 Samuel 16:11-13* — “So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him...”

³ *Psalms 118:22* – “The stone the builders rejected...”

Reflection Question

Do you pretend not to care about being overlooked—even when you deeply do?

Journal Prompts

- What moments of rejection still linger?
- What would it feel like to believe God chose you first?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why do we equate being noticed with being valuable?
- How do you respond when you're not seen?

Prayer Prompt

*Ask God to help you find confidence in His calling,
not in others' attention.*

Challenge of the Week

Show up boldly somewhere you've felt invisible.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

The Parts of You No One Claps For

• *Hidden faithfulness* • *Private discipline* • *God's unseen applause*

The parts no one claps for
Might be the parts
That matter most.

No one claps for self-discipline—
But it's what holds you close.

No one sees the tears
You cry when no one is around.
But those tears water seeds
That will one day astound.

People praise outcomes—
Not the effort.
But God sees
What others never report.¹

So don't wait for applause
To measure worth.
Heaven claps
Every time you choose rebirth.²

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Matthew 6:4 – “Your Father, who sees what is done in secret...”

² Luke 15:7 – “There is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents...”

Reflection Question

Are there parts of you you only value when others acknowledge them?

Journal Prompts

- What faithful habits do you practice that no one sees?
- How can you value them even without recognition?

Group Discussion Questions

- Why do we need others to validate our worth?
- How can we tune into God's approval above all?

Prayer Prompt

*Thank God for seeing your unseen sacrifices.
Ask Him to affirm you when no one else notices.*

Challenge of the Week

Do something deeply meaningful this week—and tell no one.
Let it be your offering to God.

What do you want to say in response to what you read? God, in response I want to say...

Long term plan (Big-picture growth, values, or ongoing focus)	I will...

Write a short prayer in response to today’s reflection

Additonal Thoughts/Reflections

About the Author

Franklin Edwards is a multi-genre author and entrepreneur with a passion for using literature to inspire faith, courage, and positive change. He has written and published more than twenty-two books, including nineteen children's titles and several poetry collections for adults. His children's book *Just Be Yourself* was featured on Nine PBS and remains part of their permanent public library.



Through his company, Franklin the Helper® Children's Books, LLC, Franklin has created opportunities not only to share his own work but also to support new authors. He has guided writers through the publishing process and developed programs that bring stories and inspiration directly into schools, churches, and community spaces.

At the heart of Franklin's work is his faith. Whether through children's stories, reflective poetry, or community initiatives, he strives to remind people of their worth and purpose. His mission is to spread light and truth, using literature as a bridge that connects people to God's love and to one another.