



Ready by Dawn

The Dawn Card

Ten minutes before the pressure comes.

“But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.”

1 SAMUEL 30:6 (ESV)

Rhythms don't change us; they position us to be filled by God.



Ready by Dawn · Practical faith for how you lead, work, and build.

PHIL CHAN

DAWN

ABOUT 10 MINUTES

Draw out your heart, add up the gains, take up the Word, name the day before God. Pray from the inside out.

D DRAW OUT 2 MIN · EMPTY

Brain-dump onto paper. Ask: *What reaction felt bigger than the moment called for?* Then pray it: "Search me, O God, and know my heart!"

A ADD UP THE GAINS 2 MIN · GRATITUDE

Write three gains from the last 24 hours. Measure backward, not against the ideal. Where was God faithful?

W TAKE UP THE WORD 3 MIN · BE SHAPED

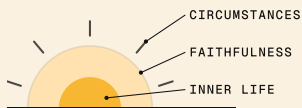
Read one passage. Let it challenge you, not just comfort you. Write one line to carry today.

N NAME THE DAY 3 MIN · INTERCEDE

Open your calendar. Pray over each block: every meeting, every person, the hard conversation, the commute home, the evening with your family.

Ready by Dawn

Full guide:
[Ready by Dawn – link TBD]



The Dawn Card

Ten minutes before the pressure comes.

Why the morning

5 a.m. is a good hour for me. The inbox is quiet, nobody needs a decision yet, and the day hasn't started pushing on me.

That doesn't last. I'm a full-time Executive Pastor, my wife and I are raising five kids in Los Angeles, I founded an AI consulting company, and I build tools to help people. Underneath it all are things easy to neglect: my health, and friendships that need time I don't always give them. I'm not listing this to impress you. I'm admitting I'm carrying a lot, and on my own I'm not enough for it.

You're probably carrying a lot too. By nine, the pressure shows up: the dreaded email, the missed number, the person disappointed in you. If you carry leadership weight, you know how quickly pressure starts making your decisions, and how often you start the day already behind.

In one of the worst moments of his life, David came home to find his town burned and his people talking about stoning him. Scripture records what he did next:

"But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God."

1 SAMUEL 30:6 (ESV)

He didn't wait for someone else to strengthen him. He went to the source.

Every day, you and I walk in either equipped or unequipped. Paul doesn't tell us to hope the day goes easy. He tells us to get dressed:

"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm."

EPHESIANS 6:13 (ESV)

I made this card to put the armor on before you need it. I use it myself. It won't make either of us holy by itself.



Rhythms don't change us; they position us to be filled by God.

Think of each morning as a small deposit in your heart. You won't feel any one of them. But in the hard meeting six months from now, you'll be drawing on all of them.

How it works: DAWN

Draw out your heart, add up the gains, take up the Word, name the day before God. Pray from the inside out.

D	2 MIN · EMPTY	A	2 MIN · GRATITUDE	W	3 MIN · BE SHAPED	N	3 MIN · INTERCEDE
Draw Out		Add Up the Gains		Take Up the Word		Name the Day	
PRAYS FOR Inner Life		PRAYS FOR God's faithfulness in all of it		PRAYS FOR Areas of Faithfulness		PRAYS FOR Circumstances	

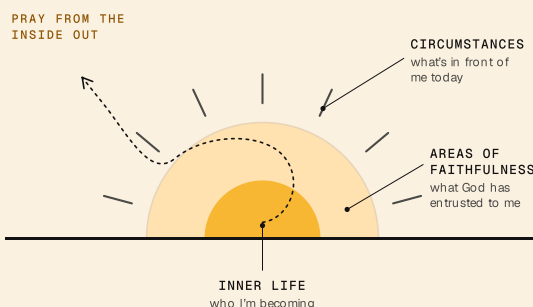
You need a pen, a notebook, your Bible, and your calendar. If you have more than ten minutes, give the extra time to **D** and **N**.

The Prayer Map

- **Inner Life:** the person you're becoming. Pray for strength in your inner being, for love that grows in wisdom and discernment, and for endurance with joy.
- **Areas of Faithfulness:** what God has entrusted to you. Your marriage or friendships, your kids, your team, your body, your craft, your church.
- **Circumstances:** what's on today's calendar.

Most of us pray from the outside in, starting with what's urgent and rarely getting to the core. The Prayer Map turns that around. When the inside is strong, the outside gets a different version of you.

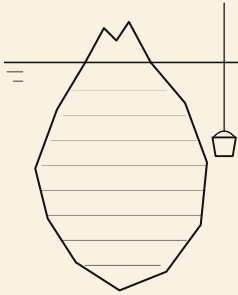
The Prayer Map is adapted from Mike Bickle's *Prayers to Strengthen Your Inner Man*.



D

Draw Out

2 MINUTES · EMPTY



Many of your decisions are made by a part of you that you haven't met yet.

Picture an iceberg. What you see above the waterline is small, and what sits underneath is much bigger. The part underneath is often what's actually steering: the fear behind the short answer, the old hurt behind the overreaction, the need to be needed behind the yes you didn't mean.

"The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out."

PROVERBS 20:5 (ESV)

Everyone's heart is deep water. What differs from person to person is whether they lower the bucket.

Do this: Write fast without editing. Start with whatever's on top, like yesterday's frustration or the thing you're dreading. Keep going. A few sentences in, you'll often find yourself somewhere older than yesterday.

Prompt: *What reaction felt bigger than the moment called for?*

Don't dig alone. Let the page turn into prayer:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart!"

PSALM 139:23 (ESV)

Pray the core (Inner Life): Ask God to strengthen you in your inner being today, so that what's under the waterline is held by Him and isn't steering you.

A

Add Up the Gains

2 MINUTES · GRATITUDE

Most leaders measure themselves against the ideal: where the team should be, the revenue target, the parent they meant to be. That distance never closes, because the ideal keeps moving. In *The Gap and The Gain*, Dan Sullivan (with Dr. Benjamin Hardy) calls this living in "the gap."

The alternative is to measure backward, against where you started: "the gain." It isn't denial; it's an accurate count. For a follower of Jesus, counting gains is also remembering God's faithfulness, the evidence you'll lean on when He's hard to see.

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23 (ESV)

Do this: Write three gains from the last 24 hours. Small ones count: a conversation that went better than last time, a temptation you walked past, a kid who laughed at dinner.

Prompt: *Where was God faithful yesterday that I almost didn't notice?*

W

Take Up the Word

3 MINUTES · BE SHAPED



Everyone is being shaped by something larger than themselves: the market, the inbox, the expectations in the room, the fear of falling behind. Like stone under a chisel, you will be shaped no matter what. What you can choose is the chisel.

Take up "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17, ESV). Keeping a sword sharp takes regular work.

Let it confront you. Scripture comforts, and it also corrects. Ask where the passage pushes against how you're living.

Use your best brain. Your mind is freshest before the noise starts. Give that time to what you most want shaping you.

Do this: Read one passage. Write **one lesson** you'll carry into today. One is enough.

Pray the glow (Areas of Faithfulness): Bring that lesson to the people and responsibilities God has entrusted to you. Ask Him to make you faithful in them today.

Join a plan. A reading plan takes away the morning decision about what to read. Pick one and follow it.

TIP · LET AN AI ASSISTANT BUILD YOUR PLAN

Paste a prompt like this into an AI assistant and adjust it to fit you:

"Build me a 30-day reading plan through [book/theme] for a [role] who has 10 minutes each morning. Each day: one passage, one question that challenges me, one thing to practice today."

Check the passages yourself, and let the questions lead you back into the text.

N

Name the Day

3 MINUTES · INTERCEDE



This is the main part of the card. You don't have to walk into a meeting and hope. You can walk in with prayer having gone there before you.

“O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.”

PSALM 5:3 (ESV)

Pray the rays (Circumstances). Open today's calendar and walk it top to bottom, one block at a time:

- **Each meeting:** wisdom, clarity, and that you'll listen before you speak.
- **Each person in it:** name them; pray for what they're carrying that you can't see.
- **Each task:** focus, and faithfulness in the unseen work.
- **The hard conversation:** courage and gentleness together, and the outcome you can't control.
- **The commute home:** that you'll leave work at work and arrive as yourself.
- **The evening with your family:** that they get your presence and not your leftovers.

Prompt: Which block am I most tempted to walk into alone? Pray over that one twice.

Tools that help

A physical journal. Paper slows you down enough to hear yourself. A great one: the Leuchtturm1917 A5 softcover.

amazon.com/dp/B07ZY6GT4D

Nuvo. Plan your day so the blocks you pray over in N are actually on the calendar.

Dayspring. A journal for the inner life, with Scripture and prayer right on the page, and a way to look back over months. usedayspring.app

A weekly planning and leadership audit. One unhurried hour a week to look at the whole week: [LeadWell leadwell-ochre.vercel.app](https://leadwell-ochre.vercel.app)

Seven mornings

One row per morning. Tick it even if you only did part of it.

	DAY	DATE	DONE	ONE GAIN	ONE LESSON	BLOCK I PRAYED OVER TWICE
	1		☐			
	2		☐			
	3		☐			
	4		☐			
	5		☐			
	6		☐			
	7		☐			

Tomorrow morning

Don't aim for a perfect morning. Aim to show up. Ten minutes, four letters, one notebook. Some mornings the bucket will come up empty, the gains will look small, and the Word will feel dry. Do it anyway. You're putting yourself where God can fill you.

Draw out. Add up. Word. Name the day.



If this morning rhythm helps, there are rhythms for the rest of life too, weekly and seasonal, in **Rhythms of Resilience: Spiritual practices to thrive in chaos** by Phil Chan. amazon.com/dp/1957321105

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