



*one*


# TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME

Give us today our daily bread.

—Matthew 6:11

When you live in survival mode, your mind can become preoccupied with regrets of the past and worries of the future. A daily effort to reframe your life will help you focus on the present moment.





Time is precious. You know that. Yet time can slip away so quickly with frequent distractions and unforeseen situations.

Have you ever found yourself wishing there were more than twenty-four hours in a day to get everything done? Does one day blur right into the next? It's quite common to hear a caregiver say, "I live in survival mode most of the time!" or, "I find myself wishing time away while dreading what tomorrow might bring."

Living in this "survival mode" can make it difficult to see the precious moments God gives you in the midst of your caregiving. It isn't possible to literally stop the hands of time. (Time stands still for no one, especially for a family caregiver.) Yet it is entirely possible, with a little practice, to intentionally slow down. And in doing so, you can take in those moments. You can experience the God-given glimpses of precious times spent with loved ones to store away in your memory bank. The secret to finding these special moments is making a conscious effort to live "just for today."

Why only for today? Shouldn't past lessons inform what tomorrow might bring? Don't the responsibilities of caregiving require the skill of anticipation? To a degree, both of these things are true. And yet, too much focus on what was or what will be generates worry, which will rob you of the joy in this present moment.

The reality is there are only three places you can live: the past, the present, or the future. The past is gone. God asks you to leave it behind: "Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not" (Is 43:18). And the future is also out of your reach; you cannot live there, either. "Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself" (Mt 6:34). God goes before you to pave your path.

It is in the present where you meet God. It is filled with all that you need for today. You do not need more hours. You have enough.



## THREE KEYS TO LIVING IN THE PRESENT

Shifting your mindset to living “just for today” requires three things: prayer, surrender, and trust.


*Prayer* is a spiritual gift, one you always have access to any-time, anywhere. In quieting the mind with prayer, you make space to become more aware of the sacred present moment. Science backs this up further, noting that a person’s perception of their situation changes through the act of praying. But there is more required of you.

*Surrender* is a tough one for most everyone. Each of us carries burdens from the past—regrets, resentments, and unmet expectations—that weigh us down and zap our energies. When we ask God for the strength to surrender our burdens and to give us the gift of forgiveness (whether that forgiveness is for someone else or for ourselves), God will help us to let go of the past in order to better focus on the gift of today.

Lastly, *trust* is required to live in the “just-for-today” moments. It calls for you to loosen your control over people and situations and most of all your desire to control God’s will for you. Most caregivers think way ahead and believe that they know exactly what others should do, including God. Ever bargained with God? Ever pleaded for a situation to go the way you knew it should go? Turn all these things over to God, who knows far better than anyone, including yourself, what is good for you. Turning both your will and your trust over to God unloads all the clutter that keeps you from focusing on the blessings of living in today.

That’s not to say it is easily done. The mind reacts to unknowns by triggering your brain to go to work and try to control what is happening. It is part of human nature. And, as you know, there are many unknowns in the caregiving journey. So many it can become overwhelming at times. Take comfort. You are not alone with these struggles.

Do not become discouraged if your efforts seem to yield little or no results. None of this happens overnight. It is a gradual letting go of what really isn’t helping and a slow gain of good that



will help. It is ceasing to raise the “what-ifs” and the “what-could-bes” and replacing them with “I’ve done the best I can today. Tomorrow is another day.”

## JUST FOR TODAY

Every believer in this world must be a spark of light, a core of love, life-giving leaven in the mass: and the more he is so, the more he will live, in his innermost depths, in communion with God.

—Homily of Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone,  
Commemorating Pope John XXIII, 2006

Caring for another person places you on one of the most intimate journeys you can make. Wouldn’t you love to spare some of your time each day to just be with your loved one—to be in the moment, to see the good things, and to make the memories that will remain with you forever? Of course you do! We all do. “But how?” you might ask.

St. John XXIII, one of the most influential people of the twentieth century for convening the Second Vatican Council, was known for his ordinary ways. One of the great gifts he gave us is “The Daily Decalogue of Pope John XXIII.” The Daily Decalogue offers gentle wisdom to help you embrace a “just-for-today” attitude.





## Let's Reflect for a Moment

Here are the highlights of "The Daily Decalogue of Pope John XXIII," which we've summarized in our own words for you:

1. *Just for today*, I will live positively, without trying to solve all my problems at once.
2. *Just for today*, I will not try to improve anyone but myself. I will not criticize anyone.
3. *Just for today*, I will acknowledge I was created to be happy not just in the next life but in this one as well.
4. *Just for today*, I will adapt to others without expecting others to bend to my wishes.
5. *Just for today*, I will find ten minutes to read a good book, to feed my soul.
6. *Just for today*, I will do a good deed and not tell anyone about it.
7. *Just for today*, I will do one thing I do not enjoy doing without drawing attention to it.
8. *Just for today*, I will be on guard against both hastiness and indecision.
9. *Just for today*, I believe that God cares about me as he cares about no one else.
10. *Just for today*, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe in goodness.

Which one of these do you need most right now? Today, and every day, give yourself permission to be nourished by God.






## Prayer

Heavenly Father, be patient with me. It is my nature to want all the answers and to be able to give directions to solve the issues I see today as well as those that could happen. I awaken with worry and go to bed with worry.

Help me to turn to you with all these thoughts that occupy so much of my mind and place them into your hands. Give me the courage, Lord, to truly let these things go and to trust you with them.


May I begin to see the purpose in what I encounter each day. Shield me from worry. Show me how to get comfortable with using all that you give me today wisely, knowing that you already have tomorrow.

Amen.



## *Think about It / Jot It Down*


Reflect on your caregiving journey. Quiet yourself. What makes it hard for you to focus on just one day at a time?




Distractions, temperament, and fears and worries are three common obstacles to finding grace in each present moment. Are any of these obstacles for you?

*Distractions.* Name them. Pray for a moment about how you might eliminate or manage that distraction. Write down your thoughts here.





*Temperament.* How do you normally see the world around you? Jot down how you are wired. Is your natural temperament helping, or is it an obstacle for you?



*Fears and worries.* The first step to turning these over to God is to take an honest inventory. Take that step now. What are your fears and worries?



Let's turn now to the most common prayer among Christians, the Lord's Prayer, as found in the Gospel of Matthew:

Our Father in heaven,  
    hallowed be your name,  
    your kingdom come,  
    your will be done,  
        on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread;  
and forgive us our debts,  
    as we forgive our debtors;  
and do not subject us to the final test,  
    but deliver us from the evil one. (Mt 6:9–13)

Take a moment to slowly pray the Lord's Prayer. Let the words "Give us *today* our daily bread" sink in. Did you ever wonder why God promises just one day's worth of bread? Imagine not wondering or worrying about more than today and trusting God with the rest!

Have **NO ANXIETY** at all, but in everything, by **PRAYER** and petition, with **THANKSGIVING**, make your requests known to **GOD**.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

