

God: Our Refuge from Sin



A guided prayer journal
for repentance.

God: Our Refuge from Sin

Oh my people, trust in him at all times.

Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge.

Psalm 62:8 NLT

"Refuge": shelter or protection from danger or distress; something to which one has recourse in difficulty – Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Ed.

In a world saturated with sin and death, we need a reliable refuge. God is our refuge when we run to Him with a heart of repentance.

Repentance is the process of coming into agreement with God about the definition of sin. Confessing our failure to do things His way and then trusting His saving grace to lead us out of our distress and free us from the effects of our sinful habits.

The most distressing fall-out from sin in our lives is **shame**. This emotion causes us to retreat inward. isolate ourselves from others and from God. in a desperate effort feel safe. secure.

It is counterintuitive to think of God as a refuge from our shame-full acts. Like Adam and Eve in the garden, shame tells us it's best to run for cover. Hide from the One who knows all things. sees all things. judges all things. (See Genesis 3.)

However, our natural response is based on a lie planted in our hearts by the snake in the garden: *God can't be trusted...* Sin and death have distorted our understanding of who God is and what we mean to Him.

No matter the trouble – whether its source is our own doing or someone who has sinned against us – God is waiting and ready to mitigate. lighten. alleviate. the harsh consequences of sin. He is a compassionate loving God waiting for us to return to Him. But we must choose Him, for He will not let anything else provide us the comfort, security, or feeling of worth we need. He will not give His

glory to another. We have no solution for the problem of sin. Only God – Father, Son, Spirit – has what we need.

REFUGE. Within this word is an acronym for **repentance**. The first step in the process for finding freedom and healing from sin.

Retreat:

Enter His presence to

Find your comfort, security, and worth

Under His

Gracious

Embrace of love.

God: Our Refuge from Sin is an imaginative prayer practice inspired by the teachings of St. Ignatius. The heart of his teachings on prayer focus on growing a personal relationship with God.

Ignatius taught a conversational prayer practice. Which means we speak to God... and then listen for His response. And he encouraged using your senses as you pray. Imagine the place you are meeting with God: what it looks like, smells like, feels like (both physically and emotionally) to be in His presence, and what sounds you hear. You may even imagine eating with Him, where taste can become a part of your prayer experience.

Imagination is a gift from God, it is a way to help us create. In prayer, we are using our imagination to create a sacred space in our mind and heart to meet with our Creator.

We humbly offer this prayer exercise to help you deepen your relationship with God. And discover His love as the only reliable

REFUGE.

Be blessed,

Stacy & Carol

God: Our Refuge from Sin Prayer Guide

Set aside fifteen to twenty minutes in a quiet place. Free yourself from distractions. silence or shut down your phone. Gather your Bible and a pen and paper to write down thoughts. Consider lighting a candle to remind you of God's presence.

Begin your time of prayer with a breath prayer.

Establish a rhythm of steady deep breathing.

When you feel settled begin this silent prayer with your breathing:

Inhale: Jesus

Exhale: Friend of sinners.

Inhale: Jesus

Exhale: Friend of sinners

Repeat this pattern of prayer until you are ready to move to the next step.

Imagine your heart as a field.

It is the field of your relationship with God. What work have you been doing? What does it look like?

The late afternoon sun washes over your field. Your day's work is coming to an end, but you have one more task to complete. It's time to create a place of retreat to sit with friends.

Look across the field of your heart. Where would you create this space? What is needed for friends to get away together? a bench? comfy chairs? Perhaps a place to set a cool drink or hot cup of tea? Take a moment to see the completed retreat space in your mind. Notice the colors. patterns. natural elements surrounding it.

The Retreat.

It's a new day, a beautiful clear morning greets you as you walk to the edge of your heart's field. You're ready to work, but you notice someone waiting in the retreat space you created. His back is to you, but you recognize Him. It's Jesus.

How does it feel to see the first friend making themselves comfortable in your retreat space is Jesus? What desires rise to the surface of your mind?

It's time to choose. Do you retreat toward Him or away from Him? Do you run and hide? take more time to clean yourself up? get your life together?

Or do you approach Him as the friend He says He is? trusting Him with your heart? everything from joys to heartaches? fears and accomplishments? Do you trust Him with your broken. sin-full. self?

Enter His presence.

Psalm 100:4 says, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise." God waits for us to come... to sit by His side and just be with Him. The invitation is for you, just as you are.

Saying "Yes" begins with giving God thanks and praise. Settle down next to Jesus. Spend a moment thanking God for His presence in your heart and life.

Praise Him as your dear friend. Name the specific qualities that make Him a good friend.

Find your comfort. security. and worth.

In friendship we find comfort, security, and worth. Consider the Holy Trinity as your friend: Father, Spirit, Son.

- **God your Father and friend.** He is “the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles.” Tell God where you have been feeling uncomfortable in your life.

Consider where you have been seeking comfort from the discomforts of life. Openly share those places with Him.

Hear Him ask: Are they working for you?

Ask Him where you should find comfort.

Thank Him for the places and times of comfort in your life. Recognize Him as the source of all comfort.

- **Holy Spirit your guide and friend.** By faith in Jesus, Holy Spirit is deposited “in our hearts as a guarantee for what is to come.” He secures our path to the fulfilling of all God’s promises.

Tell Him where you are feeling insecure. unsafe. afraid.

Share with Him how you have been keeping yourself safe. How are you ensuring your own security in the world? Where are you seeking answers?

Listen for His response to your plans. Be open for His guidance to do things differently. Be ready to change your mind about what is best for you.

- **Jesus, friend of sinners.** Our worth is firmly established in this truth: God “did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things.” Jesus giving up His life in exchange for yours establishes your worth in the world.

The condition of the field of your heart and soul – weedy or bountiful, rocky or fertile – does not lessen your worth in God’s eyes. Jesus alone justifies your life as worthy. Be honest with God about how you see yourself.

Tell Him the things you need to be or do to be valued by anyone.

Open your heart to hear what He says about you.

Under the cross.

Bringing ourselves under the cross, under God’s authority and sovereignty, we become comforted. secure. and confident of our worth, just as we are. As you sit with Jesus, look over the field of your heart. Ask Him to show you the weeds and rocks. the ground in need of softening with obedience.

See what Jesus brings to your attention. Agree with Him about the condition of your heart and soul.

Confess and acknowledge. speak aloud those moments you have fallen for the temptation. returned to the same old ways. the places you said you would never go again.

Confess the places you think are hopeless. where you have found refuge in “I can’t change.” “This is just the way it is.”

Think about the places where self-defensiveness kicks in. Ask your friend Jesus: “What lies at the root of this need to defend myself?”

Perhaps you’ve been judgmental. Why? what stirs your heart to judge? Let Jesus reveal what lies beneath your judgment of others.

Where else do you need to come under His authority? accept His sovereignty? Talk openly with Him about these places.

Gracious Savior.

Jesus is our gracious savior and friend. He alone brings beauty out of ashes. turns our grief to glory. replaces our shame with dignity. Look over your field again. Where do you see places of beauty? new growth growing from previously barren places? Where have you been more patient? kind? compassionate?

What potential lies in the field of your heart? for a bountiful harvest? for a redeeming work of grace?

Confess your trust in His grace. Grace that covers a multitude of sins. Grace that cleans up what we confess – without limit! Grace that transforms the desires of your heart and prepares your soul for glorious growth.

Listen to these words of assurance from Psalm 32:

Oh, what joy for those whose obedience is forgiven,
whose sin is put out of sight!

Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has
cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete
honesty!

When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted
away, and I groaned all day long.

Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on
me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer
heat. *Interlude.*

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped
trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess
my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my
guilt is gone. *Interlude.*

Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is
still time, that they may not drown in the
floodwaters of judgment.

For you are my hiding place; you protect me from
trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.
Interlude.

The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best
pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over
you.

Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a
bit and bridle to keep it under control."

Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love
surrounds those who trust the Lord.

So rejoice in the Lord and be glad, all you who obey
him! Shout joy, all you whose hearts are pure!

Embrace His love.

Imagine what it might look like to embrace this love sitting next to you. His arm around you, head resting on His shoulders? a hand to hold? your head in His lap?

Notice the security you feel when you take refuge in His love: protected. comforted. Hear Him whisper how much your friendship means to Him: “You were worth it all.”

Listen... really listen... as you rest in His love.

What song of deliverance is Jesus singing over you?

What promises of His come to mind?

Rest in His embrace of unfailing steadfast love.

Trust He is with you and for you.

Close your time of prayer.

Thank God for being your refuge from all your troubles.

He longs to show you how much He loves you.

He wants to help those who put their trust in Him.

Remember He is waiting for you. What reminder do you need to take from this time with Jesus?

So the Lord must wait for you to come to him so he
can show you his love and compassion.

For the Lord is a faithful God.

Blessed are those who wait for his help.

Isaiah 30:18 NLT

Return to this place of retreat to find REFUGE
as needed.

Notes:



A free resource from UnraveledLove.com.