

## Week 10 Day 7 | *The Lord Is: My Refuge*

Have you ever seen the Running of the Bulls? The most famous one is held in Pamplona, Spain. Thousands of adventurers try to outmaneuver, outrun, or outlast a group of bulls released in some blocked-off streets spanning a half-mile. It's an interesting sight to watch people literally run for their lives.

Maybe you've seen a movie where the heroes are being chased as they run for the gates of their country's embassy. Imagine a young boy running home as he is being chased by a pack of bullies. Whatever the case, once they reach their destination, a wave of relief washes over them. They're safe . . . secure . . . protected. They have found refuge.

In Old Testament times, the word “refuge” was especially significant as there were entire cities designated as “Cities of Refuge.” Revenge was so prominent that manslaughter was repaid with manslaughter, oftentimes done by the hands of the victim's family, even if the death was unintentional. If you were involved in an accidental death, you could flee to one of six Cities of Refuge. There you were kept safe as you awaited trial. You can imagine an enormous sense of relief washing over you once inside those city walls.

Although King David never fled to a City of Refuge, he certainly knew what it was like to be pursued by his enemies. David's faith, obedience, and love of the Lord's law made him a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). As admirable as these traits were, David was more impressive for something else: his complete and utter desperation for the Lord. This is why he was especially fond of referring to the Lord as a “refuge.” For David, the Lord as a refuge meant God was a place of safety for the distressed (Psalm 59:16). The Lord was a strong tower that no enemy could breach (Psalm 61:3). He was a shelter that no evil could conquer (Psalm 91:9–10), and under which David could live free of condemnation (Psalm 34:22). The Lord wasn't just “a” refuge for David; He was “the” refuge (Psalm 91:2).

In one of the most revealing, honest declarations of them all, David wrote:

*“Then I pray to you, O Lord. I say, ‘You are my place of refuge. You are all I really want in life.’”—Psalm 142:5 (NLT)*

Imagine, a king with the world at his fingertips, and all He really wants is the God who is at his side: “You are all I really want in life.” All that matters, all that counts, all that's worth anything worth having is the Lord and the safety He provides.

With only three weeks remaining in our fitness journey, you are entering the flare phase. This is when things typically start getting easier and more realistic. The idea that fitness is sustainable is starting to resonate with you.

However, that's not always the case for the flare phase. You may still be feeling that the enemy is in hot pursuit. He's nipping at your heels with reminders of recent failures or setbacks. Your resolve is fading, though the pace of his chasing isn't. To make matters worse, you find yourself believing the growing whispers of defeat you're hearing behind you. You need a City of Refuge.

Provisions were made to ensure accessibility to Cities of Refuge. They were available to everyone, no matter what. The cities were easy to see because they were often built on mountains. The roads leading to the cities were extra wide, well maintained, and never congested. They had plenty of signs and directions posted along the way. Since the gates never closed, once you were there, you were in. If you ever needed a City of Refuge, not only could you get to one, but the city wanted you there.

Sound familiar? It should, because that's the Lord we serve—open to everyone, all the time, no matter what. He's inviting you, welcoming you in, and protecting you once you're there. When we need our City of Refuge—and we need Him every day—we continue running. We know He is strong and good, and will always remain close (Nahum 1:7). We don't stop until we reach our Tower. There, we have shelter from the storms and have shade from the heat (Isaiah 25:4). We put one foot in front of another, knowing He is the One who saves and delivers (Psalm 7:1).

The Lord provides safety and shelter. We should seek to rest in His provision in all circumstances.

Once we arrive, relief washes over us. We're safe . . . secure . . . protected. We have found Refuge. He is all we really need in life.

### Prayer

*Father, thank You for the safety You provide for us. Will You forgive me when I seek refuge in things that can't provide it? Please help me run to You, all the time, no matter what. Amen.*

### Meditation

You are my refuge. That is all I need.

### Daily Spiritual Exercise

Continue to spend 10 to 15 minutes writing your own “The Lord is\_\_\_\_\_” devotional. Remember, you don't need to be eloquent to honor God by this exercise. The goal is to acknowledge who He has been, is, and will continue to be in your life. Don't get caught up in making it perfect. It's the pouring out of your heart that brings Him glory.