# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/16/18

# The Voice of the Nature of God



I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" —[Isaiah 6:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Isaiah+6%3A8)

When we talk about the call of God, we often forget the most important thing, namely, the nature of Him who calls. There are many things calling each of us today. Some of these calls will be answered, and others will not even be heard. The call is the expression of the nature of the One who calls, and we can only recognize the call if that same nature is in us. The call of God is the expression of God’s nature, not ours. God providentially weaves the threads of His call through our lives, and only we can distinguish them. It is the threading of God’s voice directly to us over a certain concern, and it is useless to seek another person’s opinion of it. Our dealings over the call of God should be kept exclusively between ourselves and Him.

The call of God is not a reflection of my nature; my personal desires and temperament are of no consideration. As long as I dwell on my own qualities and traits and think about what I am suited for, I will never hear the call of God. But when God brings me into the right relationship with Himself, I will be in the same condition Isaiah was. Isaiah was so attuned to God, because of the great crisis he had just endured, that the call of God penetrated his soul. The majority of us cannot hear anything but ourselves. And we cannot hear anything God says. But to be brought to the place where we can hear the call of God is to be profoundly changed.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We begin our Christian life by believing what we are told to believe, then we have to go on to so assimilate our beliefs that they work out in a way that redounds to the glory of God. The danger is in multiplying the acceptation of beliefs we do not make our own. Conformed to His Image, 381 L

# CCEL – 1/16/18

**It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.**—[COL. 1:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.19)

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.—God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.—By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.—And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.—Of his fulness have all we received.

[John 3:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html#John.3.35). -[Phi. 2:9-11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.9). -[Eph. 1:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.21). -[Col. 1:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.16).[Rom. 14:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.14.html" \l "Rom.14.9). -[Col. 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.10). -[John 1:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.16).

“I will help thee, saith the Lord.”

### [Isaiah 41:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.41.html" \l "Isa.41.14)

This morning let us hear the Lord Jesus speak to each one of us: “I will help thee.” “It is but a small thing for me, thy God, to help thee. Consider what I have done already. What! not help thee? Why, I bought thee with my blood. What! not help thee? I have died for thee; and if I have done the greater, will I not do the less? Help thee! It is the least thing I will ever do for thee; I have done more, and will do more. Before the world began I chose thee. I made the covenant for thee. I laid aside my glory and became a man for thee; I gave up my life for thee; and if I did all this, I will surely help thee now. In helping thee, I am giving thee what I have bought for thee already. If thou hadst need of a thousand times as much help, I would give it thee; thou requirest little compared with what I am ready to give. 'Tis much for thee to need, but it is nothing for me to bestow. ‘Help thee?’ Fear not! If there were an ant at the door of thy granary asking for help, it would not ruin thee to give him a handful of thy wheat; and thou art nothing but a tiny insect at the door of my all-sufficiency. ‘I will help thee.’”

O my soul, is not this enough? Dost thou need more strength than the omnipotence of the United Trinity? Dost thou want more wisdom than exists in the Father, more love than displays itself in the Son, or more power than is manifest in the influences of the Spirit? Bring hither thine empty pitcher! Surely this well will fill it. Haste, gather up thy wants, and bring them here—thine emptiness, thy woes, thy needs. Behold, this river of God is full for thy supply; what canst thou desire beside? Go forth, my soul, in this thy might. The Eternal God is thine helper!

“Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismay'd!

I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid.”

# Word Live – 1/16/18

# À la carte

## **Prepare**

In what ways does your faith in Jesus make you different from those around you?



## **Bible passage Leviticus 11:1–12**

### **Clean and Unclean Food**

11 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 2“Say to the Israelites: ‘Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat: 3You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud.

4“‘There are some that only chew the cud or only have a divided hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you. 5The hyrax, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. 6The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. 7And the pig, though it has a divided hoof, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. 8You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.

9“‘Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams you may eat any that have fins and scales. 10But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales—whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water—you are to regard as unclean. 11And since you are to regard them as unclean, you must not eat their meat; you must regard their carcasses as unclean. 12Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be regarded as unclean by you.

## **Bible passage Leviticus 11:41–45**

41“‘Every creature that moves along the ground is to be regarded as unclean; it is not to be eaten. 42You are not to eat any creature that moves along the ground, whether it moves on its belly or walks on all fours or on many feet; it is unclean. 43Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. 44I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground. 45I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Teacher God**

So hyrax and camel are off the menu; so what? What on earth do these seemingly pernickety food laws have to do with us? Our culture is obsessed with food. Cooking shows, diet plans, countless restaurants, obesity and other eating disorders. We are a culture obsessed with food. So while the exact stipulations of these laws may no longer apply to us, the principles God is teaching through them are still important.

God is teaching us three things in Leviticus 11. First, he is teaching us about obedience. Many people try to hypothesise why some animals are clean and others unclean. In the end we must rest on the fact that God has said, therefore we must obey. A maturing believer is one who increasingly obeys God’s Word, one who grows in dependence not independence.

**Distinctive diet**

Secondly, as God’s people obeyed these laws they would be distinct, different and separate from others. Their faith in God, and obedience to him would make them stand out. Whilst we are not called to stand out by our diet, we are still called to be holy, to be different because of our faith in Jesus.

Thirdly, I think God is highlighting his Lordship over every area of our lives. He is interested not just in our Sundays but in every minutiae of life. God even wants us to eat and drink to his glory (see [1 Corinthians 10:31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+10%3A31&version=NIRV)).

## **Respond**

Every time you eat today, think about these themes of obedience, holiness and Lordship.

[Jon Gemmell](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/G-H/3526467.id)

## **Deeper Bible study**

**How important is food to you – what you eat and how you eat?**

Recently revised and brought up to date by his grandson, who is also a doctor, None of These Diseases was written by Dr SI McMillen in 19671. The title derives from God’s promise in [Exodus 15:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+15%3A26&version=NIVUK) and the book provides scientific pointers to the health benefits of obedience to the Law. It is not difficult to see, for instance, that pork would be a health hazard in a desert where there was no firewood for thorough cooking, or that male circumcision provides for a greater degree of cleanliness to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (which would not be an issue if people keep the seventh commandment!).

This should come as no surprise to us, knowing that God cares for the health of his people. Indeed, he cares for every aspect of their well-being. Rather than focus on the wisdom of not feeding on bats, geckos and carrion birds, therefore, it is important to see that God is interested in separating the clean from the unclean, the holy from the profane. Israel as a nation was set apart to be different from other peoples. These food laws were a part of that distinction.

The Pharisees got it wrong when they failed to understand that visible practice serves only as a pointer to inner purity; Jesus rebuked them for this on more than one occasion ([Matthew 15:10–20; 23:25–28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3A10%E2%80%9320%3B+23%3A25%E2%80%9328&version=NIVUK)). God still cares about what we eat or what we do not eat. The early church came to understand this in a new way when they agreed not to compel Gentile converts to strict observance of Judaic Law ([Acts 15:28,29](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15%3A28-29&version=NIVUK)). In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, he gives us an altogether different motivation for deciding what to eat or not to eat: it is not what it does or fails to do for me that counts, but what it does for my brother ([1 Corinthians 8:8–13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+8%3A8%E2%80%9313&version=NIVUK)).

[Emmanuel Oladipo](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

1 SI McMillen and David E Stern, None of These Diseases, third edition, Revell, 2000

# Today in the Word – 1/16/18

# Calling: Living Worthy of Our Salvation

[**Ephesians 4:1–6**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:1–6)

### **Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ**

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Pastor and author John Piper explained in a sermon: “The deep horror of our sin is not simply that we cross over some line that God told us not to cross. The ultimate essence of evil is not simply that we break God’s commands. The problem with our sin is that we love or prefer anything over God.” If we fail to understand this, “the glory of Christ’s victory on the cross, the majesty of God, and the deep satisfaction of the Christian life will all be lost on us.”

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.Ephesians 4:1

To live worthy of our salvation, then, means to value God above all else. Obedience to His commands follows from that. Just as Paul had devoted his life to his calling to proclaim the gospel (3:7–8), so now he exhorted the Ephesians and us to “live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (v. 1). Here “calling” refers to God’s sovereign choice of us for adoption, redemption, and forgiveness (1:3–14). We’re to live worthy of His grace and gift of life (2:8–10). That’s a lot to live up to! Fittingly, this can only be done in God’s strength.

What does this mean specifically? Today’s passage gives us three examples. First, it means to be humble and gentle (v. 2). These qualities, seen as weak, were not prized in Roman culture. Second, it means to be patient and loving. And third, it means to live in unity and harmony with our fellow believers (v. 3).

Paul expanded on this third command, in keeping with his focus on the church in this epistle (vv. 4–6). Unity or oneness among fellow believers is founded upon a series of “ones”—one Spirit, one hope (of salvation, see 1:18), one Lord (Christ), one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

### **Apply the Word**

Water baptism is an ordinance or sacrament (depending on your tradition) of the church wherein we publicly identify ourselves as followers of Christ (see Rom. 6:4). It makes sense that Paul would refer to it when addressing unity in the body of Christ. If you’ve never been baptized, speak to your pastor or another church leader and learn more about it.

### **Pray with Us**

Let’s continue in prayer for the administration team at Moody’s Spokane campus—Jack Lewis, Nathanael Schey, and Rashel Rogers—as they serve students and keep the administrative side of the Spokane campus running smoothly.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/16/18

# The Power of Prayer



**Read:** [**1 Samuel 7:7–14**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+7%3A7%E2%80%9314)

7When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. When the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. 8They said to Samuel, “Do not stop crying out to the Lord our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines.” 9Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. He cried out to the Lord on Israel’s behalf, and the Lord answered him.

10While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the Lord thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. 11The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Kar.

12Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+7%3A7%E2%80%9314" \l "fen-NIV-7365a" \o "See footnote a)] saying, “Thus far the Lord has helped us.”

13So the Philistines were subdued and they stopped invading Israel’s territory. Throughout Samuel’s lifetime, the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines. 14The towns from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured from Israel were restored to Israel, and Israel delivered the neighboring territory from the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Samuel 7:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+7%3A7%E2%80%9314#en-NIV-7365) Ebenezer means stone of help.

Do not stop crying out to the Lord our God for us, that he may rescue us. [1 Samuel 7:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+7%3A8)

One day, when I was deeply concerned about the welfare of one close to me, I found encouragement in part of the Old Testament story of Samuel, a wise leader of the Israelites. As I read how Samuel interceded for God’s people as they faced trouble, I strengthened my resolve to pray for the one I loved.

The Israelites faced the threat of the Philistines, who had previously defeated them when God’s people didn’t trust in Him (see 1 Samuel 4). After repenting of their sins, they heard that the Philistines were about to attack. This time, however, they asked Samuel to continue praying for them (7:8), and the Lord answered clearly by throwing their enemy into confusion (v. 10). Though the Philistines may have been mightier than the Israelites, the Lord was the strongest of them all.

[Father, strengthen my faith, that I will always believe in Your goodness and love.](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Father%2C+strengthen+my+faith%2C+that+I+will+always+believe+in+Your+goodness+and+love.&via=ourdailybread&hashtags=strength&url=https://odb.org/mET/)

When we ache over the challenges facing those we love, and fear the situation won’t change, we may be tempted to believe that the Lord will not act. But we should never underestimate the power of prayer, for our loving God hears our pleas. We don’t know how He will move in response to our petitions, but we know that as our Father He longs for us to embrace His love and to trust in His faithfulness.

Do you have someone you can pray for today?

Father God, the way You hear and answer my prayers amazes me. Strengthen my faith, that I will always believe in Your goodness and love.

Share your prayer request or pray for others at [YourDailyBread.org/prayer](https://yourdailybread.org/prayer).

God hears us when we pray.

By [Amy Boucher Pye](https://odb.org/author/amyboucherpye/)

#### **INSIGHT**

Samuel led his people to worship of the one true God (1 Samuel 7:1–6). Prayer was central to Samuel’s ministry (v. 9); in response to his intercession, God gave the nation victory over the Philistines (vv. 7–13). To commemorate this God-inspired victory, Samuel erected a remembrance stone he called Ebenezer, which means “stone of help.” It can also serve as a reminder to us not to underestimate the power of God to respond to our prayers!

For further study see Let’s Pray at [discoveryseries.org/hp135](https://discoveryseries.org/hp135).

[Dennis Fisher](https://odb.org/author/dennisfisher/)

# God Calling – 1/16/18

# Friend in Drudgery

Nothing in the day is too small to be a part of My scheme.

It is the daily strivings that count, not the momentary heights. The obeying of My Will day in, day out, in the wilderness plains, rather than the occasional Mount of Transfiguration.

Perseverance is nowhere needed so much as in the religious life. The drudgery of the Kingdom it is that secures My intimate Friendship. I am the Lord of little things, the Divine Control of little happenings.

Nothing in the day is too small to be a part of My scheme. The little stones in a mosaic play a big part.

Joy in Me. Joy is the God-given cement that secures the harmony and beauty of My mosaic.

"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there any thing too hard for me? - Jeremiah 32:27

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/17/18

# The Call of the Natural Life



When it pleased God…to reveal His Son in me… —[Galatians 1:15-16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Galatians+1%3A15-16)

The call of God is not a call to serve Him in any particular way. My contact with the nature of God will shape my understanding of His call and will help me realize what I truly desire to do for Him. The call of God is an expression of His nature; the service which results in my life is suited to me and is an expression of my nature. The call of the natural life was stated by the apostle Paul— “When it pleased God…to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him [that is, purely and solemnly express Him] among the Gentiles….”

Service is the overflow which pours from a life filled with love and devotion. But strictly speaking, there is no call to that. Service is what I bring to the relationship and is the reflection of my identification with the nature of God. Service becomes a natural part of my life. God brings me into the proper relationship with Himself so that I can understand His call, and then I serve Him on my own out of a motivation of absolute love. Service to God is the deliberate love-gift of a nature that has heard the call of God. Service is an expression of my nature, and God’s call is an expression of His nature. Therefore, when I receive His nature and hear His call, His divine voice resounds throughout His nature and mine and the two become one in service. The Son of God reveals Himself in me, and out of devotion to Him service becomes my everyday way of life.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

No one could have had a more sensitive love in human relationship than Jesus; and yet He says there are times when love to father and mother must be hatred in comparison to our love for Him.   So Send I You, 1301 L

# CCEL – 1/17/18

**Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption.**—[ISA. 38:17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.38.html" \l "Isa.38.17)

God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.—O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.—When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.—I waited patiently for the Lord. He brought me up . . . out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock.

[I John 4:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.9).[Mic. 7:18-19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mic.7.html" \l "Mic.7.18). -[Psa. 30:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.30.html" \l "Ps.30.2). -[Jon. 2:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jonah.2.html" \l "Jonah.2.7). -[Psa. 40:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.40.html" \l "Ps.40.1).

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion.”

### [Revelation 14:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.14.html" \l "Rev.14.1)

The apostle John was privileged to look within the gates of heaven, and in describing what he saw, he begins by saying, “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb!” This teaches us that the chief object of contemplation in the heavenly state is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” Nothing else attracted the apostle’s attention so much as the person of that Divine Being, who hath redeemed us by his blood. He is the theme of the songs of all glorified spirits and holy angels. Christian, here is joy for thee; thou hast looked, and thou hast seen the Lamb. Through thy tears thine eyes have seen the Lamb of God taking away thy sins. Rejoice, then. In a little while, when thine eyes shall have been wiped from tears, thou wilt see the same Lamb exalted on his throne. It is the joy of thy heart to hold daily fellowship with Jesus; thou shalt have the same joy to a higher degree in heaven; thou shalt enjoy the constant vision of his presence; thou shalt dwell with him forever. “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb!” Why, that Lamb is heaven itself; for as good Rutherford says, “Heaven and Christ are the same thing;” to be with Christ is to be in heaven, and to be in heaven is to be with Christ. That prisoner of the Lord very sweetly writes in one of his glowing letters—“O my Lord Jesus Christ, if I could be in heaven without thee, it would be a hell; and if I could be in hell, and have thee still, it would be a heaven to me, for thou art all the heaven I want.” It is true, is it not, Christian? Does not thy soul say so?

“Not all the harps above

Can make a heavenly place,

If God his residence remove,

Or but conceal his face.”

All thou needest to make thee blessed, supremely blessed, is “to be with Christ.”

# Word Live – 1/17/18

# The big day

## **Prepare**

‘Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes’ (HF Lyte, ‘Abide with me’). Ask God to give you a clearer understanding of Jesus’ sacrifice for you.



## **Bible passage Leviticus 16:1–22**

##### **The Day of Atonement**

1 The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the LORD. 2 The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.

3 "This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. 5 From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

6 "Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. 7 Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 8 He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. 9 Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. 10 But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat.

11 "Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering. 12 He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain. 13 He is to put the incense on the fire before the LORD, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony, so that he will not die. 14 He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover.

15 "He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. 16 In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the Tent of Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17 No one is to be in the Tent of Meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel.

18 "Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. 19 He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites.

20 "When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. 21 He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. 22 The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Holy God**

The Day of Atonement comes in the very centre of Leviticus, highlighting its importance. Leviticus is also in the very centre of the Torah, so we are at the middle of the middle. This is a key passage.

Notice four things. First, great care needs to be taken in coming into God’s presence. Look at the careful preparation Aaron needs to make in performing this service (vs 1–5,11–14). Holiness is lethal when mixed with sinfulness; precautions need to be taken.

Secondly, see how Aaron needs to sacrifice the bull as a sin offering for himself (v 11). Even the high priest falls far short of the standard of holiness needed to come into God’s presence.

**Goats for God**

Thirdly, see the purpose of the first goat (v 15), the sin offering. This goat is killed as punishment for the sin of the people. This goat performs the work of ‘propitiation’, absorbing God’s wrath for the people’s sin.

Fourthly, don’t miss the purpose of the second goat (v 21). This goat has the people’s sins symbolically transferred to it and then it is driven away, performing the work of ‘expiation’, showing that their sin is now removed from them. Not just ‘forgiveness’ but ‘forgotteness’.

## **Respond**

What wonderful news! In Jesus we have a perfect high priest and a perfect sacrifice. One who not only takes the penalty for sin but also removes the presence of sin. ‘… so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many’ ([Hebrews 9:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+9%3A28&version=NIVUK)).

[Jon Gemmell](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/G-H/3526467.id)

## **Deeper Bible study**

**‘Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear, / Yet dazzle heaven, that brightest seraphim / Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.’ (John Milton, Paradise Lost, Book III: 380)**

God’s immaculate purity is simply beyond our human experience. Again and again, this fact is emphasised to us in Scripture. Not only did the people of Israel have to take specific steps to purify themselves before God appeared on Mount Sinai to give them the Law: they also had to keep their distance from the mountain of this unique encounter ([Exodus 19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+19&version=NIVUK)). It is this high and holy God who decided to make himself approachable to sinful humanity, starting with his chosen people, Israel. The Day of Atonement is the annual celebration of the event by which he bridges the gulf, making them to become at one with him through the rite of at-one-ment.

The high priest presided over the ceremony, but he first had to get rid of the barrier created by his own sin. This he did first by washing himself clean and being dressed in the prescribed vestments and then by offering a bull in sacrifice. Only after this could he go into the most holy place of the tent of meeting to offer the necessary sacrifice on behalf of the people before the mercy seat of the ark of testimony. That was not all. The sins of the entire nation were ritually transferred to the head of a scapegoat (v 21), which was then led outside the camp into the wilderness. These rituals helped to remind the people that they belonged to a holy God who demanded that they too be holy – and the whole process was re-enacted the following year.

How privileged we are! We are blessed by the once-for-all sacrifice of the Lamb of God who has atoned for us. O that we may worship him in the beauty of holiness! ([Psalm 96:9, AV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+96%3A9&version=AKJV))

[Emmanuel Oladipo](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## **The Day of Atonement**

**Dealing with sin**

‘Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart …’ ([Psalm 24:3,4a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2024:3,4a;&version=72;)).  
  
Yes, we do have to be realistic. However much we yearn for a deeper walk with God, sin gets in the way and has to be dealt with.  
  
● The sin and guilt offerings are the most extensive and detailed in Leviticus and are covered in several other places in this book ([Leviticus 4:1 – 6:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%204:1%20–%206:7;&version=72;); [6:24–30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%206:24–30;&version=72;); [7:1–6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%207:1–6;&version=72;); [8:14–17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%208:14–17;&version=72;); [16:1–22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%2016:1–22;&version=72;)).  
  
● Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement – literally the ‘Day of Covering’ – is central to God’s purpose for his people. It is where God’s demand that his people be holy is met by his gracious provision to make this possible.   
  
In his grace and mercy God desires that we come into his presence but because of his holiness we must come in the way he has provided. Yom Kippur is such an important festival in the life of Israel that its detailed requirements feature extensively in the book of Leviticus.   
  
**Pursuing holiness**

This command to be holy was a requirement at three levels:  
  
● **The national level** – ‘Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves’ **(**[23:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%2023:26;&version=72;)). Israel was called to be a holy nation and, as such, corporate as well as personal repentance was central to its holiness.  
  
● **The leadership level** –In his regular ministryAaronwould wear his special High Priestly robes, but on the Day of Atonement he would remove these and wear more simple linen garments, by this emphasising his own need of forgiveness before ministering on behalf of the people.  
  
● **The individual level** – This entailed personal fasting and self-denial ([23:29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%2023:29;&version=72;)).  
  
**Guilt before God and man**These sacrifices atoned for sin only as far as guilt before the Lord was concerned. Sin against others required also that some real restitution was made. The offending person must ‘make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the [offended party] on the day he presents his guilt offering’ ([Leviticus 6:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%206:5;&version=72;)).  
  
On this, the most solemn day in Israel’s worshipping year, as well as the customary burnt offering, there was the scapegoat which symbolised the taking away of Israel’s sins. The psalmist put it this way: ‘As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us’ ([Psalm 103:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20103:12;&version=72;)).  
  
John Fieldsend

## **The scapegoat**

[https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W180809R1 The Scapegoat.mp3](https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W180809R1%20The%20Scapegoat.mp3)

The image of the scapegoat, the one bearing the blame for something, suggests to us things like weakness, victimisation and helplessness. Jesus is our scapegoat, and he is nothing like that. He chose to lay aside his power and majesty and allow human beings to abuse and kill him, and he took all our sin for his love of us.   
  
Read or listen to this poem by Jane Upchurch.  
  
**The Scapegoat**The wilderness calls.  
I can hear the flap of its canvas,  
feel the drought in its breath,  
smell the baked bark of stone  
as it burns in the boiling sun.  
It is not home  
save to jackals and outcasts,  
demons and fears  
and temptation.  
  
So why is Jesus here?   
  
It is the day of atonement  
and the high priest knows  
my wandering ways.  
The sacrifice has been offered,  
my heart has been sprinkled,  
my conscience is cleansed,  
but it is not complete.  
  
The memories of my rebellion  
rattle in my mind like rusty tins  
tripping up my thoughts  
and tarnishing my tasks.   
  
I need to look into the eyes  
of the goat,  
place my hands on his head  
and lay on him  
all the wounds and warps of my life.  
  
Jesus, whose hot blood  
salted my sin forever,  
you made yourself nothing,  
taking the form of a scapegoat,   
carrying into the wilderness   
the load that I could not bear;  
removing my transgressions  
as far as the east is from the west.  
  
So when I find myself  
in the wilderness,  
when I have stones  
for bread  
and stumble over  
decisions I have to make,  
I don’t need to fear.  
It is no longer a place of  
punishment and exile,  
but a time when God is  
perfecting my holiness.   
  
Jane Upchurch

# Today in the Word – 1/17/18

# Calling: Using Spiritual Gifts to Build Up the Church

[**Ephesians 4:7–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:7–13)

7But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8This is why it[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:7%E2%80%9313#fen-NIV-29281a)] says:

“When he ascended on high,  
    he took many captives  
    and gave gifts to his people.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:7%E2%80%9313#fen-NIV-29281b)]

9(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:7%E2%80%9313#fen-NIV-29282c)]? 10He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 4:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:7%E2%80%9313#en-NIV-29281) Or God
2. [Ephesians 4:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:7%E2%80%9313#en-NIV-29281) Psalm 68:18
3. [Ephesians 4:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:7%E2%80%9313#en-NIV-29282) Or the depths of the earth

Kids have loved building with Play-Doh for more than 60 years. First introduced at schools in Cincinnati, this soft modeling clay was featured at a national education convention in 1955 and marketed in department stores the following year. It is estimated that children have played with some 700 million pounds of this famous material. In 1998, Play-Doh was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame.

The body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature.Ephesians 4:12–13

The spiritual gifts of believers are the building materials of the church. That is, with our Spirit-given gifts, we serve the church and build up one another. Living worthy of our salvation is not an individualistic activity, as we often think of it, but a community enterprise. We “do life together,” as the current saying goes. The key is God’s grace (v. 7).

Salvation is about God’s kingdom and victory. In something of a rabbinic style, Paul comments on Psalm 68:18 to make this point (vv. 8–10). Christ descended (became human and died) in order to ascend (His mission of redemption finished). He humbled Himself in order to reign. The “captives” are sin, death, and Satan. The “gifts” are grace and life.

Living worthy of our salvation happens when people use their spiritual gifts to serve and edify one another within the church (vv. 11–13). This is why the Spirit gives the gifts at all—to build up the body of Christ. Apostles and prophets were the “foundation” of the church (2:20). Evangelists, pastors, and teachers equip believers through their work. Other gifts are listed elsewhere in Scripture, and all serve the purpose of building up the church toward unity.

Just as salvation is both finished and in process, so also is unity. We both possess it and are reaching it. It will be complete when our knowledge of Christ is mature and perfect.

### **Apply the Word**

Are you using your spiritual gift as God intended? Sometimes we treat spiritual gifts as tools for self-understanding or self-expression. But they’re meant to be used for the benefit of God’s people. To learn more, read Ministering through Spiritual Gifts: Recognize Your Personal Gifts and Use Them to Further the Kingdom by Charles Stanley.

### **Pray with Us**

Commit Janet Stiven to prayer today. As vice president and General Counsel at Moody, she provides advice and legal guidance in many situations that require prayer and wisdom. Thank you for your prayers!

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/17/18

# Growing Gratitude



**Read:** [**Romans 11:33–36**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A33%E2%80%9336)

### **Doxology**

33Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A33%E2%80%9336#fen-NIV-28243a)] knowledge of God!  
    How unsearchable his judgments,  
    and his paths beyond tracing out!  
34“Who has known the mind of the Lord?  
    Or who has been his counselor?”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A33%E2%80%9336#fen-NIV-28244b)]  
35“Who has ever given to God,  
    that God should repay them?”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A33%E2%80%9336#fen-NIV-28245c)]  
36For from him and through him and for him are all things.  
    To him be the glory forever! Amen.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 11:33](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A33%E2%80%9336#en-NIV-28243) Or riches and the wisdom and the
2. [Romans 11:34](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A33%E2%80%9336#en-NIV-28244) Isaiah 40:13
3. [Romans 11:35](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A33%E2%80%9336#en-NIV-28245) Job 41:11

For from him and through him and for him are all things. [Romans 11:36](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A36)

Would you like to cultivate a greater sense of gratitude? George Herbert, a seventeenth-century British poet, encourages readers toward that goal in his poem “Gratefulness”: “Thou that hast given so much to me, give one thing more: a grateful heart.”

Herbert recognized the only thing he needed in order to be thankful was simply an awareness of the blessings God had already given him.

[For from him and through him and for him are all things. Romans 11:36](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=For+from+him+and+through+him+and+for+him+are+all+things.+Romans+11%3A36&via=ourdailybread&url=https://odb.org/mEM/)

The Bible declares Christ Jesus as the source of all blessing in Romans 11:36, “For from him and through him and for him are all things.” “All things” encompasses both the extravagant and the mundane, everyday gifts in our lives. Everything we receive in life comes directly from our heavenly Father (James 1:17), and He willingly gives us those gifts out of His love for us.

To expand my awareness of God’s blessings in my life, I am learning to cultivate a heart that acknowledges the source of all the joys I experience each day, but especially the ones I often take for granted. Today those included a crisp morning to run, the anticipation of an evening with friends, a stocked pantry so I could make French toast with my daughters, the beauty of the world outside my window, and the aroma of freshly brewed coffee.

What is the “so much” that God has already given to you? Opening our eyes to those blessings will help us to develop grateful hearts.

Take a few minutes to thank God for what comes to your mind right now. Try to do that throughout the day as well.

When you think of all that’s good, thank God.

Welcome to Lisa Samra! Meet all our authors at [odb.org/all-authors](https://odb.org/all-authors).

By [Lisa Samra](https://odb.org/author/lisasamra/)

#### **INSIGHT**

Do you tend to think of yourself as more or less thankful than other people? Consider how the apostle Paul used that question to set a love-trap for some of his readers. Early in his letter to the Romans he describes those who have no interest in worshiping or giving thanks to their Creator (Romans 1:21). For the rest of chapter he describes the unraveling lives of those who refuse to acknowledge the goodness of their God.

Then it happens. Paul anticipates that someone has taken the bait. With no warning he asks his readers whether they really think they are any different than the unthankful sinners he has been condemning (2:1). Paul then spends much of the rest of his letter giving his readers reasons to give thanks to God for revealing in Christ the greatest good news the world has ever heard. Just before erupting in his great expression of worshipful praise to God (11:33–36), Paul concludes, “For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all” (v. 32).

In the smallest kindness, a thankful heart can sense the greatness of our God.

[Mart DeHaan](https://odb.org/author/martdehaan-2/)

# God Calling – 1/17/18

# God's Rush To Give

Love and Trust are the solvents for the worry and cares and frets of a life.

Silence. Be silent before Me. Seek to know, and then to do My will in all things.

Abide in My Love. An atmosphere of loving understanding to all men. This your part to carry out, and then I surround you with a protective screen that keeps all evil from you. It is fashioned by your own attitude of mind, words, and deeds, towards others.

I want to give you all things, good measure, pressed down and running over. Be quick to learn. You know little yet of the Divine Impatience which longs to rush to give. Does one worrying thought enter your mind, one impatient thought? Fight it at once.

Love and Trust are the solvents for the worry and cares and frets of a life. Apply them at once. You are channels and though the channel may not be altogether blocked, fret and impatience and worry corrode, and in time would become beyond your help.

Persevere, oh! persevere. Never lose heart. All is well.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." - Proverbs 3:5,6

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/18/18

# “It Is the Lord!”



Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" —[John 20:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+20%3A28)

“Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink’ ” ([John 4:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+4:7)). How many of us are expecting Jesus Christ to quench our thirst when we should be satisfying Him! We should be pouring out our lives, investing our total beings, not drawing on Him to satisfy us. “You shall be witnesses to Me…” ([Acts 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:8)). That means lives of pure, uncompromising, and unrestrained devotion to the Lord Jesus, which will be satisfying to Him wherever He may send us.

Beware of anything that competes with your loyalty to Jesus Christ. The greatest competitor of true devotion to Jesus is the service we do for Him. It is easier to serve than to pour out our lives completely for Him. The goal of the call of God is His satisfaction, not simply that we should do something for Him. We are not sent to do battle for God, but to be used by God in His battles. Are we more devoted to service than we are to Jesus Christ Himself?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We are all based on a conception of importance, either our own importance, or the importance of someone else; Jesus tells us to go and teach based on the revelation of His importance. “All power is given unto Me.… Go ye therefore ….”  So Send I You, 1325 R

# CCEL – 1/18/18

**Him that was to come.**—[ROM. 5:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.14)

Jesus . . . made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, . . . that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.—One died for all.—As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.—That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.—God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.—God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.—Thou hast given him power over all flesh.

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

[Heb. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.9). -[II Cor. 5:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.14). -[Rom. 5:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.19).[I Cor. 15:45](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.45). -[I Cor. 15:46](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.46). -[Gen. 1:26,27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.1.html" \l "Gen.1.26). -[Heb. 1:1-3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.1.html" \l "Heb.1.1). -[John 17:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html#John.17.2).[I Cor. 15:47,48](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.47).

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”

### [Hebrews 4:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.9)

How different will be the state of the believer in heaven from what it is here! Here he is born to toil and suffer weariness, but in the land of the immortal, fatigue is never known. Anxious to serve his Master, he finds his strength unequal to his zeal: his constant cry is, “Help me to serve thee, O my God.” If he be thoroughly active, he will have much labour; not too much for his will, but more than enough for his power, so that he will cry out, “I am not wearied of the labour, but I am wearied in it.” Ah! Christian, the hot day of weariness lasts not forever; the sun is nearing the horizon; it shall rise again with a brighter day than thou hast ever seen upon a land where they serve God day and night, and yet rest from their labours. Here, rest is but partial, there, it is perfect. Here, the Christian is always unsettled; he feels that he has not yet attained. There, all are at rest; they have attained the summit of the mountain; they have ascended to the bosom of their God. Higher they cannot go. Ah, toil-worn labourer, only think when thou shalt rest forever! Canst thou conceive it? It is a rest eternal; a rest that “remaineth.” Here, my best joys bear “mortal” on their brow; my fair flowers fade; my dainty cups are drained to dregs; my sweetest birds fall before Death’s arrows; my most pleasant days are shadowed into nights; and the flood-tides of my bliss subside into ebbs of sorrow; but there, everything is immortal; the harp abides unrusted, the crown unwithered, the eye undimmed, the voice unfaltering, the heart unwavering, and the immortal being is wholly absorbed in infinite delight. Happy day! happy! when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and the Eternal Sabbath shall begin.

# Word Live – 1/18/18

# Be holy, be loving

## **Prepare**

The greatest commandments are to love God and love our neighbours. Think about what that looks like practically in your everyday life.



## **Bible passage Leviticus 19:1–18**

##### **Various Laws**

1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

3 " 'Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God.

4 " 'Do not turn to idols or make gods of cast metal for yourselves. I am the LORD your God.

5 " 'When you sacrifice a fellowship offering to the LORD, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. 6 It shall be eaten on the day you sacrifice it or on the next day; anything left over until the third day must be burned up. 7 If any of it is eaten on the third day, it is impure and will not be accepted. 8 Whoever eats it will be held responsible because he has desecrated what is holy to the LORD; that person must be cut off from his people.

9 " 'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.

11 " 'Do not steal.   
      " 'Do not lie.   
      " 'Do not deceive one another.

12 " 'Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

13 " 'Do not defraud your neighbor or rob him.   
      " 'Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight.

14 " 'Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD.

15 " 'Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

16 " 'Do not go about spreading slander among your people.   
      " 'Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD.

17 " 'Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt.

18 " 'Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Worshipful God**

The dual themes of Leviticus 19 are God’s holiness and the holiness of his people. Seven times in these 18 verses God reminds his people that he is the Lord (vs 3,4,10,12,14,16,18) and that they are to be holy, reflecting God’s holiness (v 2).

Holiness is to be reflected both in their faithfulness towards God and their fidelity towards their neighbour. Holiness is expressed in their worship of God (vs 1–8). It is revering parents and reverencing the Sabbath (v 3). It is about not worshipping idols (v 4), and offering and consuming sacrifices appropriately (vs 5–8). God is holy and his people are to be holy. How are you doing in pursuing holiness in a Godward direction?

**Caring community**

There is also a horizontal dimension to holiness which is expressed in verses 9–18. Not just worship of God but also love for neighbour. Generosity is illustrated by caring for the poor and the stranger (vs 9,10), and truthfulness demanded in dealings with others (vs 11,12).

God’s people are to care particularly for those under them or worse off (vs 13,14), and treat all with fairness (vs 15,16). They are to be forgiving in their relationships with each other (vs 17,18). How are you doing in pursuing holiness in your relationships with those around you?

## **Respond**

What practical steps can you take today to be loving towards your neighbours? Who can you care for? Who can you be generous to? Who can your forgive?

[Jon Gemmell](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/G-H/3526467.id)

## **Deeper Bible study**

**What is your attitude to people with a begging bowl?**

Most of the laws in this chapter come into the category of moral laws – and some immediately catch the eye. These are the ones that have to do with care for the most vulnerable members of society: the poor and the refugee (vs 9,10), the labourer on minimum wage (v 13b), those with physical disabilities (v 14), the female slave ([vs 20–22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A20%E2%80%9322&version=NIVUK)) and the aged ([v 32](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A32&version=NIVUK)).

It has been said that when we measure the well-being of a nation we normally look at the financial and economic indicators, but for the Creator of the universe what matters much more is the quality of life of its most vulnerable citizens. This is illustrated by God’s verdict on Israel at the time of Amos. Evidently, the economy then was booming and, as is often the case, the rich got richer and the poor poorer. The common practice was in direct contravention of the laws in Leviticus 19: ‘skimping on the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat’ ([Amos 8:5b,6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Amos+8%3A5b-6&version=NIVUK)).

How do we measure up in our nation? What is our role as people who seek to honour the Lord in the way we live? ‘The poor you will always have with you’, Jesus famously predicted ([Matthew 26:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26%3A11&version=NIVUK)) – and in our days we have the poor in plenty. Our daily news indicates that poverty keeps on multiplying, especially as wars and other natural or man-made disasters devastate communities in near or distant lands. It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the scale of the problem, but where there’s a will there’s a way. We can always do our own little bit – and even this does make a real difference in the end.

[Emmanuel Oladipo](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## **Human rights and responsibilities**

**Human rights**

Almost every day there is a news story involving human rights. When we experience something that challenges us or makes us feel uncomfortable we often complain that it ‘infringes our human rights’.   
  
From the Magna Carta to the American Constitution to the European Convention on Human Rights, it’s easy to assume that there is something absolute about the right to freedom.  
  
**Human responsibility**

In fact, the Bible says very little about our rights, certainly not in the context of any absolutes. It does say a lot about our responsibilities – our responsibilities to one another within our families, our communities, and the whole of our created order. Ultimately, therefore, to our Creator.  
  
**Human freedom**

Living in this biblical way challenges the precepts of the world. We were created to serve and it is only when we fulfil our calling that we can become truly free**.**It is not human freedom which is absolute, but rather human responsibility. And the level of freedom we can rightly claim is contingent on the level of responsibility we exercise.   
  
This passage teaches these principles in its typically simple, everyday examples. And the whole of Scripture backs this up.   
  
**Recent relevance**

On 24 March 2009 the Guardian newspaper recorded that Jack Straw, the UK Justice Secretary, wanted to introduce a new ‘Bill of Rights and Responsibilities’. It was not hailed with much enthusiasm by any party in Parliament. It may be something that we as Christians need to look at with some urgency.  
  
[John Fieldsend](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/E-F/3526095.id)

## **Make me holy**

<https://youtu.be/0IqtyNau2Dw>

‘Be holy because I … am holy’ (v 2). Everything flows from this: the self-revelation of God as the Holy One.   
  
It’s easy, reading a chapter like this, to believe that holiness is a matter of keeping rules. But this chapter is more like a spring, bursting forth from God’s declaration about himself, in which holiness seeps into every area of life.  
  
So, even this far back in the Old Testament, what holiness is becomes clear: holiness is being like God. It’s not proper moral conduct nor is it separation from an unholy world (though both these ideas are contained within the big picture of holiness).   
  
From our new covenant perspective then, holiness is being like Jesus. So, of course, it begins on the inside. The actions commanded in today’s passage can only flow from a heart which has had selfishness and covetousness cut out of it, replaced by love and generosity toward God and neighbour.  
  
Make this prayer your own today.  
  
Richard England

# Today in the Word – 1/18/18

# Calling: Growing to Maturity

[**Ephesians 4:14–16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:14–16)

14Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Did you know medical research supports this idea? Specifically, one recent study found that eating fruits and vegetables with white flesh, such as apples, pears, bananas, and cauliflower, may protect against strokes. The white flesh contains beneficial chemicals that in the study lowered the risk of stroke by 52 percent.

Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.Ephesians 4:15

Righteous knowledge is key to spiritual health. Verse 14 in today’s reading begins a contrast by describing bad spiritual health, or immaturity. It’s like being a baby—helpless, ignorant, and completely dependent. It’s also like being a small boat in a storm, one that cannot hold its own and is at the mercy of the waves (see James 1:6). Finally, it’s like being a loose piece of paper being blown about in a windstorm. The danger in each case is bad or deceitful teaching that misleads those who do not have an accurate understanding of salvation and God’s plan and purposes in it. Immature believers are weak, gullible, unstable, confused, and easily led astray.

Verse 15 finishes the contrast by describing spiritual maturity. It’s like being a grown-up, able to stand on one’s own two feet. It’s about the ability to speak the truth in love to one another and thus to grow together. Mature believers are wise, loving, and submissive to Christ, and they embrace mutual responsibility within the body. Their faith is strong.

The church stands firm when it understands who Christ is and what He did. This doesn’t mean growth is something we “do,” for it comes from the Head, Christ (v. 16). We each definitely have a responsibility to do our part, but the power to do it and the glory for the results belong to Christ alone.

### **Apply the Word**

As followers of Christ, we’re to be growing in our understanding of who Christ is and what He did and in our understanding of scriptural truths and doctrines. In what ways are you currently seeking to learn in this area? It’s part of loving God with your mind! Remember, spiritual growth should be a community or relational endeavor.

### **Pray with Us**

Remember in your prayers Greg Thornton, senior vice president of Media. The goal of Moody Publishers and Moody Radio is to reach the world for Christ; please pray for Greg as he seeks to further this mission.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/18/18

# Dealing with Delay



**Read:** [**Genesis 45:1–8**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+45%3A1%E2%80%938)

### **Joseph Makes Himself Known**

45 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, “Have everyone leave my presence!” So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. 2And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh’s household heard about it.

3Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

4Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! 5And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. 6For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. 7But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+45%3A1%E2%80%938" \l "fen-NIV-1366a" \o "See footnote a)]

8“So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 45:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+45%3A1%E2%80%938#en-NIV-1366) Or save you as a great band of survivors

So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. [Genesis 45:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+45%3A8)

A global computer system outage causes widespread flight cancellations, stranding hundreds of thousands of passengers at airports. During a winter storm, multiple auto accidents close major highways. The person who promised to send a reply “right away” has failed to do so. Delays can often produce anger and frustration, but as followers of Jesus, we have the privilege of looking to Him for help.

One of the Bible’s great examples of patience is Joseph, who was sold to slave traders by his jealous brothers, falsely accused by his employer’s wife, and imprisoned in Egypt. “But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him” (Genesis 39:20–21). Years later, when Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dreams, he was made second in command in Egypt (ch. 41).

[Confidence in God enables us to live out our faith patiently.](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Confidence+in+God+enables+us+to+live+out+our+faith+patiently.&via=ourdailybread&hashtags=patience&url=https://odb.org/mEV/)

The most remarkable fruit of his patience occurred when his brothers came to buy grain during a famine. “I am your brother Joseph,” he told them, “the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. . . . So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God”  (45:4–5, 8).

In all our delays, brief or long, may we, like Joseph, gain patience, perspective, and peace as we trust in the Lord.

Father in heaven, in all of our delays may we trust Your faithful hand of guidance and experience Your presence with us in every situation.

Confidence in God enables us to live out our faith patiently.

By [David C. McCasland](https://odb.org/author/davidcmccasland/)

#### **INSIGHT**

When we are going through a difficult season, we can find comfort and encouragement by looking at how God worked in Joseph’s difficult—even seemingly hopeless—circumstances. We learn to ask the questions: Why does God have me here? What does He have in store for me or want to do through me? Joseph came to realize that it was God who had placed him in his situation (see Genesis 45:8; 50:20).

We also learn something about God’s timing. It only takes a few moments for us to read Joseph’s story, but his trial lasted for years. His imprisonment may have been to fulfill God’s purposes (interpreting Pharaoh’s dreams) but the timing was also God’s.

How does knowing that God is in control help you as you wait for Him to work?

For more about Joseph see Overcoming Life’s Challenges at [discoveryseries.org/q0715](https://discoveryseries.org/q0715).

[J.R. Hudberg](https://odb.org/author/jrhudberg/)

# God Calling – 1/18/18

# Faith - Works

Pray daily for Faith. It is My Gift.

It is your only requisite for the accomplishment of mighty deeds. Certainly you have to work, you have to pray, but upon Faith alone depends the answer to your prayers - your works.

I give it you in response to your prayer, because it is the necessary weapon for you to possess for the dispersion of evil - the overcoming of all adverse conditions, and the accomplishment of all good in your lives, and then you having Faith, give it back to Me. It is the envelope in which every request to Me should be placed.

And yet "Faith without works is dead." So you need works, too, to feed your Faith in Me. As you seek to do, you feel your helplessness. You then turn to Me. In knowing Me, your faith grows - and that faith is all you need for My Power to work.

"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him:  but the just shall live by his faith." - Habakkuk 2:4

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/19/18

# Vision And Darkness

# Vision and Darkness

An horror of great darkness fell upon him. — [Genesis 15:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+15%3A12)

Whenever God gives a vision to a saint, He puts him, as it were, in the shadow of His hand, and the saint’s duty is to be still and listen. There is a darkness which comes from excess of light, and then is the time to listen. Genesis 16 is an illustration of listening to good advice when it is dark instead of waiting for God to send the light. When God gives a vision and darkness follows, wait. God will make you in accordance with the vision He has given if you will wait His time. Never try and help God fulfil His word. Abraham went through thirteen years of silence, but in those years all self-sufficiency was destroyed; there was no possibility left of relying on common-sense ways. Those years of silence were a time of discipline, not of displeasure. Never pump up joy and confidence, but stay upon God (cf. Isaiah 50:10,11).

Have I any confidence in the flesh? Or have I got beyond all confidence in myself and in men and women of God; in books and prayers and ecstasies; and is my confidence placed now in God Himself, not in His blessings? "I am the Almighty God" – El-Shaddai, the Father-Mother God. The one thing for which we are all being disciplined is to know that God is real. As soon as God becomes real, other people become shadows. Nothing that other saints do or say can ever perturb the one who is built on God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

I have no right to say I believe in God unless I order my life as under His all-seeing Eye. Disciples Indeed, 385 L

# CCEL – 1/19/18

**Serving the Lord with all humility of mind.**—[ACTS 20:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.20.html" \l "Acts.20.19)

Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.—I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man, . . . not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.—When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Our rejoicing is this, . . . that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.—We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

[Matt. 20:26-28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.20.html" \l "Matt.20.26).[Gal. 6:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.3). -[Rom. 12:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.3). -[Luke 17:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.17.html" \l "Luke.17.10).[II Cor. 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.12). -[II Cor. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html" \l "iiCor.4.7).

“I sought him, but I found him not.” [Song of Solomon 3:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.3.html" \l "Song.3.1)

Tell me where you lost the company of Christ, and I will tell you the most likely place to find him. Have you lost Christ in the closet by restraining prayer? Then it is there you must seek and find him. Did you lose Christ by sin? You will find Christ in no other way but by the giving up of the sin, and seeking by the Holy Spirit to mortify the member in which the lust doth dwell. Did you lose Christ by neglecting the Scriptures? You must find Christ in the Scriptures. It is a true proverb, “Look for a thing where you dropped it, it is there.” So look for Christ where you lost him, for he has not gone away. But it is hard work to go back for Christ. Bunyan tells us, the pilgrim found the piece of the road back to the Arbour of Ease, where he lost his roll, the hardest he had ever travelled. Twenty miles onward is easier than to go one mile back for the lost evidence.

Take care, then, when you find your Master, to cling close to him. But how is it you have lost him? One would have thought you would never have parted with such a precious friend, whose presence is so sweet, whose words are so comforting, and whose company is so dear to you! How is it that you did not watch him every moment for fear of losing sight of him? Yet, since you have let him go, what a mercy that you are seeking him, even though you mournfully groan, “O that I knew where I might find him!” Go on seeking, for it is dangerous to be without thy Lord. Without Christ you are like a sheep without its shepherd; like a tree without water at its roots; like a sere leaf in the tempest—not bound to the tree of life. With thine whole heart seek him, and he will be found of thee: only give thyself thoroughly up to the search, and verily, thou shalt yet discover him to thy joy and gladness.

# Word Live – 1/19/18

# Come on and celebrate

## **Prepare**

How good is your memory? How easily do the truths about God flee from your mind?



## **Bible passage Leviticus 23:1–14**

1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.

##### The Sabbath

3 " 'There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD.

##### The Passover and Unleavened Bread

4 " 'These are the LORD's appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times: 5 The LORD's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. 6 On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. 7 On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. 8 For seven days present an offering made to the LORD by fire. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.' "

##### **Firstfruits**

9 The LORD said to Moses, 10 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. 11 He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. 12 On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the LORD a lamb a year old without defect, 13 together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil—an offering made to the LORD by fire, a pleasing aroma—and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine. 14 You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Provider God**

It is very easy to forget. The memory of things quickly fade and important things drift into the background. God’s people are prone to forgetting important things, particularly who their God is. Leviticus 23 details the feast days that the Israelites were to celebrate in the regular rhythm of life: reminders for the people to stop them forgetting.

The Sabbath (v 3): a regular reminder that God was their creator. In not working on the seventh day, the people declared their trust in God to provide, and looked forward to a greater rest that was to come. Remember God as the creator of the world.

**Remembering redemption**

The Passover (vs 4–8): celebrated once a year, reminding them of their rescue from Egypt. They remembered how God saved his people from the death of the firstborn and then rescued them from Egypt. Remember God who has rescued you from sin and death through Jesus.

The Feast of the Firstfruits (vs 9–14): reminded God’s people that he is the one who provides. That it was God who gave them the land and caused its harvest to ripen. It provided an opportunity for the people to give back to God in worship some of what he had provided for them. Remember God who gives all good gifts.

## **Respond**

Thank God for who he is: the creator of the world. Thank God for what he has done: rescuing you from sin and death. Praise God for what he gives: providing everything we need.

[Jon Gemmell](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/G-H/3526467.id)

## **Deeper Bible study**

**Jewish religion is full of festivals, with exuberant celebrations. How about ours?**

This chapter speaks of seven celebrations, each with its own specific purpose for the children of Israel – and all of them have some significance for us today. Although our reading includes only three of them, this note treats all seven for completion.

**The Sabbath** (v 3) was appointed at creation, as the day of rest. We should therefore dedicate one day in seven for rest and for worship – and not for odd jobs! **The Passover and Unleavened Bread** (vs 4–8) celebrate when the angel of destruction passed over the Israelites. They ate unleavened bread, but we celebrate the body and the blood of Jesus Christ in the bread and the wine of Holy Communion. **Firstfruits** (vs 9–14) takes place in spring, marking the beginning of the harvest. We may not belong to agrarian communities, but God sustains us all with the bounty of the earth. **The Festival of Weeks** ([vs 15–22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A15%E2%80%9322&version=NIVUK)) comes fifty days later, when the harvest is well and truly gathered in. It is celebrated by offerings of the new grain. It is also called the Feast of Pentecost (from the Greek pentēkostē, for ‘fiftieth’), which we too celebrate as marking the first dramatic ingathering of believers from all nations when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples. **The Festival of Trumpets** ([vs 23–25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A23%E2%80%9325&version=NIVUK)) comes ten days before the Day of Atonement and two weeks before the Feast of Tabernacles. It proclaims a solemn preparation for these memorable celebrations in the story of the people of God. **The Day of Atonement** ([vs 26–32](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A26%E2%80%9332&version=NIVUK)), like the Passover, marks God’s redemption of his people. **The Festival of Tabernacles** ([vs 33–36](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A33%E2%80%9336&version=NIVUK)) tells the story of Israel’s forty years of wanderings in the desert after their liberation from Egypt.

Praise God for the Deliverer who ‘tabernacled’ among us, pilgrims and wanderers in the world’s wilderness.

[Emmanuel Oladipo](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## **It’s party time!**

**The pilgrim festivals**

These are the Lord’s appointed feasts. It has been said that Israel does not keep the Feasts – the Feasts have kept Israel. The regular celebration of the great acts of God which created and moulded its identity and purpose has kept Israel alive through countless adversities through the millennia.

Within the multitude of festivals which mean that a Jew can party pretty well most weeks of the year, there are three main ones, called the Pilgrim Festivals, which we shall look at today and tomorrow.

We shall look at each festival from three viewpoints:

● Its historical significance

● Its agricultural significance

● Its significance for Jesus, and therefore what it can mean for us as we worship him.

**Passover**

Passover celebrates Israel’s deliverance from slavery in Egypt. This was when the angel of God’s judgement killed the firstborn of Egypt but passed over the dwellings of Israel – providing they had sacrificed the Passover lamb and sprinkled its blood on the doorframes of their houses.

This meal was to be eaten in great haste because they were about to be ejected from the land. They were to eat, packed and dressed for a rapid departure, hence there was no time to let the bread rise in the cooking.

The annual celebration of Passover is the spiritual DNA of Israel. The Passover celebrations bring the past into present. These things did not just happen to our ancestors – we were there with them.

In his celebration of the Passover, Jesus made a direct link from this deliverance from slavery in Egypt to the even greater deliverance of his people from their slavery to sin. Jesus linked his celebration of Passover with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

**Spring harvest festival**

But as well as the commemoration of this unique spectacular one-off deliverance, Israel has incorporated the celebration of God’s faithfulness in providing the early spring harvest of barley. The first barley loaf is offered as a wave offering, a thanksgiving to the Lord for his faithfulness in his unspectacular but faithful provision of their daily needs.

The command here is especially related to their first springtime in the Promised Land, and so linked the everyday blessing with the miraculous – both come from God.

In agricultural communities the rhythm of the seasons is felt more than in many of our more urban and industrialised societies. For Israel the cycle of sowing and reaping was tied in to the celebration of God’s goodness.

Harvest language is used in Scripture to describe the end of the age. This is a time of judgement and separation (see [Matthew 3:12; 13:30](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+3%3A12%3B+13%3A30&version=NIVUK)). Just as in the agrarian community, the grain and the fruit are gathered in with rejoicing, so the ‘harvest’ of the gospel – those who have found life in Christ – come home with great rejoicing.

[John Fieldsend](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/E-F/3526095.id) and [John Grayston](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/G-H/3526467.id)

## **Vox pops: Sabbath rest**

<https://youtu.be/D-MKrs88jtY>

Do you remember the days before Sunday trading? Whether you liked it or not, Sundays certainly felt different to the rest of the week – a time for family, a time for a gentler pace, a time for gardening, a time for God…?   
  
We asked some ordinary people if it’s important to keep one day special and if rest is more than about having a day off, and this is what they said.

# Today in the Word – 1/19/18

# Calling: Putting Off the Old, Putting On the New

[**Ephesians 4:17–24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:17–24)

### **Instructions for Christian Living**

17So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

20That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

When the gospel arrived in Ephesus and Paul planted a church there, people stopped worshiping the pagan goddess Artemis, or Diana, at her famous temple. This had an economic impact that led to a riot. In addition, many who had followed occult practices dramatically chose to abandon their old lives by burning their scrolls of magic and sorcery. It is estimated that these were worth 50,000 days’ wages (see Acts 19).

Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.Ephesians 4:24

These actions were the results of the Ephesians’ commitment to putting off the old and putting on the new. Moving from death to life and growing from immaturity to maturity require this kind of radical change (see 2 Cor. 5:17). “Putting off” and “putting on” indicate decisive choices and actions. An entirely transformed way of life is needed!

To put off the old means to stop living like unbelieving Gentiles, that is, like pagans (vv. 17–19). Their thinking is ignorant and futile because they’ve suppressed the truth. Their hearts are hard and spiritually insensitive. They are far from the Lord. As a result, their behavior is given over to sensuality and self-indulgence. Impurity and greed characterize their lives. Wrong thinking leads to wrong actions.

To put on the new, by contrast, means to live in accordance with the truth of the gospel (vv. 20–24). Believers’ thinking is aligned with the truth of Christ—or more exactly, is in the process of becoming so. Our lives as maturing disciples of Christ should be characterized by specific qualities and actions that add up to a righteous “way of life,” which has the gospel at its center (Col. 3:9–10).

Our old selves were corrupt and deceived, but our new selves understand that we are created to be holy and Christlike. Right thinking leads to right actions.

### **Apply the Word**

One classic book on the topic of discipleship is The Pursuit of Holiness by Jerry Bridges, who writes in an insightful, down-to-earth manner. Your Sunday school class or small group might benefit from studying this topic together, or you could host a book discussion group and invite friends to join you in learning more about holiness.

### **Pray with Us**

Let’s ask for God’s leading and direction for Moody Radio’s Programming team as they work on Moody Radio’s broadcasts for all of our friends who listen around the country. Pray for Dan Craig, Jon Gauger, and Judy Kron.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/19/18

# By the Spirit’s Power



**Read:** [**Zechariah 4:1–7**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zechariah+4%3A1%E2%80%937)

### The Gold Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees

4 Then the angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep. 2He asked me, “What do you see?”

I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. 3Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.”

4I asked the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”

5He answered, “Do you not know what these are?”

“No, my lord,” I replied.

6So he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.

7“What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘God bless it! God bless it!’”

What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. [Zechariah 4:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zechariah+4%3A7)

What do you do when there is a mountain in your way? The story of Dashrath Manjhi can inspire us. When his wife died because he was unable to get her to the hospital to receive urgent medical care, Manjhi did what seemed impossible. He spent twenty-two years chiseling a massive gap in a mountain so other villagers could get to the local hospital to receive the medical care they needed. Before he died, the government of India celebrated him for his achievement.

Rebuilding the temple must have looked impossible to Zerubbabel, one of the leaders of Israel who returned from exile. The people were discouraged, faced opposition from their enemies, and lacked resources or a big army. But God sent Zechariah to remind Zerubbabel that the task would take something more powerful than military strength, individual power, or man-made resources. It would take the Spirit’s power (Zechariah 4:6). With the assurance of divine aid, Zerubbabel trusted that God would level any mountain of difficulty that stood in the way of rebuilding the temple and restoring the community (v. 7).

[We have two options: rely on our own strength or trust the Spirit’s power.](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=We+have+two+options%3A+rely+on+our+own+strength+or+trust+the+Spirit%E2%80%99s+power.&via=ourdailybread&hashtags=trust&url=https://odb.org/mEW/)

What do we do when there is a “mountain” before us? We have two options: rely on our own strength or trust the Spirit’s power. When we trust His power, He will either level the mountain or give us the strength and endurance to climb over it.

What challenges stand in your way? How will you trust the power of God's Spirit in your life? Share it on [Facebook.com/ourdailybread](https://facebook.com/ourdailybread).

Human power is inadequate to accomplish God’s purposes.

By [Marvin Williams](https://odb.org/author/marvinwilliams/)

#### **INSIGHT**

What keeps us from finishing the work entrusted to us? Eighteen years had passed since Cyrus, king of Persia, told Jewish captives of Babylon to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple of their God (Ezra 6:3,14). Now the prophet Zechariah urged completion. This temple, like the Messiah who would someday enter its courts, represented the heart of God for the world. Anything done for His honor—and for the good of others—is done in His Spirit.

[Mart DeHaan](https://odb.org/author/martdehaan-2/)

# God Calling – 1/19/18

# Love Anticipates

Lord, I will seek Thee.

The Anticipatory Love of God is a thing mortals seldom realize - Dismiss the thought of a grudging God.

None ever sought Me in vain. I wait, wait with a hungry longing to be called upon; and I, who have already seen your hearts' needs before you cried upon Me, before perhaps you were conscious of those needs yourself, I am already preparing the answer.

It is like a Mother, who is setting aside suitable gifts for her daughter's wedding, before Love even has come into the daughter's life.

The Anticipatory Love of God is a thing mortals seldom realize. Dwell on this thought. Dismiss from your minds the thought of a grudging God, who had to be petitioned with sighs and tears and much speaking before reluctantly He loosed the desired treasures. Man's thoughts of Me need revolutionizing.

Try and see a Mother preparing birthday or Christmas delights for her child - the while her Mother-heart sings: "Will she not love that? How she will love this!" and anticipates the rapture of her child, her own heart full of the tenderest joy. Where did the Mother learn all this preparation - joy? From Me - a faint echo this of My preparation - joy.

Try to see this as plans unfold of My preparing. It means much to Me to be understood, and the understanding of Me will bring great joy to you.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/20/18

# Are You Fresh For Everything?

# Are You Fresh for Everything?

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. — [John 3:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+3%3A3)

Sometimes we are fresh for a prayer meeting but not fresh for cleaning boots!

Being born again of the Spirit is an unmistakable work of God, as mysterious as the wind, as surprising as God Himself. We do not know where it begins, it is hidden away in the depths of our personal life. Being born again from above is a perennial, perpetual and eternal beginning; a freshness all the time in thinking and in talking and in living, the continual surprise of the life of God. Staleness is an indication of something out of joint with God – "I must do this thing or it will never be done." That is the first sign of staleness. Are we freshly born this minute or are we stale, raking in our minds for something to do? Freshness does not come from obedience but from the Holy Spirit; obedience keeps us in the light as God is in the light.

Guard jealously your relationship to God. Jesus prayed "that they may be one, even as we are one" – nothing between. Keep all the life perennially open to Jesus Christ, don’t pretend with Him. Are you drawing your life from any other source than God Himself? If you are depending upon anything but Him, you will never know when He is gone.

Being born of the Spirit means much more than we generally take it to mean. It gives us a new vision and keeps us absolutely fresh for everything by the perennial supply of the life of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The great point of Abraham’s faith in God was that he was prepared to do anything for God.  
Not Knowing Whither

# CCEL – 1/20/18

**His name shall be called Wonderful.**—[ISA. 9:6.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.9.html" \l "Isa.9.6)

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.—Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.—JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.—God . . . hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.—Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet.—He had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself . . . KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.—What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

[John 1:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.14). -[Psa. 138:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.138.html" \l "Ps.138.2).[Matt. 1:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.1.html" \l "Matt.1.23). -[Matt. 1:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.1.html" \l "Matt.1.21).[John 5:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.5.html" \l "John.5.23). -[Phi. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.9). -[Eph. 1:21,22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.21). -[Rev. 19:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.19.html" \l "Rev.19.12),[16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.19.html" \l "Rev.19.16).[Job 37:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.37.html" \l "Job.37.23). -[Prov. 30:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.30.html" \l "Prov.30.4).

“Abel was a keeper of sheep.” [Genesis 4:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.4.html" \l "Gen.4.2)

As a shepherd Abel sanctified his work to the glory of God, and offered a sacrifice of blood upon his altar, and the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering. This early type of our Lord is exceedingly clear and distinct. Like the first streak of light which tinges the east at sunrise, it does not reveal everything, but it clearly manifests the great fact that the sun is coming. As we see Abel, a shepherd and yet a priest, offering a sacrifice of sweet smell unto God, we discern our Lord, who brings before his Father a sacrifice to which Jehovah ever hath respect. Abel was hated by his brother—hated without a cause; and even so was the Saviour: the natural and carnal man hated the accepted man in whom the Spirit of grace was found, and rested not until his blood had been shed. Abel fell, and sprinkled his altar and sacrifice with his own blood, and therein sets forth the Lord Jesus slain by the enmity of man while serving as a priest before the Lord. “The good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.” Let us weep over him as we view him slain by the hatred of mankind, staining the horns of his altar with his own blood. Abel’s blood speaketh. “The Lord said unto Cain, ‘The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.’” The blood of Jesus hath a mighty tongue, and the import of its prevailing cry is not vengeance but mercy. It is precious beyond all preciousness to stand at the altar of our good Shepherd! to see him bleeding there as the slaughtered priest, and then to hear his blood speaking peace to all his flock, peace in our conscience, peace between Jew and Gentile, peace between man and his offended Maker, peace all down the ages of eternity for blood-washed men. Abel is the first shepherd in order of time, but our hearts shall ever place Jesus first in order of excellence. Thou great Keeper of the sheep, we the people of thy pasture bless thee with our whole hearts when we see thee slain for us.

# Word Live – 1/20/18

# Pressing the reset button

## **Prepare**

What would it feel like to be free, forgiven and have all your debts cancelled?



## **Bible passage Leviticus 25:8–17**

##### **The Year of Jubilee**

8 “‘Count off seven sabbath years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbath years amount to a period of forty-nine years. 9 Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. 10 Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. 11 The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. 12 For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields.

13 “‘In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to their own property.

14 “‘If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other. 15 You are to buy from your own people on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee. And they are to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. 16 When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what is really being sold to you is the number of crops. 17 Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God.

## **Explore the Bible**

**God of freedom**

The Year of Jubilee was a remarkable year in the life of God’s people. It was a year where the economy was reset. A year where debts were forgiven, property was returned and the land rested from farming. It was a year of liberty, redemption and restoration.

**Jubilee Jesus**

The Year of Jubilee was to be a very special year indeed. In [Luke 4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+4&version=NIVUK), in Jesus’ first recorded sermon, Jesus quotes from [Isaiah 61](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+61&version=NIVUK), and at the end of that quote declares himself to be the fulfilment of the year of Jubilee, the year of the Lord’s favour.

It is now ultimately in Jesus that we will be forgiven of our debts for ever and be fully restored.

## **Respond**

Think about how you would feel as an Israelite who had fallen into poverty. Someone who had sold all their land, sold themselves into slavery and had no hope of getting back on your feet. Think about how you would feel when the Year of Jubilee came around, and thank God that in Jesus you have been given so much more than even them.

[Jon Gemmell](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/G-H/3526467.id)

## **Deeper Bible study**

**Are you a land owner or a land debtor?**

There is a national social and economic reset at Jubilee. Bad debts are written off, indentured servants are set free and sold family lands are repossessed. This process re-establishes relative equity in the system, so that the rich do not continue getting richer while the poor get for ever poorer. It underlines the principle that all Israelites are free to live on the land graciously provided to them by God and none should be subjected to perpetual exploitation. Wealth in the form of goods, cattle or cash is not redistributed.

‘Land is not part of the wealth we inherit from our ancestors but part of the debt we owe to our descendants’, according to an African proverb. Not surprisingly, its use and disposition are carefully regulated by God’s law. For example, intercropping, which could easily exhaust the soil, was forbidden ([Leviticus 19:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A19&version=NIVUK)). Here we see how the land should be made to lie fallow and rest every seventh year, and twice the period at Jubilee ([vs 1–12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+25%3A1%E2%80%9312&version=NIVUK)). God always keeps his side of the bargain: if Israel obeyed, there would be enough food produced in preceding years to feed the nation during the years of fallow ([vs 18–22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+25%3A18%E2%80%9322&version=NIVUK)).

Among the most successful efforts to live out these principles in modern times has been the Jubilee 2000 movement. Based on the teachings of this chapter, it campaigned for the cancellation of debts owed to rich nations as we entered the new millennium. It was argued that these debts were unjust and they were not really payable. At its 1999 meeting in Cologne, the G8 countries agreed to cancel debts worth $100 billion. Jubilee 2000 has subsequently evolved to become the Jubilee Debt Campaign, which continues to champion the cause of specific indebted countries such as Greece1. Are there such Christian initiatives you could support?

[Emmanuel Oladipo](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

1 <http://jubileedebt.org.uk/countries>

# Today in the Word – 1/20/18

# Practice: Righteousness in Daily Life

[**Ephesians 4:25–32**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:25–32)

25Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26“In your anger do not sin”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:25%E2%80%9332" \l "fen-NIV-29299a" \o "See footnote a)]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27and do not give the devil a foothold. 28Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

29Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 4:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204:25%E2%80%9332#en-NIV-29299) Psalm 4:4 (see Septuagint)

A 2016 survey by LifeWay Research revealed that 67 percent of Americans admit they’re sinners. Of that total, only 5 percent are okay with it, which indicates that the rest want to change their lives. But just 28 percent say they rely on Jesus to overcome sin. The remaining 34 percent are working on being less sinful and improving themselves on their own.

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.Ephesians 4:30

This is hopeless, for salvation is by grace through faith, not works. Victory over sin comes only through the blood of Christ. Today’s passage gives specific examples of righteousness in the daily lives of followers of Jesus—qualities to be cultivated, actions to be taken, commands to be obeyed.

Two examples come from the realm of speech or words (vv. 25, 29). We’re to speak truthfully, not to lie. We’ve been liberated from ignorance and deceit and must instead speak the truth to one another in love. We’re also to engage in edifying talk, not unwholesome conversation. To edify means to communicate in a way that benefits the listener. This implies attentiveness, discernment, and care.

Another example is not to let anger become sin (vv. 26–27). As Christians, we should take care of issues as soon as possible, because to let them fester could give the devil a foothold in our lives and make things worse. Yet another example is to work hard and diligently, not to be lazy or dishonest (v. 28).

Additional examples of vices to put off are found in verse 31, and additional examples of virtues to put on are in verse 32. The overarching idea is not to do anything that would grieve the Holy Spirit and oppose His sanctifying work in our lives (v. 30). Sin saddens God, for it means we’re choosing against His grace.

### **Apply the Word**

The exhortation to diligent work is not so that we can accumulate material blessings but so that we can share generously with others (v. 28). This runs counter to American culture, in which we tend to feel, “It’s my money, I can do with it whatever I like.” If needed, seek Christ’s help to “put on the new”!

### **Pray with Us**

Please continue to include Moody Radio’s Programming team in your prayers. Chris Papendick, Dan Anderson, Kurt Goff, and Stephen Johnson serve the Lord with their skills, expertise, and diligent work at Moody Radio.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/20/18

# My Help!



**Read:** [**Psalm 121**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+121)

#### **A song of ascents.**

1I lift up my eyes to the mountains—  
    where does my help come from?  
2My help comes from the Lord,  
    the Maker of heaven and earth.

3He will not let your foot slip—  
    he who watches over you will not slumber;  
4indeed, he who watches over Israel  
    will neither slumber nor sleep.

5The Lord watches over you—  
    the Lord is your shade at your right hand;  
6the sun will not harm you by day,  
    nor the moon by night.

7The Lord will keep you from all harm—  
    he will watch over your life;  
8the Lord will watch over your coming and going  
    both now and forevermore.

My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. [Psalm 121:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+121%3A2)

For decades the renowned Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir has blessed multitudes through their soul-refreshing gospel songs. One example is their recording from Psalm 121 titled “My Help.”

Psalm 121 begins with a personal confession of faith in the Lord who brought all things into existence, and He was the source of the psalmist’s help (vv. 1–2). Just what did this mean? Stability (v. 3), around-the-clock care (vv. 3–4), constant presence and protection (vv. 5–6), and preservation from all kinds of evil for time and eternity (vv. 7–8).

[Father, thank You that You are our source of help.](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Father%2C+thank+You+that+You+are+our+source+of+help.&via=ourdailybread&url=https://odb.org/mEX/)

Taking their cues from Scripture, God’s people through the ages have identified the Lord as their source of “help” through their songs. My own worship experience includes lifting my voice with others who sang a soulful rendition of Charles Wesley’s, “Father, I stretch my hands to Thee, no other help I know; if Thou withdraw Thyself from me, ah! whither shall I go.” The great reformer Martin Luther got it right when he penned the words, “A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing; our helper He amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.”

Do you feel alone, forsaken, abandoned, confused? Ponder the lyrics of Psalm 121. Allow these words to fill your soul with faith and courage. You’re not alone, so don’t try to do life on your own. Rather, rejoice in the earthly and eternal care of God as demonstrated in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. And whatever the next steps, take them with His help.

Father, how grateful we are that Scripture and song remind us that You are our source of help. Help me to not forget that this day.

The Maker of the universe is the helper of God’s people!

By [Arthur Jackson](https://odb.org/author/arthurjackson/)

#### **INSIGHT**

All male Jews were to come to the temple to observe three annual feasts (Deuteronomy 16:16). As the pilgrims made their way up the highlands where Jerusalem is located, they sang from a collection of songs known as the “pilgrim psalms” (Psalms 120–134). The Hebrew title marks these psalms as “songs of ascents.” Psalm 121, the second of the pilgrim psalms, has been called “The Traveler’s Psalm.” The psalmist addresses our need for safety and protection as we journey through life, assuring us that our God will help us and keep us safe. In Psalm 124, David continues this same theme, deliberating the possible disastrous outcomes “if the Lord had not been on our side” (vv. 1–2). Undeniably, if God does not help us, we will not survive! (vv. 3–5). Concluding his deliberations, David assures us that God has not abandoned us. God is our defender and deliverer. With confidence we can say, “My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth” (121:2).

How does Psalm 121 help you when you feel threatened by life’s journey?

Sim Kay Tee

# God Calling – 1/20/18

# At One With God

To dwell in thought on the material, when once you live in Me - is to call it into being.

One with Me. I and My Father are one. One with the Lord of the whole Universe!

Could human aspiration reach higher? Could man's demands transcend this? One with Me.

If you realize your high privilege, you have only to think and immediately the object of your thought is called into being. Indeed, well may I have said, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

To dwell in thought on the material, when once you live in Me - is to call it into being. So you must be careful only to think of and desire that which will help, not hinder, your spiritual growth. The same law operates too on the spiritual plane.

Think Love, and Love surrounds you, and all about whom you think. Think thoughts of ill-will and ill surrounds you, and those about whom you think. Think health - health comes. The physical reflects the mental and spiritual.

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." - Proverbs 23:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/21/18

# Recall What God Remembers

# Recall What God Remembers

I remember . . . the kindness of thy youth. — [Jeremiah 2:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Jeremiah+2%3A2)

Am I as spontaneously kind to God as I used to be, or am I only expecting God to be kind to me? Am I full of the little things that cheer His heart over me, or am I whimpering because things are going hardly with me? There is no joy in the soul that has forgotten what God prizes. It is a great thing to think that Jesus Christ has need of me – "Give Me to drink." How much kindness have I shown Him this past week? Have I been kind to His reputation in my life?

God is saying to His people – You are not in love with Me now, but I remember the time when you were – "I remember . . . the love of thine espousals." Am I as full of the extravagance of love to Jesus Christ as I was in the beginning, when I went out of my way to prove my devotion to Him? Does He find me recalling the time when I did not care for anything but Himself? Am I there now, or have I become wise over loving Him? Am I so in love with Him that I take no account of where I go? or am I watching for the respect due to me; weighing how much service I ought to give?

If, as I recall what God remembers about me, I find He is not what He used to be to me, let it produce shame and humiliation, because that shame will bring the godly sorrow that works repentance.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We have no right to judge where we should be put, or to have preconceived notions as to what God is fitting us for. God engineers everything; wherever He puts us, our one great aim is to pour out a whole-hearted devotion to Him in that particular work. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” My Utmost for His Highest, April 23, 773 L

# CCEL – 1/21/18

**Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it.**—[JOHN 15:2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.2)

He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

We glory in tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.—If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.

[Mal. 3:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mal.3.html" \l "Mal.3.2).[Rom. 5:3-5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.3). -[Heb. 12:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.7),[11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.11).

“And so all Israel shall be saved.” [Romans 11:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.11.html" \l "Rom.11.26)

When Moses sang at the Red Sea, it was his joy to know that all Israel were safe. Not a drop of spray fell from that solid wall until the last of God’s Israel had safely planted his foot on the other side the flood. That done, immediately the floods dissolved into their proper place again, but not till then. Part of that song was, “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed.” In the last time, when the elect shall sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb, it shall be the boast of Jesus, “Of all whom thou hast given me, I have lost none.” In heaven there shall not be a vacant throne.

“For all the chosen race

Shall meet around the throne,

Shall bless the conduct of his grace,

And make his glories known.”

As many as God hath chosen, as many as Christ hath redeemed, as many as the Spirit hath called, as many as believe in Jesus, shall safely cross the dividing sea. We are not all safely landed yet:

“Part of the host have crossed the flood,

And part are crossing now.”

The vanguard of the army has already reached the shore. We are marching through the depths; we are at this day following hard after our Leader into the heart of the sea. Let us be of good cheer: the rear-guard shall soon be where the vanguard already is; the last of the chosen ones shall soon have crossed the sea, and then shall be heard the song of triumph, when all are secure. But oh! if one were absent—oh! if one of his chosen family should be cast away—it would make an everlasting discord in the song of the redeemed, and cut the strings of the harps of paradise, so that music could never be extorted from them.

# Word Live – 1/21/18

# Forever love

## Prepare

Are you a grateful person? Pray that God might make you more thankful.



## **Bible passage Psalm 136**

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.   
       His love endures forever.

2 Give thanks to the God of gods.   
       His love endures forever.

3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords:   
       His love endures forever.

4 to him who alone does great wonders,   
       His love endures forever.

5 who by his understanding made the heavens,   
       His love endures forever.

6 who spread out the earth upon the waters,   
       His love endures forever.

7 who made the great lights—   
       His love endures forever.

8 the sun to govern the day,   
       His love endures forever.

9 the moon and stars to govern the night;   
       His love endures forever.

10 to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt   
       His love endures forever.

11 and brought Israel out from among them   
       His love endures forever.

12 with a mighty hand and outstretched arm;   
       His love endures forever.

13 to him who divided the Red Sea asunder   
       His love endures forever.

14 and brought Israel through the midst of it,   
       His love endures forever.

15 but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea;   
       His love endures forever.

16 to him who led his people through the desert,   
       His love endures forever.

17 who struck down great kings,   
       His love endures forever.

18 and killed mighty kings—   
       His love endures forever.

19 Sihon king of the Amorites   
       His love endures forever.

20 and Og king of Bashan—   
       His love endures forever.

21 and gave their land as an inheritance,   
       His love endures forever.

22 an inheritance to his servant Israel;   
       His love endures forever.

23 to the One who remembered us in our low estate   
       His love endures forever.

24 and freed us from our enemies,   
       His love endures forever.

25 and who gives food to every creature.   
       His love endures forever.

26 Give thanks to the God of heaven.   
       His love endures forever.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Good God**

Psalm 136 is a unique psalm due to its repeated refrain ‘His love endures for ever.’ It is a psalm of thanksgiving that helps us focus our mind on who God is and all that he has done for us.

The psalm moves seamlessly from God’s character – his goodness, sovereignty and uniqueness (vs 1–3) – on to his work of creation (vs 4–6). It then lists God rescuing his people from Egypt (vs 10–16), and his conquering the land for them (vs 17–22), before summarising and concluding (vs 23–28).

**Praising psalm**

We cannot get away from the singular focus of this psalm that we are to be people who perpetually give thanks to God because his loving kindness is everlasting.

If this psalm gives reason enough for Old Testament Israel to give thanks to God, how much more reason do we have, as those who are assured that ‘neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord’ ([Romans 8:38,39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A38-39&version=NIVUK)). This is everlasting steadfast love.

## **Respond**

Take time to list all the reasons you have to be thankful to God, finishing each one with, ‘his love endures for ever.’

[Jon Gemmell](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/G-H/3526467.id)

## **Deeper Bible study**

**‘What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them …?’ (**[**Psalm 8:4, TNIV**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+8%3A4&version=NIVUK)**)**

This timeless song of praise comes from grateful hearts in praise of the God of love and grace. Its constant refrain leads us to imagine that it was sung responsively by the worshipping congregation, with the priests alternating with other worship leaders, in the manner of [Ezra 3:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezra+3%3A11&version=NIVUK).

The opening verses leave us in no doubt as to which God is being addressed. In words that echo [Deuteronomy 10:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+10%3A17&version=NIVUK), he is identified as the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the one who has demonstrated his steadfast love in creation, in the history of his chosen people, Israel, and in his ongoing care for both. How often do we pause to acknowledge the wonders of creation? As our scientific instruments help us discover more and more about the expansive immensity of the universe, we have more reason than generations past to marvel at the understanding (v 5) and the enduring, steadfast love that put it all in place. Joining in this hymn of praise is an opportunity for us to acknowledge to God that both the infinitesimal worlds of nanoparticles and the gargantuan worlds of galaxies are the work of God’s fingers ([Psalm 8:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+8%3A3&version=NIVUK)).

For all this, he is not God at a distance (vs 23–26) but ‘God with us’ ([Matthew 1:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A23&version=NIVUK)). He is intricately involved in the life of his peoples and creatures. He chose one nation as the means of extending his steadfast love to all nations. He gave them his laws to keep, as we have been reading this past week. He gave a land to them and defended them against their foes. Far from being confined to Israel, this grace extends to all creatures (v 25) and it includes his provision for every aspect of my well-being today!

[Emmanuel Oladipo](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## **Worthy of praise**

[https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W140210R1 Worthy of praise.mp3](https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W140210R1%20Worthy%20of%20praise.mp3)

Listen to this reading of today’s psalm, allowing the repeated phrase ‘His love endures forever’ to soak deeply into you and lead you into worship.

# Today in the Word – 1/21/18

# Practice: Walking in Love and Purity

[**Ephesians 5:1–7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:1–7)

5 1Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

3But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. 4Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:1%E2%80%937" \l "fen-NIV-29310a" \o "See footnote a)] 6Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7Therefore do not be partners with them.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 5:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:1%E2%80%937#en-NIV-29310) Or kingdom of the Messiah and God

A recent survey found that many Americans are muddled about what constitutes marital unfaithfulness. Just 31 percent thought watching pornography was cheating on a spouse. Some 42 percent said that sending flirtatious messages to a romantic interest was fine—and 25 percent thought even sexually explicit messages were OK. About one in four didn’t see a one-night stand as cheating, and about one in five didn’t even consider regular sexual relations with someone not your spouse to be cheating.

Walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.Ephesians 5:2

Spiritually dead people are hopelessly confused in their moral thinking. To walk in love and purity, we must have biblical principles and standards. This means that we as “dearly loved children” need to imitate and obey our Father (vv. 1–2). Godliness, after all, means acting as God would act; Christlikeness means doing what Christ would do. What Christ did was love us to death, literally. We should follow His sacrificial example and seek always to “walk in the way of love.” Such a life will be a “fragrant offering,” pleasing to the Lord (see Rom. 12:1; 2 Cor. 2:15).

Sinful and impure choices are foul-smelling offerings to the King of Kings. We must avoid such offensive foolishness at all costs! Sexual immorality and greed, for example, are “improper for God’s holy people” (v. 3). Sins of the tongue are also unacceptable, including obscenity and coarse jesting (v. 4). Giving thanks is an effective antidote.

God’s holiness cannot compromise. There shouldn’t be “even a hint” of such behaviors or approval of them in the church, for people who live in this way prove through their actions that they’re not really God’s children and won’t inherit eternal life (vv. 3, 5). False teachers might say otherwise, but God’s grace leads to transformed lives.

### **Apply the Word**

Since it also deals with sins of the tongue, James 3:1–12 would be an excellent passage for additional reading today. Speaking in godly ways is not just a matter of self-control, for “no human being can tame the tongue.” Use these verses to guide your prayers for God to help you use your tongue in ways that glorify Him.

### **Pray with Us**

Jim Elliot is the vice president of Stewardship. Along with his team, he invests in relationships with the Moody supporters around the country and across the globe, seeking to wisely steward what God provides. Pray for God’s blessing on him and his team.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/21/18

# Promises, Promises



**Read:** [**2 Peter 1:1–9**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+1%3A1%E2%80%939)

1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

2Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

### **Confirming One’s Calling and Election**

3His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

5For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 8For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

He has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature. [2 Peter 1:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+1%3A4)

My youngest daughter and I have a game we call “Pinchers.” When she goes up the stairs, I’ll chase her and try to give her a little pinch. The rules are that I can only pinch her (gently, of course!) when she’s on the stairs. Once she’s at the top, she’s safe. Sometimes, though, she’s not in the mood to play. And if I follow her up the stairs, she’ll sternly say, “No pinchers!” I’ll respond, “No pinchers. I promise.”

Now, that promise may seem a little thing. But when I do what I say, my daughter begins to understand something of my character. She experiences my consistency. She knows my word is good, that she can trust me. It’s a little thing, keeping such a promise. But promises—or, keeping them, I should say—are the glue of relationships. They lay a foundation of love and trust.

[God’s Word to us reveals His heart toward us.](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=God%E2%80%99s+Word+to+us+reveals+His+heart+toward+us.&via=ourdailybread&url=https://odb.org/mEY/)

I think that's what Peter meant when he wrote that God’s promises enable us to “participate in the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). When we take God at His Word, trusting what He says about Himself and about us, we encounter His heart toward us. It gives Him an opportunity to reveal His faithfulness as we rest in what He says is true. I'm thankful Scripture brims with His promises, these concrete reminders that “his compassions never fail. They are new every morning” (Lamentations 3:22–23).

Lord, thank You so much for Your “great and precious promises.” Help us to recognize and to rest in what You say is true, that we might fully experience Your tender goodness.

God’s Word to us reveals His heart toward us.

By [Adam Holz](https://odb.org/author/adamholz/)

#### **INSIGHT**

By the time we get to Peter’s writings in the New Testament, God’s reputation as a “promise-keeper” is well established. Early we see that the God of the Bible makes promises that match His role as the sovereign, Almighty God. And He delivers what He promises. The roots of this “promise-making,” “promise-keeping” attribute are deep in the soil of Genesis. When the patriarch Abraham was called to relocate to a place he had never seen, he went. Along with words that instructed him to leave what was familiar came promises that the Lord would make of him a great nation, give him a great name, and bless the nations of the world through his offspring (see 12:1–3). That offspring was Christ (see Galatians 3:16; Hebrews 6:11–20) and the promise remains good today for all who embrace Him.

How does knowing God keeps His promises encourage you in your season of life?

[Arthur Jackson](https://odb.org/author/arthurjackson/)

# God Calling – 1/21/18

# A Crowded Day

Be glad all the time.

Believe that I am with you and controlling all. When My Word has gone forth, all are powerless against it.

Be calm. Never fear. You have much to learn. Go on until you can take the most crowded day with a song. "Sing unto the Lord." The finest accompaniment to a Song of Praise to Me is a very crowded day. Let Love be the motif running through all.

Be glad all the time. Rejoice exceedingly. Joy in Me. Rest in Me. Never be afraid. Pray more. Do not get worried. I am thy Helper. "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms." You cannot get below that. Rest in them, as a tired child rests.

"Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." - Hebrews 13:5

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/22/18

# What Am I Looking At?

# Am I Looking To God?

Look unto Me, and be ye saved. — [Isaiah 45:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Isaiah+45%3A22)

Do we expect God to come to us with His blessings and save us? He says – Look unto Me, and be saved. The great difficulty spiritually is to concentrate on God, and it is His blessings that make it difficult. Troubles nearly always make us look to God; His blessings are apt to make us look elsewhere. The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is, in effect – Narrow all your interests until the attitude of mind and heart and body is concentration on Jesus Christ. "Look unto Me."

Many of us have a mental conception of what a Christian should be, and the lives of the saints become a hindrance to our concentration on God. There is no salvation in this way, it is not simple enough. "Look unto Me" and – not "you will be saved," but "you are saved." The very thing we look for, we shall find if we will concentrate on Him. We get preoccupied and sulky with God, while all the time He is saying – "Look up and be saved." The difficulties and trials – the casting about in our minds as to what we shall do this summer, or to-morrow, all vanish when we look to God.

Rouse yourself up and look to God. Build your hope on Him. No matter if there are a hundred and one things that press, resolutely exclude them all and look to Him. "Look unto Me," and salvation is, the moment you look.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The great point of Abraham’s faith in God was that he was prepared to do anything for God.  
Not Knowing Whither

# CCEL – 1/22/18

**This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.**—[PSA. 48:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.48.html" \l "Ps.48.14)

O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.—The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.—Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.—Our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.—The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

[Isa. 25:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.25.html" \l "Isa.25.1). -[Psa. 16:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.16.html" \l "Ps.16.5).[Psa. 23:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.23.html" \l "Ps.23.3). -[Psa. 73:23-26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.73.html" \l "Ps.73.23). -[Psa. 33:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.33.html" \l "Ps.33.21). -[Psa. 138:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.138.html" \l "Ps.138.8).

“Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?” [Ezekiel 15:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.15.html" \l "Ezek.15.2)

These words are for the humbling of God’s people; they are called God’s vine, but what are they by nature more than others? They, by God’s goodness, have become fruitful, having been planted in a good soil; the Lord hath trained them upon the walls of the sanctuary, and they bring forth fruit to his glory; but what are they without their God? What are they without the continual influence of the Spirit, begetting fruitfulness in them? O believer, learn to reject pride, seeing that thou hast no ground for it. Whatever thou art, thou hast nothing to make thee proud. The more thou hast, the more thou art in debt to God; and thou shouldst not be proud of that which renders thee a debtor. Consider thine origin; look back to what thou wast. Consider what thou wouldst have been but for divine grace. Look upon thyself as thou art now. Doth not thy conscience reproach thee? Do not thy thousand wanderings stand before thee, and tell thee that thou art unworthy to be called his son? And if he hath made thee anything, art thou not taught thereby that it is grace which hath made thee to differ? Great believer, thou wouldst have been a great sinner if God had not made thee to differ. O thou who art valiant for truth, thou wouldst have been as valiant for error if grace had not laid hold upon thee. Therefore, be not proud, though thou hast a large estate—a wide domain of grace, thou hadst not once a single thing to call thine own except thy sin and misery. Oh! strange infatuation, that thou, who hast borrowed everything, shouldst think of exalting thyself; a poor dependent pensioner upon the bounty of thy Saviour, one who hath a life which dies without fresh streams of life from Jesus, and yet proud! Fie on thee, O silly heart!

# Word Live – 1/22/18

# Don't be a 'know-it-all'!

## **Prepare**

What is more important to you – being right or being loving?



## **Bible passage 1 Corinthians 8:1–13**

##### **Food Sacrificed to Idols**

1Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. 3But the man who loves God is known by God.

4So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. 5For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), 6yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

7But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. 8But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

9Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. 10For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? 11So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. 12When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Rigid morals**

I must confess to being someone who naturally sees the world in terms of black and white – something is either right or wrong! I really have to depend on God for his grace so that I don’t tread on numerous toes and upset everyone around me.

The Corinthian church seemed to be full of people just like me! They knew that God was the only true God and that idols were mere lumps of wood, stone or metal; they knew it made no difference whether or not meat had been used in a religious ceremony before it was eaten, and so they thought it was nonsense not to take advantage of cheaper meat available in the temple markets.

**Hurtful actions**

Paul, however, challenged them to consider the effects of their decision on those who were newer or weaker Christians. People seeing them get meat from the temple might have assumed that they had been involved in idol worship, and that it was all right to sacrifice to idols and worship God. In Paul’s opinion, there was no point in being right, if that causes other people to go wrong!

Paul’s words challenge me today – in what ways am I so insistent that I am right, that in fact I am wrong, because I have not loved and built up others?

## **Respond**

Is there a particular issue you feel strongly about? Ask God to show you his perspective on this matter and to fill you with his grace and love as you explore the way ahead with others.

[Esther Bailey](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/A-B/3525685.id)

## **Introduction to 1 Corinthians 8–10**

When Paul first visited Corinth he stayed there for a year and a half ([Acts 18:1–17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3A1%E2%80%9317&version=NIVUK)). The letter that we refer to as ‘1 Corinthians’, which dates from around AD 54–55, is probably not Paul’s first letter to this church, since he makes reference in it to a previous letter ([1 Corinthians 5:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+5%3A9&version=NIVUK)). Some think that this earlier letter might be repeated in [2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+6%3A14+%E2%80%93+7%3A1&version=NIVUK). It appears that Paul has received a letter back from the Corinthians ([1 Corinthians 7:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+7%3A1&version=NIVUK)) and that from chapter 7 to the end of 1 Corinthians, which includes this week’s passages, Paul is working his way through matters they raised and over which they have sought his guidance.

The beliefs and practices of the Corinthian church were influenced by the Greek philosophy around them. Broadly, they believed that the spirit was good and the body was bad. If the body is bad and therefore irredeemable, if religion is a spiritual issue only, then the logical belief is that it doesn’t matter what we do with our bodies and so we may as well indulge in worldly pleasures. Some, of course, reacted in the opposite direction and tried to deny the physical body, putting limits on food and sexual conduct – examples of the two extremes that we may be tempted to embrace: asceticism and hedonism1.

In [1 Corinthians 8–10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+8%E2%80%9310&version=NIVUK), Paul navigates these two extremes with skill, wisdom and grace. These chapters are really one argument which Paul is making about the balance between rights and freedoms that are given to Christians and our responsibility to seek the welfare of others before ourselves. Although the issues of food being offered to idols may not be important in our culture, the principles Paul draws out are timeless and apply to the church anywhere. By embracing such principles we equip ourselves to navigate with wisdom the differences of opinion within the church and the world.

**FOR FURTHER READING**  
C Blomberg, 1 Corinthians, The NIV Application Commentary, Zondervan, 1994  
NT Wright, Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians, SPCK, 2003

1 C Blomberg, 1 Corinthians, The NIV Application Commentary, Zondervan, 1994, p25

## Deeper Bible study

**‘Have the same attitude of mind Christ Jesus had: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.’ (**[**Philippians 2:5,6, TNIV**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A5-6&version=NIVUK)**)**

Anyone who has been involved in church life for more than a little while will be aware that occasionally differing views over an issue will lead to division and upset. I’m not thinking of practical issues like church furniture, but more ethical and moral dilemmas, where Christians hold different views with deep integrity. This is the context into which Paul speaks to the Corinthian Christians, and this part of his letter seeks to address what was a thorny issue for the Corinthian church: the matter of whether Christians should eat meat that has been offered to idols. In Corinth, as in much of the Roman world at the time, most meat was taken to pagan temples or shrines to be offered to the various gods. What was left over was then taken to the market to be bought and sold. This was causing pain and division.

Paul addresses the matter as a wise pastor would. He takes time to develop his argument more thoroughly over the next few chapters, but his guidance to the Corinthians is simple, yet profound. Love matters most of all. Love for others in the church matters more than our own desire or sense of freedom. Paul permits eating the food in question, but reminds the Corinthians that if by doing so it will cause others to stumble and feel as though they are sinning, then out of an attitude of love, they should abstain.

Of course, this type of love is costly and at times inconvenient. It means sacrificing our freedoms and perhaps things we enjoy for the sake of others. But ‘Love rather than knowledge remains the centre of Paul’s ethics’1. Choosing love, however costly, gives the better chance of preserving the unity of God’s church.

[Gareth Higgs](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/G-H/3526467.id)

## **Practical idolatry**

**The situation in Corinth**

To be absent was to cut oneself off, lose one’s place in society and damage one’s business and social life. It is hardly surprising that the Corinthian Christians continued to attend.

Paul is clear on two things:  
  
• Idols have no reality, but exercise powerful influence on the minds and behaviour of the worshippers.   
  
• Christian fellowship and the impact that our behaviour has on other believers is of first importance.

Eating meat offered to idols did not affect them one way or another – unless they believed that it was wrong, in which case it weakened their commitment to God and their life of obedience. They had total freedom to eat. But not if it damaged the faith of another by encouraging them to eat against their own judgement.

**How about us?**

Sometimes we, like Paul, will be required to sacrifice something of our freedom for the spiritual benefit of others. Will I limit my freedom to avoid creating problems for fellow Christians? This is a tough call in a world that places such a high value on individual freedom.

[John Grayston](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/G-H/3526467.id)

# Today in the Word – 1/22/18

# Practice: Living as Children of Light

[**Ephesians 5:8–14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:8–14)

8For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10and find out what pleases the Lord. 11Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,  
    rise from the dead,  
    and Christ will shine on you.”

The manchineel tree looks innocent enough, but it can harm in multiple ways. Its fruit is toxic. Its sap, which is also found on the bark and leaves, causes burn-like blisters. Touching a leaf to your eyes can cause temporary blindness. Even having just a drop from it fall on you can cause severe pain. This is why this tree is called in Spanish arbol de la muerte, or “tree of death.”

The fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth.Ephesians 5:9

A tree is known by its fruit (see Matt. 7:16–18). Similarly, Paul taught in Ephesians that the fruit of living in the light versus living in the dark is clear. “You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light” (v. 8). What does this mean? It means to pursue goodness, righteousness, and truth (v. 9). It means that in all situations we should “find out what pleases the Lord” (v. 10). This carries the idea of cultivating wisdom and discernment, the ability to interpret biblical truths accurately and apply them meaningfully in specific contexts. We already know from His Word what pleases God, so the point here is to “find out” in practice.

On the flip side, believers are to “have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them” (v. 11). There should be no participation, no association, no approval or implied endorsement. We’re also not to talk or gossip about sin, for dwelling on it is unhealthy and can lead to pride or voyeurism (v. 12). And we are not to tolerate or celebrate sin in the church. This can be bold and risky and often comes with a price, but it can also happen as part of our normal attempts to follow the path of Christ—for light by its very nature reveals what darkness attempts to conceal (v. 13). Because Christ has shone on us, we have ourselves become a light to the world (v. 14; see Matt. 5:14–16; 2 Cor. 4:6).

### **Apply the Word**

From the moment God said, “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3) to the heavenly city which needs no light but Him (Rev. 21:23), imagery of light and darkness is found throughout Scripture. Last August, Today in the Word devoted an entire month of study to this topic. You can find it in the archives at our website: todayintheword.org.

### **Pray with Us**

Express appreciation in prayer for Moody’s Donor Development team, who prayerfully serve our friends and partners. Pray God’s blessing on Bruce Everhart, Cherise Wilson, Claire Kniowski, Georgette Whittenhall, and Hadassah Carlson.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/22/18

# It’s in the Attitude



**Read:** [**James 1:1–12**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A1%E2%80%9312)

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:

Greetings.

### **Trials and Temptations**

2Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A1%E2%80%9312" \l "fen-NIV-30269a" \o "See footnote a)] whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

9Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. 10But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. 11For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

12Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [James 1:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A1%E2%80%9312#en-NIV-30269) The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in verses 16 and 19; and in 2:1, 5, 14; 3:10, 12; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19.

Consider it pure joy . . . whenever you face trials of many kinds. [James 1:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A2)

Regina drove home from work discouraged and tired. The day had started with tragic news in a text message from a friend, then spiraled downward in meetings with co-workers who refused to work with any of her ideas. As Regina was talking to the Lord, she thought it best to put the stress of the day aside and made a surprise visit with flowers to an elderly friend at a care center. Her spirits lifted as Maria shared how good the Lord was to her. She said, "I have my own bed and a chair, three meals a day, and help from the nurses here. And occasionally God sends a cardinal to my window just because He knows I love them and He loves me."

Attitude. Perspective. As the saying goes, “Life is 10 percent what happens to us and 90 percent how we react to it.” The people James wrote to were scattered because of persecution, and he asked them to consider their perspective about difficulties. He challenged them with these words: “Consider it pure joy . . . whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2).

[“Consider it pure joy . . . whenever you face trials of many kinds.” James 1:2](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=%E2%80%9CConsider+it+pure+joy+.+.+.+whenever+you+face+trials+of+many+kinds.%E2%80%9D+James+1%3A2&via=ourdailybread&hashtags=joy&url=https://odb.org/mEZ/)

We are each on our own journey of learning to trust God with hard circumstances. The kind of joy-filled perspective James talked about comes as we learn to see that God can use struggles to produce maturity in our faith.

Lord, please change my attitude about hard times. Bring about joy, perseverance, and maturity in me.

God can bring times of growth out of our times of heartache.

By [Anne Cetas](https://odb.org/author/annecetas/)

#### **INSIGHT**

When James says, “Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position” (1:9), he reflects the paradox of Jesus’s words in the Beatitudes. “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” said Jesus, describing those who are spiritually humble, “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

No one wants to suffer, but without testing, there is no perseverance. And without perseverance, there is no spiritual growth and the eternal reward that comes with it.

How might you choose to respond when you find yourself in humble or difficult circumstances?

[Tim Gustafson](https://odb.org/author/timgustafson/)

# God Calling – 1/22/18

# Gray Days

You must say 'Thank You' on the grayest days.

Be not afraid. I am your God, your Deliverer. From all evil, I will deliver you. Trust Me. Fear not.

Never forget your "Thank you." Do you not see it is a lesson? You MUST say "Thank You" on the grayest days. You MUST do it. All cannot be light unless you do. There is gray-day practice. It is absolutely necessary.

My death upon the Cross was not only necessary to save a world, it was necessary if only to train My disciples. It was all a part of their training: My entering Jerusalem in triumph; My washing the disciples' feet; My sorrow-time in Gethsemane; My being despised, judged, crucified, buried. Every step was necessary to their development - and so with you.

If a gray day is not one of thankfulness, the lesson has to be repeated until it is. Not to everyone is it so. But only to those who ask to serve Me well, and to do much for Me. A great work requires a great and careful training.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." - Isaiah 41:10