# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/23/18

# Transformed By Beholding

# Transformed by Beholding

We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image. — [2 Corinthians 3:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+3%3A18)

The outstanding characteristic of a Christian is this unveiled frankness before God so that the life becomes a mirror for other lives. By being filled with the Spirit we are transformed, and by beholding we become mirrors. You always know when a man has been beholding the glory of the Lord, you feel in your inner spirit that he is the mirror of the Lord’s own character. Beware of anything which would sully that mirror in you; it is nearly always a good thing, the good that is not the best.

The golden rule for your life and mine is this concentrated keeping of the life open towards God. Let everything else – work, clothes, food, everything on earth – go by the board, saving that one thing. The rush of other things always tends to obscure this concentration on God. We have to maintain ourselves in the place of beholding, keeping the life absolutely spiritual all through. Let other things come and go as they may, let other people criticize as they will, but never allow anything to obscure the life that is hid with Christ in God. Never be hurried out of the relationship of abiding in Him. It is the one thing that is apt to fluctuate but it ought not to. The severest discipline of a Christian’s life is to learn how to keep "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord."

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

There is no condition of life in which we cannot abide in Jesus. We have to learn to abide in Him wherever we are placed. Our Brilliant Heritage

# CCEL – 1/23/18

**Hope maketh not ashamed.**—[ROM. 5:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.5)

I am the Lord: . . . they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.—Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.—Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord **JEHOVAH** is everlasting strength.—My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense; I shall not be moved.—I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed.

God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.

[Isa. 49:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.49.html" \l "Isa.49.23). -[Jer. 17:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.17.html" \l "Jer.17.7). -[Isa. 26:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.26.html" \l "Isa.26.3). -[Psa. 62:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.62.html" \l "Ps.62.5). -[II Tim. 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.1.html" \l "iiTim.1.12).[Heb. 6:17-20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.6.html" \l "Heb.6.17).

“I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” [Psalm 89:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.89.html" \l "Ps.89.19)

Why was Christ chosen out of the people? Speak, my heart, for heart-thoughts are best. Was it not that he might be able to be our brother, in the blest tie of kindred blood? Oh, what relationship there is between Christ and the believer! The believer can say, “I have a Brother in heaven; I may be poor, but I have a Brother who is rich, and is a King, and will he suffer me to want while he is on his throne? Oh, no! He loves me; he is my Brother.” Believer, wear this blessed thought, like a necklace of diamonds, around the neck of thy memory; put it, as a golden ring, on the finger of recollection, and use it as the King’s own seal, stamping the petitions of thy faith with confidence of success. He is a brother born for adversity, treat him as such.

Christ was also chosen out of the people that he might know our wants and sympathize with us. “He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” In all our sorrows we have his sympathy. Temptation, pain, disappointment, weakness, weariness, poverty—he knows them all, for he has felt all. Remember this, Christian, and let it comfort thee. However difficult and painful thy road, it is marked by the footsteps of thy Saviour; and even when thou reachest the dark valley of the shadow of death, and the deep waters of the swelling Jordan, thou wilt find his footprints there. In all places whithersoever we go, he has been our forerunner; each burden we have to carry, has once been laid on the shoulders of Immanuel.

“His way was much rougher and darker than mine

Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?”

Take courage! Royal feet have left a blood-red track upon the road, and consecrated the thorny path forever.

# Word Live – 1/23/18

# I’ve got my rights

## Prepare

Pray that God would make you more aware of the rights of others than of your own.



## **Bible passage 1 Corinthians 9:1–18**

##### **The Rights of an Apostle**

1Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? 2Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. 4Don't we have the right to food and drink? 5Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? 6Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?

7Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? 8Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? 9For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? 10Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. 11If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? 12If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

   But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. 13Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? 14In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

15But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me. I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast. 16Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. 18What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it.

## **Explore the Bible**

**"I know my rights!"**

Many Scottish schools are ‘rights respecting schools’ – the pupils know their rights according to the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, and the school ensures that these rights are upheld.

But sometimes the exercise of one person’s rights undermines the rights of someone else. For example, when someone’s right to express an opinion affects someone else’s right to practise their own culture or religion, or leads to them being hurt in body or mind; or when there are not enough resources to allow all children to have food, clothing, a safe place to live or a good quality education.

**Putting it all aside**

Paul is aware of his rights as a leader within the church and as a preacher of the gospel. However, he chooses to lay aside his rights, so that there is no hindrance to the good news of Jesus being proclaimed, heard and responded to.

In this, he follows the precedent of Jesus, who as Son of God has far greater rights; and he encourages us to do the same.

## **Respond**

‘In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant ... he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death ... on a cross!’ ([Philippians 2:5–8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A5%E2%80%938&version=NIVUK)).

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

## **Deeper Bible study**

**‘Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold.’ (FR Havergal, 1836–79, ‘Take my life and let it be’, Songs of Fellowship, 519)**

For many of us, talking about money can be a subject of embarrassment or awkwardness – but the subject of professional ministry cannot be avoided and Paul tackles it in this chapter. It seems that some Christians in Corinth are questioning his authority because he doesn’t charge for his ministry like other itinerant philosophers of the day did. It seems that the tensions between money and ministry were as difficult to negotiate for Paul as they are for the modern church. Paul argues that, if he wanted to, he had the ‘right’ to charge for his services (vs 4–6,12) but, just as with the issue of food and idols, he is concerned with the potential misconception of others and that this may lead to some questioning the authenticity of the gospel. He doesn’t charge because he doesn’t want his motives to be questioned.

Paul isn’t arguing for a purely voluntary ministry either. He makes it clear that those who work for the gospel should be remunerated, not just financially but in other material ways such as food and clothing – and that such support should be free of any notion of control or manipulation. The heart of the issue for Paul is again serving others before oneself. Ensure that nothing we do has the potential to corrupt us or others.

For Christian workers, that means that integrity and transparency are vital when we receive an income for our work. For churches and others, we need to ensure that those whose privilege it is to serve full-time in the Lord’s work are appropriately supported and rewarded.

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

## **Supporting our leaders**

**Biblical roots**

There is a strong biblical tradition of support for those in leadership among God’s people.

• The priests were entitled to their share (see [Leviticus 22:10,11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%2022:10,11;&version=72;)).

• The Levites were supported out of the tithe (see [Deuteronomy 28:12,13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2028:12,13;&version=72;)).

• Prophets seem to have been supported by the community (eg [1 Kings 7:7–11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Kings%207:7–11;&version=72;)).

This was sometimes abused (see [1 Samuel 2:12–15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Samuel%202:12–15;&version=72;)). Kings were even worse (see [1 Samuel 8:10–18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Samuel%208:10–18;&version=72;)). By the time of Jesus such abuse was widespread (see [Mark 12:40](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2012:40;&version=72;)).

**Caring for others**

Despite this, Paul argues that the apostles are entitled to the support of the Christian community. Local leaders are also entitled to such support (see [1 Timothy 5:17–20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%205:17–20;&version=72;)).

Here in [1 Corinthians](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians;&version=72;) and in [1 Timothy 5:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%205:18;&version=72;), he appeals to Old Testament teaching which at first sight seems a little odd. What do oxen pulling the threshing sledge across the wheat have to do with the support of Christian workers?

But if we care for the animals who work for us how much more should we care for the people who minister to us. [1 Timothy 5:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%205:17;&version=72;) suggests that we should be generous.

**Good practice**

What does this mean for us? It is a denial of biblical teaching when Christian leaders, evangelists, youth workers or missionaries struggle financially while members of their congregations or supporting churches enjoy a much higher standard of living.

But it is equally unacceptable when leaders enjoy a lavish lifestyle at the expense of congregations. Getting it right will not be easy. Generosity on the one hand and the willingness to sacrifice on the other will help.

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

## **Gospel unlimited**



How determined are you that your life demonstrates the mercy of God through Jesus to the people around you without compromise? Reflect on this image.

# Today in the Word – 1/23/18

# Practice: Being Filled with the Spirit

[**Ephesians 5:15–20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:15–20)

15Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. 18Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, 19speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor and author Stuart Briscoe explored Paul’s unconventional analogy between drunkenness and being filled with the Spirit. From experiences in his younger days, he observed that when his fellow soldiers in the Royal Marine Commandos would go drinking, they would consume alcohol until it altered their thinking, changed their desires and motivations, and strongly influenced or even controlled their actions.

Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.Ephesians 5:18–19

Being filled with the Holy Spirit alters our thinking, changes our desires and motivations, and strongly influences or even controls our actions—but unlike drinking excessive alcohol, the Spirit’s control brings glory to God. Living worthy of our calling, of the gospel, and of our salvation in Christ absolutely requires being filled with the Spirit.

A life of following Christ is put in terms of living wisely and “making the most of every opportunity” to share the gospel (vv. 15–16). The gospel is the highest form of wisdom, though to the world it appears foolishness (see 1 Cor. 1:18–25). True foolishness, though, is failing to comprehend what the Lord’s will is, while true wisdom means to understand and follow it (v. 17). For example, once we understand that we’ve been chosen by God from eternity past as part of His redemptive plan, we should strive to behave in a manner befitting our chosenness.

This is where being filled with the Spirit comes in (vv. 18–20). We could never live this way in our own strength. Thankfully, God has provided His strength through His Spirit. The phrase “filled with the Spirit” is in the present continuous tense, which means it happens constantly or on an ongoing basis. Whereas drunkenness leads to debauchery, being filled with the Spirit leads to worship, thankfulness, and praise to the Lord.

### **Apply the Word**

Wise and godly living takes attentiveness. Being careless or thoughtless leads to sin and selfishness. Too often we live on autopilot, making choices from mere habit. Does your typical day demonstrate the values you say you hold? Are your activities worthy of your calling? Are you daily seeking to be filled with the Spirit?

### **Pray with Us**

Keep praying for the Donor Development team today as they cheerfully communicate with our Moody family. Joe Forrider, Scott Veigel, Teri Vaughn, and Stephen Asare express their thanks for your faithful and joyful partnership with Moody.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/23/18

# A “Yes” of Love



**Read:** [**1 John 3:16–24**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3A16%E2%80%9324)

16This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

19This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: 20If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 21Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. 23And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. [1 John 3:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3A18)

On August 21, 2016, Carissa posted photos on social media of a devastating flood in Louisiana. The next morning she included a note from someone in the flooded area pleading for help. Five hours after that, she and her husband, Bobby, sent out a call for others to join them on their 1,000-mile trip to provide help. Less than twenty-four hours later, thirteen people were on their way to serve those whose homes had been severely damaged.

What motivates people to drop everything and drive seventeen hours to move appliances, do demolition work, and provide hope in a place they’ve never been before? It’s love.

[We show God’s love when we are willing to help others.](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=We+show+God%E2%80%99s+love+when+we+are+willing+to+help+others.&via=ourdailybread&url=https://odb.org/mF2/)

Think about this verse, which she posted along with her call for help: “Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this” (Psalm 37:5). This is especially true when we follow God’s call to help. The apostle John said, “If anyone . . . sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?” (1 John 3:17). It may be a daunting task—but we have God’s promise of help when we “do what pleases him” (v. 22).

When a need arises, we can honor God by being willing to offer a “yes” of love to what we sense He is asking us to do for others.

Lord, please open our eyes to the needs of others, open our hearts to those people, and open our hands so we can provide help in the time of need.

We show God’s love when we are willing to help others; we show His strength when we take on the task He gives us to do.

By [Dave Branon](https://odb.org/author/davebranon/)

#### **INSIGHT**

Like John in today’s passage, James calls us to action, saying our desire to help others arises out of faith: “What good is it . . . if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds?” (James 2:14). If we tell those in need, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed” without first meeting their physical needs, what does that accomplish? He urges, “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (vv. 15–17). John echoes, “How can the love of God be in that person” who “sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them?” (1 John 3:17). Our loving actions flow out of our faith and the empowering love of God inside us.

How might God be calling you to help someone?

[Alyson Kieda](https://odb.org/author/akieda/)

# God Calling – 1/23/18

# How Power Comes

Learn to shut yourself away in My Presence.

Lord, Thou art our Refuge. Our God, in Thee do we trust. O Master, come and talk with us.

All power is given unto Me. It is Mine to give, Mine to withhold, but even I have to acknowledge that I cannot withhold it from the soul that dwells near Me, because it is then not a gift, but passes insensibly from Me to My disciples.

It is breathed in by the soul who lives in My Presence.

Learn to shut yourself away in My Presence - and then, without speaking, you have those things you desire of Me, Strength - Power - Joy - Riches.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." - Psalm 91:1

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/24/18

# God’s Overpowering Purpose

# God’s Overpowering Purpose

I have appeared unto thee for this purpose. — [Acts 26:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+26%3A16)

The vision Paul had on the road to Damascus was no passing emotion, but a vision that had very clear and emphatic directions for him, and he says, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Our Lord said, in effect, to Paul – Your whole life is to be overmastered by Me; you are to have no end, no aim, and no purpose but Mine. "I have chosen him."

When we are born again we all have visions, if we are spiritual at all, of what Jesus wants us to be, and the great thing is to learn not to be disobedient to the vision, not to say that it cannot be attained. It is not sufficient to know that God has redeemed the world, and to know that the Holy Spirit can make all that Jesus did effectual in me; I must have the basis of a personal relationship to Him. Paul was not given a message or a doctrine to proclaim, he was brought into a vivid, personal, overmastering relationship to Jesus Christ. Verse 16 is immensely commanding – "to make thee a minister and a witness." There is nothing there apart from the personal relationship. Paul was devoted to a Person not to a cause. He was absolutely Jesus Christ’s, he saw nothing else, he lived for nothing else. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Jesus Christ is always unyielding to my claim to my right to myself. The one essential element in all our Lord’s teaching about discipleship is abandon, no calculation, no trace of self-interest.  
Disciples Indeed

# CCEL – 1/24/18

**The Lord is at hand.**—[PHI. 4:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.5)

The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.—He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.—Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

[I Thes. 4:16-18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.4.html" \l "iThess.4.16). -[Rev. 22:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.22.html" \l "Rev.22.20).[II Pet. 3:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.3.html" \l "iiPet.3.14).[I Thes. 5:22-24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.5.html" \l "iThess.5.22).[Jas. 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.5.html" \l "Jas.5.8).

“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler.” [Psalm 91:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.91.html" \l "Ps.91.3)

God delivers his people from the snare of the fowler in two senses. From, and out of. First, he delivers them from the snare—does not let them enter it; and secondly, if they should be caught therein, he delivers them out of it. The first promise is the most precious to some; the second is the best to others.

“He shall deliver thee from the snare.” How? Trouble is often the means whereby God delivers us. God knows that our backsliding will soon end in our destruction, and he in mercy sends the rod. We say, “Lord, why is this?” not knowing that our trouble has been the means of delivering us from far greater evil. Many have been thus saved from ruin by their sorrows and their crosses; these have frightened the birds from the net. At other times, God keeps his people from the snare of the fowler by giving them great spiritual strength, so that when they are tempted to do evil they say, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” But what a blessed thing it is that if the believer shall, in an evil hour, come into the net, yet God will bring him out of it! O backslider, be cast down, but do not despair. Wanderer though thou hast been, hear what thy Redeemer saith—“Return, O backsliding children; I will have mercy upon you.” But you say you cannot return, for you are a captive. Then listen to the promise—“Surely he shall deliver thee out of the snare of the fowler.” Thou shalt yet be brought out of all evil into which thou hast fallen, and though thou shalt never cease to repent of thy ways, yet he that hath loved thee will not cast thee away; he will receive thee, and give thee joy and gladness, that the bones which he has broken may rejoice. No bird of paradise shall die in the fowler’s net.

# Word Live – 1/24/18

# All things to all people

## Prepare

How did you first hear of God’s love for you? Thank God for people who were prepared to make sacrifices so that you could be brought into God’s family.



## Bible passage 1 Corinthians 9:19–27

19Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

24Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

25Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Changing message methods**

Paul did not change his message as he spoke to different groups of people – earlier in this letter ([1:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3A23&version=NIVUK)) he states that his message is Christ crucified, even though that message is difficult for both Jews and Gentiles to accept. However, here he explains that his methods of sharing that message vary depending on who he is trying to reach.

More than just altering his methods, Paul alters his lifestyle so as not to get in the way of the message being heard and considered. In [Acts 21:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+21%3A26&version=NIVUK), we see him practising Jewish customs, even though he was aware that these customs were not necessary as part of his Christian discipleship.

**Using freedom**

He is able to voluntarily do this because he is certain of his freedom in Christ. As he says in [Romans 8:1,2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A1-2&version=NIVUK), ‘There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because ... the law of the Spirit ... has set you free from the law of sin and death.’

He chooses to use his freedom to work hard, and to submit himself to other people’s expectations, in order that some people might be saved.

## **Respond**

Think of a family member or close friend who does not know Jesus – what would you be willing to give up, or to do, so that they might hear the gospel? Pray that God would give you motivation and opportunity to share his love with them.

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

## **Deeper Bible study**

**‘My every sacred moment spend in publishing the sinners’ friend.’ (Charles Wesley, 1707–88, ‘Give me the faith’, Hymns & Psalms, 767)**

Paul continues the theme of voluntarily relinquishing his rights in order to fulfil the mission God has given him, of proclaiming the gospel. He realises, though, that to be effective in the evangelistic task one cannot adopt a one-size-fits-all attitude. The gospel message he is free to proclaim has to be applied and packaged in the language and the context of his hearers, so Paul explains that, because of his rootedness in Christ, he is able to be flexible in his evangelistic approach and relate the gospel to the place in which he finds himself.

He isn’t promoting pure situational ethics, where we make up codes of conduct based on culture alone as if there were no absolutes; neither is he suggesting that there are no timeless fundamentals of the gospel that transcend time and place. However, for the gospel to take root in individual lives it has to be made known in the language and setting people understand. The message of the gospel remains constant, but the messenger chooses to give up his/her rights, and possibly comforts, to reach more people.

Paul goes on to speak of the need for training if he is to be ready to fulfil his role as Christ’s messenger. How such training is needed today! Not just in practical tips for ministry and discipleship, helpful though such resources may be, but a vigorous regime of prayer, fasting, fellowship and engagement with Scripture, that we might be fit and ready wherever we are placed, so that ‘by all possible means I might save some’ (v 22). Our reward for submitting to such a training regime and being ready to serve the cause of the gospel is one that will last for all eternity (v 25).

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

## **Finishing the race**

[https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W200209R3 Finishing the race.mp3](https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W200209R3%20Finishing%20the%20race.mp3)

The Christian life is often compared to a race, and not a 100 metres sprint! It’s more like a marathon as we are called to choose the way of Christ again and again over many years and in many different situations.   
  
Sometimes we behave as if starting the race, when we come to faith, is the only landmark in the course. But the apostle Paul wants us to see the importance of finishing well, so that we have added rewards in heaven to the salvation with which we started.   
  
Listen to this monologue, ‘Finishing the race’, written by Andrew Lane.

# Today in the Word – 1/24/18

# Practice: Mutual and Wifely Submission

[**Ephesians 5:21–24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:21–24)

### **Instructions for Christian Households**

21Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

The idea that wives should submit to their husbands is controversial and countercultural in our day. People think it implies that women are somehow inferior to men, or that the Bible endorses male abuse of power. But that’s not what Scripture means at all! The Word is quite clear that both men and women are created in God’s image (Gen. 1:27) and equal in God’s eyes (Gal. 3:28).

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:21

So how are we to understand this command (vv. 22, 24; see Col. 3:18)? The short answer is exactly as it reads, but through biblical lenses, not our cultural lenses. Wives should submit to their husbands “as you do to the Lord” and “in everything.” Yet this does not imply any loss in dignity or equality or sanction any male abuses of power. If God the Son can submit to God the Father (John 8:28–29; 1 Cor. 11:3), we might need to rethink our cultural ideas about submission.

Verse 21 continues to build on the idea in the previous verses, so that submitting “to one another out of reverence for Christ” is part of being filled with the Spirit (v. 18). Does mutual submission mean husbands and wives should submit to one another? No; the command means, according to one study Bible, “submitting to others according to the authority and order established by God.” Relevant responsibilities in family relationships are described in the verses that follow.

This verse, then, provides a statement of the general principle, and the following verses give examples of how it works in practice. It’s proper for wives to submit to husbands, because “the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church” (v. 23). The reverse would not be appropriate, any more than it would be between Christ and the church.

### **Apply the Word**

We aren’t great with submission to authority. We cherish our rights and admire vigilantes like Batman, explorers like Daniel Boone, and heroes like Audie Murphy. But submission to proper authorities is a Christlike virtue, whether in the family, church, or society (see Rom. 13:1–2). Ask the Lord to give you a submissive spirit today.

### **Pray with Us**

In your prayer time today, bring Steven Mogck, executive vice president and chief operating officer, before the Lord. Ask that God would give him joy in his work today, for “the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10).

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/24/18

# God of Life



**Read:** [**Psalm 104:1–12**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+104%3A1%E2%80%9312%2C+24%E2%80%9330)

1 Praise the Lord, my soul.

Lord my God, you are very great;  
    you are clothed with splendor and majesty.

2The Lord wraps himself in light as with a garment;  
    he stretches out the heavens like a tent  
3    and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters.  
He makes the clouds his chariot  
    and rides on the wings of the wind.  
4He makes winds his messengers,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+104%3A1%E2%80%9312%2C+24%E2%80%9330" \l "fen-NIV-15576a" \o "See footnote a)]  
    flames of fire his servants.

5He set the earth on its foundations;  
    it can never be moved.  
6You covered it with the watery depths as with a garment;  
    the waters stood above the mountains.  
7But at your rebuke the waters fled,  
    at the sound of your thunder they took to flight;  
8they flowed over the mountains,  
    they went down into the valleys,  
    to the place you assigned for them.  
9You set a boundary they cannot cross;  
    never again will they cover the earth.

10He makes springs pour water into the ravines;  
    it flows between the mountains.  
11They give water to all the beasts of the field;  
    the wild donkeys quench their thirst.  
12The birds of the sky nest by the waters;  
    they sing among the branches.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 104:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+104%3A1%E2%80%9312%2C+24%E2%80%9330#en-NIV-15576) Or angels

**Read:** [**Psalm 104:24–30**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+104%3A1%E2%80%9312%2C+24%E2%80%9330)

24How many are your works, Lord!  
    In wisdom you made them all;  
    the earth is full of your creatures.  
25There is the sea, vast and spacious,  
    teeming with creatures beyond number—  
    living things both large and small.  
26There the ships go to and fro,  
    and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.

27All creatures look to you  
    to give them their food at the proper time.  
28When you give it to them,  
    they gather it up;  
when you open your hand,  
    they are satisfied with good things.  
29When you hide your face,  
    they are terrified;  
when you take away their breath,  
    they die and return to the dust.  
30When you send your Spirit,  
    they are created,  
    and you renew the face of the ground.

Lord my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. [Psalm 104:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+104%3A1)

A few winters ago, my hometown experienced an unusually long blast of bone-chilling temperatures that finally gave way to the warmer weather of spring. For two weeks straight, the outside thermometer dipped well below the sub-zero degree mark (-20 C; -5 F).

On one particularly bitter cold morning, the sound of chirping birds broke the silence of night. Dozens, if not hundreds, sang their hearts out. If I didn’t know any better, I could have sworn the little creatures were crying out to their Creator to please warm things up!

[Lord my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. Psalm 104:1](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Lord+my+God%2C+you+are+very+great%3B+you+are+clothed+with+splendor+and+majesty.+Psalm+104%3A1&via=ourdailybread&hashtags=majesty&url=https://odb.org/mF4/)

Bird experts tell us that the multitude of birdsongs we hear during late winter mornings are mostly male birds, attempting to attract mates and claim their territories. Their chirping reminded me that God fine-tuned His creation to sustain and flourish life—because He is a God of life.

In a psalm that marvels at God’s flourishing earth, the author begins, “Let all that I am praise the Lord” (Psalm 104:1 nlt). He went on to write, “The birds of the sky nest by the waters; they sing among the branches” (v. 12).

From singing and nesting birds to a vast ocean “teeming with creatures beyond number” (v. 25), we see reasons to praise the Creator for the lengths He’s gone to ensure that all of life thrives.

Thank God for the world He has made. List the parts of His creation that you especially enjoy. Thank Him for them one by one.

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:17

By [Jeff Olson](https://odb.org/author/jolson/)

# God Calling – 1/24/18

# Your Great Reward

"I am your God. Your Great Reward. Yours to look up and say, 'All is Well.'"

You pray for Faith, and you are told to do so. But I make provision in the House of My Abiding for those who turn towards Me and yet have weak knees and hearts that faint. Be not afraid. I am your God. Your Great Reward. Yours to look up and say, "All is well."

I am your Guide. Do not want to see the road ahead. Go just one step at a time. I rarely grant the long vista to My disciples, especially in personal affairs, for one step at a time is the best way to cultivate Faith.

You are in uncharted waters. But the Lord of all Seas is with you, the Controller of all Storms is with you. Sing with Joy. You follow the Lord of Limitations, as well as the God in whose service is perfect freedom.

He, the God of the Universe, confined Himself within the narrow limits of a Baby-form and, in growing Boyhood, and young Manhood, submitted to your human limitations, and you have to learn that your vision and power, boundless as far as spiritual things are concerned, must in temporal affairs submit to limitations, too.

But I am with you. It was when the disciples gave up effort after a night of fruitless fishing, that I came, and the nets broke with the overabundance of supply.

"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." - John 15:5

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/25/18

# Leave Room For God

# Leave Room for God

But when it pleased God. . . — [Galatians 1:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Galatians+1%3A15)

As workers for God we have to learn to make room for God – to give God "elbow room." We calculate and estimate, and say that this and that will happen, and we forget to make room for God to come in as He chooses. Would we be surprised if God came into our meeting or into our preaching in a way we had never looked for Him to come? Do not look for God to come in any particular way, but look for Him. That is the way to make room for Him. Expect Him to come, but do not expect Him only in a certain way. However much we may know God, the great lesson to learn is that at any minute He may break in. We are apt to over look this element of surprise, yet God never works in any other way. All of a sudden God meets the life – "When it was the good pleasure of God. . ."

Keep your life so constant in its contact with God that His surprising power may break out on the right hand and on the left. Always be in a state of expectancy, and see that you leave room for God to come in as He likes.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Much of the misery in our Christian life comes not because the devil tackles us, but because we have never understood the simple laws of our make-up. We have to treat the body as the servant of Jesus Christ: when the body says “Sit,” and He says “Go,” go! When the body says “Eat,” and He says “Fast,” fast! When the body says “Yawn,” and He says “Pray,” pray! Biblical Ethics, 107 R

# CCEL – 1/25/18

**The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.**—[ROM. 3:22.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.3.html" \l "Rom.3.22)

He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.—Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.—Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

[II Cor. 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.21). -[Gal. 3:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.3.html" \l "Gal.3.13). -[I Cor. 1:30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.1.html" \l "iCor.1.30). -[Tit. 3:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.3.html" \l "Titus.3.5).[Phi. 3:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.8).

“I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us.” [Isaiah 63:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.7)

And canst thou not do this? Are there no mercies which thou hast experienced? What, though thou art gloomy now, canst thou forget that blessed hour when Jesus met thee, and said, “Come unto me”? Canst thou not remember that rapturous moment when he snapped thy fetters, dashed thy chains to the earth, and said, “I came to break thy bonds and set thee free”? Or if the love of thine espousals be forgotten, there must surely be some precious milestone along the road of life not quite grown over with moss, on which thou canst read a happy memorial of his mercy towards thee? What, didst thou never have a sickness like that which thou art suffering now, and did he not restore thee? Wert thou never poor before, and did he not supply thy wants? Wast thou never in straits before, and did he not deliver thee? Arise, go to the river of thine experience, and pull up a few bulrushes, and plait them into an ark, wherein thine infant—faith—may float safely on the stream. Forget not what thy God has done for thee; turn over the book of thy remembrance, and consider the days of old. Canst thou not remember the hill Mizar? Did the Lord never meet with thee at Hermon? Hast thou never climbed the Delectable Mountains? Hast thou never been helped in time of need? Nay, I know thou hast. Go back, then, a little way to the choice mercies of yesterday, and though all may be dark now, light up the lamps of the past, they shall glitter through the darkness, and thou shalt trust in the Lord till the day break and the shadows flee away. “Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses, for they have been ever of old.”

# Word Live – 1/25/18

# Learning from the past

## Prepare

‘History repeats itself. Has to. No-one listens.’ (‘History Lesson’ by Steve Turner.)



## **Bible passage 1 Corinthians 10:1–13**

##### **Warnings From Israel’s History**

1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.

6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.” 8 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. 9 We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Needing to finish**

My cupboards are full of things I have started but not finished – a knitted cardigan, a tapestry picture, a dress my daughter will now never fit into.

At the end of [chapter 9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+9&version=NIVUK), Paul writes about the need to finish what God has set before us, and the danger of not giving up anything that would prevent us from finishing. Now he uses the example of the ancient Israelites, who had seen a great display of God’s love and power as he brought them out of Egypt.

**Past example**

They had crossed through the Red Sea – a picture of baptism; they had eaten manna and drunk water from a rock – a picture of Communion. They even experienced the presence of Christ with them in the wilderness. Yet despite all this, they never received the blessing that God really had in store for them – they never reached the Promised Land.

The Israelites failed because they did not keep their focus on God; they allowed other things to become more important to them. Paul warns the Corinthians, and us, not to rely on past blessings and experiences, and not to take liberties with our spiritual freedom.

## **Respond**

Where is the church today taking liberties with spiritual freedom? How can we learn from the past? What change in focus do we need in order to finish the race? Thank God that he is faithful. Pray that he will provide a way out.

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

## **Deeper Bible study**

**Loving God, keep us humble and aware of our constant need to keep close to you and receive grace from you, that we may continue to walk in your ways.**

Paul sets out to caution the Corinthians about any sense of spiritual superiority or complacency. It seems that some people in the church were pointing to their baptism and their participation in the Lord’s Supper – and therefore expressing a misplaced sense of safety and security. Paul has addressed in the previous chapter the need to keep fit in the faith ([1 Corinthians 9:24–27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+9%3A24%E2%80%9327&version=NIVUK)) and so challenges any hint of a spiritually blasé attitude. He does so by pointing to the people of Israel and the story of the Exodus and the journey to the Promised Land. He identifies four specific privileges that Israel enjoyed: the presence of God in the cloud and pillar guiding the people; the parting of the Red Sea; the provision of manna and quail; and the provision of water from the rock (vs 1–5). Paul reminds the Corinthians that, despite these blessings, the Israelites still turned away from the Lord and committed idolatry and immorality, before testing the Lord and grumbling about their circumstances (vs 7–11). Paul tells them that even those of us who are prone to thinking we have obtained spiritual revelation of God’s truth – and therefore have faith and doctrine worked out – should be cautious lest we stumble into error. Baptism, communion, even divine revelation, do not of themselves automatically lead to Christian maturity. None of the miracles the Israelites experienced guaranteed that they would inherit the Promised Land.

Should we get despondent or feel insecure, we are reminded of God’s gracious and faithful promise to us, that even when we are tempted or tested to disobey or to wander from the path of discipleship, he will always provide a means of escape and a route to safety.

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

## **Temptation**

As a teenager and before I became a Christian, I was very embarrassed and distressed by the temptations that continually got me down, especially all kinds of dishonesty.   
  
What a relief when I became a Christian to learn that I wasn’t alone, that everyone is tempted the same way I was, and that there is a way out! And to discover in experience that the Spirit gives me the power to overcome!  
  
Consider:  
  
• Temptation is universal. We are all tempted.   
  
• Temptation is not sin. Jesus was tempted (see [Matthew 4:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%204:1;&version=72;)).   
  
• It can come from human nature (see [Ephesians 2:1–3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202:1–3;&version=72;); [James 1:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James%201:14;&version=72;)), other people (see [2 Peter 2:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Peter%202:18;&version=72;)) and the world (see [1 John 2:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202:16;&version=72;)).   
  
• The more we know the Scriptures the better equipped we are (see [Matthew 4:4,7,10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%204:4,7,10;&version=72;)).   
  
• We should be prepared (see [Matthew 26:41](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2026:41;&version=72;)).   
  
• There is help at hand. We have an advocate with the Father in Jesus, who intercedes for us (see [Romans 8:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%208:26;&version=72;); [1 John 2:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202:1;&version=72;)). In [Revelation 3:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%203:10;&version=72;) Jesus promises the church in Philadelphia that he would keep them from the hour of trial. (The Greek word for ‘temptation’ also means ‘trial’.)   
  
• It is important to remember that we are not caught in an equal battle. The Spirit of Christ who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world (see [1 John 4:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%204:4;&version=72;)).   
  
[Annabel Robinson](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/R-S/3527737.id)

# Today in the Word – 1/25/18

# Practice: Christlike and Husbandly Love

[**Ephesians 5:25–33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:25–33)

25Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26to make her holy, cleansing[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:25%E2%80%9333#fen-NIV-29331a)] her by the washing with water through the word, 27and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30for we are members of his body. 31“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:25%E2%80%9333#fen-NIV-29336b)] 32This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 5:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:25%E2%80%9333#en-NIV-29331) Or having cleansed
2. [Ephesians 5:31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:25%E2%80%9333#en-NIV-29336) Gen. 2:24

A powerful biblical metaphor for God and His people is that of husband and wife. Christ is the Bridegroom and His church is the bride. The return of Christ means that “the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. . . . Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” (Rev. 19:7–9).

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Ephesians 5:25

Christ’s love for the church is the model for a husband’s love for his wife (v. 25; see Col. 3:19). What a challenge! Husbands have been given by God the leadership role in the family not because they deserve it or are better human beings, but to provide them with an opportunity to demonstrate the kind of sacrificial love which they have experienced from Christ.

Paul knew that the command for wives to submit might tempt husbands to pride. So he swiftly spelled out the husband’s reciprocal duty: “Love your wives, just as Christ loved the church.” How does Christ love? Sacrificially and purposefully; the husband should love his wife in a way that’s unselfishly committed to her wellbeing and to seeing God’s purposes realized in her life (v. 27).

A second, more down-to-earth comparison helps clarify this (vv. 28–31; see Gen. 2:24). A husband should love his wife as he loves his own body. This demonstrates the commitment to wellbeing, in that a man will take care of his body regardless of how he “feels” about it.

For both husband and wife, the model for marriage is the relationship between Christ and His church. This is a “profound mystery,” which marriage is intended to be an earthly reflection of (vv. 32–33). A godly marriage, then, is impossible without being filled with the Spirit!

### **Apply the Word**

Moody Theological Seminary professor John Trent has written practical books for spouses to improve their marriages: 30 Ways A Husband Can Bless His Wife and 30 Ways A Wife Can Bless Her Husband. He also leads the ministry and website StrongFamilies.com. Pray that Christian marriages will reflect the love between Christ and the church!

### **Pray with Us**

Please play for WCRF, Moody Radio’s station broadcasting from northeast Ohio: Brian Dahlen, Kelly Reiter, and Kathleen Zion proclaim Jesus Christ and point people to Him every day. Your prayers are an encouragement to the team!

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/25/18

# True Hope



**Read:** [**Romans 5:1–11**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A1%E2%80%9311)

### **Peace and Hope**

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A1%E2%80%9311#fen-NIV-28049a)] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A1%E2%80%9311#fen-NIV-28050b)] boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3Not only so, but we[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A1%E2%80%9311#fen-NIV-28051c)] also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

6You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! 10For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 5:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A1%E2%80%9311#en-NIV-28049) Many manuscripts let us
2. [Romans 5:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A1%E2%80%9311#en-NIV-28050) Or let us
3. [Romans 5:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A1%E2%80%9311#en-NIV-28051) Or let us

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. [Romans 8:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A16)

Not long ago I visited the Empire State Building with a friend. The line looked short—just down the block and around the corner. Yet as we entered the building, we discovered the line of people stretching through the lobby, up the stairs, and into another room. Every new turn revealed more distance to go.

Attractions and theme parks carefully route their crowds to make the lines seem shorter. Yet disappointment can lurk “just around the bend.”

[Abba, Father, thank You that I can always trust in Your perfect, never-ending love.](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Abba%2C+Father%2C+thank+You+that+I+can+always+trust+in+Your+perfect%2C+never-ending+love.&via=ourdailybread&url=https://odb.org/mF5/)

Sometimes life’s disappointments are much more severe. The job we hoped for doesn’t materialize; friends we counted on let us down; the romantic relationship we longed for fails to work out. But into these heartbreaks, God’s Word speaks a refreshing truth about our hope in Him. The apostle Paul wrote, “Suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame [or disappoint us], because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” (Romans 5:3–5).

As we place our trust in Him, through His Spirit, God whispers the truth that we are unconditionally loved and will one day be with Him—regardless of the obstacles we face. In a world that may often disappoint us, how good it is to know that God gives genuine hope.

Abba, Father, thank You that I can always trust in Your perfect, never-ending love.

In Christ, the hopeless find hope.

By [James Banks](https://odb.org/author/jamesbanks/)

#### **INSIGHT**

Does Paul add insult to injury when he links hope to character? Is he saying it takes being a good person to have hope (Romans 5:3–4)? No. Paul isn’t writing to exalt the virtues of moral or legal compliance. He’s telling a story about what the Spirit of Christ does for us in our sin and in our suffering (Romans 5:6–8; 8:22–27). According to Paul, hope is given to us by the Holy Spirit who personally opens our hearts to the love of God—with the assurance Christ died for us in our moral helplessness.

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

# God Calling – 1/25/18

# The Way of Happiness

"Complete surrender of every moment to God is the foundation of happiness."

Complete surrender of every moment to God is the foundation of happiness, the superstructure is the joy of Communion with Him. And that is, for each, the place, the mansion, I went to prepare for you.

My followers have misunderstood that, and looked too often upon that promise as referring only to an After-Life, and too often - far too often - upon this life as a something to be struggled through in order to get the reward and the joy of the next.

Seek to carry out all I say, and such understanding, insight, vision, and joy will be yours as shall pass indeed all understanding. The plans of God are very wonderful - beyond your highest hopes.

Cling to thoughts of protection, safety, guidance.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." - Romans 12:1

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/26/18

# Look Again And Consecrate

If God so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall He not much more clothe you? — [Matthew 6:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+6%3A30)

A simple statement of Jesus is always a puzzle to us if we are not simple. How are we going to be simple with the simplicity of Jesus? By receiving His Spirit, recognizing and relying on Him, obeying Him as He brings the word of God, and life will become amazingly simple. "Consider," says Jesus, "how much more your Father Who clothes the grass of the field will clothe you, if you keep your relationship right with Him." Every time we have gone back in spiritual communion it has been because we have impertinently known better than Jesus Christ. We have allowed the cares of the world to come in, and have forgotten the "much more" of our Heavenly Father.

"Behold the fowls of the air" – their main aim is to obey the principle of life that is in them and God looks after them. Jesus says that if you are rightly related to Him and obey His Spirit that is in you, God will look after your ‘feathers.’

"Consider the lilies of the field" – they grow where they are put. Many of us refuse to grow where we are put, consequently we take root nowhere. Jesus says that if we obey the life God has given us, He will look after all the other things. Has Jesus Christ told us a lie? If we are not experiencing the "much more," it is because we are not obeying the life God has given us, we are taken up with confusing considerations. How much time have we taken up worrying God with questions when we should have been absolutely free to concentrate on His work? Consecration means the continual separating of myself to one particular thing. We cannot consecrate once and for all. Am I continually separating myself to consider God every day of my life?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

It is perilously possible to make our conceptions of God like molten lead poured into a specially designed mould, and when it is cold and hard we fling it at the heads of the religious people who don’t agree with us.  
Disciples Indeed

# CCEL – 1/26/18

**Let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.**—[HEB. 13:13,14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.13)

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.—As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.—Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

[I Pet. 4:12.13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.12). -[II Cor. 1:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.7).[I Pet. 4:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.14).[Acts 5:41](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.5.html" \l "Acts.5.41). -[Heb. 11:25,26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.11.html" \l "Heb.11.25).

“Your heavenly Father.”

### [Matthew 6:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.26)

God’s people are doubly his children, they are his offspring by creation, and they are his sons by adoption in Christ. Hence they are privileged to call him, “Our Father which art in heaven.” Father! Oh, what precious word is that. Here is authority: “If I be a Father, where is mine honour?” If ye be sons, where is your obedience? Here is affection mingled with authority; an authority which does not provoke rebellion; an obedience demanded which is most cheerfully rendered—which would not be withheld even if it might. The obedience which God’s children yield to him must be loving obedience. Do not go about the service of God as slaves to their taskmaster’s toil, but run in the way of his commands because it is your Father's way. Yield your bodies as instruments of righteousness, because righteousness is your Father’s will, and his will should be the will of his child. Father!—Here is a kingly attribute so sweetly veiled in love, that the King’s crown is forgotten in the King’s face, and his sceptre becomes, not a rod of iron, but a silver sceptre of mercy—the sceptre indeed seems to be forgotten in the tender hand of him who wields it. Father!—Here is honour and love. How great is a Father’s love to his children! That which friendship cannot do, and mere benevolence will not attempt, a father’s heart and hand must do for his sons. They are his offspring, he must bless them; they are his children, he must show himself strong in their defence. If an earthly father watches over his children with unceasing love and care, how much more does our heavenly Father? Abba, Father! He who can say this, hath uttered better music than cherubim or seraphim can reach. There is heaven in the depth of that word—Father! There is all I can ask; all my necessities can demand; all my wishes can desire. I have all in all to all eternity when I can say, “Father.”

# Word Live – 1/26/18

# Look beyond what you see!

## Prepare

How aware are you of spiritual realities in the everyday world around you?



## **Bible passage 1 Corinthians 10:14–22**

##### **Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper**

14Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

18Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

## **Explore the Bible**

**Time to think deeper…**

In Disney’s The Lion King 1½, Rafiki the mandrill encourages Timon the meerkat to ‘look beyond what you see’. In this reading, Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians to do the same.

When considering idols, he has already agreed with them that physically idols are just lumps of wood, stone or metal ([8:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+8%3A4&version=NIVUK)). But here he expands that idea – physical reality is not the only reality. We also need to consider what is happening in the spiritual realm.

**Spiritual wisdom**

Eating at someone’s table in Middle Eastern culture at that time implied friendship, agreement and unity. Thus Communion is symbolic of our ‘oneness’ with Christ and our fellowship with each other. Similarly, although an idol itself is nothing, eating at a banquet dedicated to an idol meant expressing unity and agreement with demons who use idol worship to deceive and enslave people.

The Corinthians had boasted of their ‘knowledge’ ([8:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+8%3A1&version=NIVUK)). Here Paul appeals to that knowledge and calls on them to judge wisely (v 15): look at things from a spiritual perspective, don’t play with fire, flee from idolatry!

## **Respond**

Thank God that he has won the victory over all spiritual forces.‘Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross’ ([Colossians 2:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+2%3A15&version=NIVUK)). Recommit yourself to being wholly united to him, and to no other spiritual force.

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

## **Deeper Bible study**

**Lord, draw us nearer to you, confident that as we do so, you draw ever nearer to us.**

Paul returns to the issue of eating food that has been offered to idols. He has previously set out his belief that the food itself is not contaminated in any way and so can be eaten by believers, providing it does not cause a stumbling block to others. He offers some further thoughts here, clarifying that though the food carries no spiritual power in itself, sharing in the pagan ceremonies is idolatry and is therefore a no-go area for Christians (v 14).

His reasoning is based on illustrations from Christian life and heritage. First, he points to the Lord’s Supper, the sharing of bread and wine that is at the heart of Christian worship. Paul affirms that partaking of this meal draws believers into union and fellowship with one another, as well as into union with God (vs 16,17). Similarly, when the people of Israel offered sacrifices on the altar, they too were drawn closer to the Lord, for whom the sacrifice was offered. Therefore to eat food in the context of worship of other gods, such as at pagan temples or pagan ceremonies, means that one is participating in the worship of such gods. Worship of anything or anyone other than the Lord is clearly prohibited as idolatry and the Corinthians are warned to keep themselves free from such practices.

For Christians today, does this challenge the custom of some to engage in interfaith worship? Working with followers of other religions for the public good and to build community is often a good thing, but Christians must draw the line at worship that is offered in any way other than through Jesus Christ to God the Father. Such worship, in Paul’s view, arouses the Lord’s jealousy (v 22).

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

## **Idolatry**

**Idolatry then**  
  
The pagans of ancient Corinth saw the world as full of powers, both good and evil. Success in life was largely a matter of controlling these powers so that they would either act for one’s good, or just go away so that they did not do harm.   
  
Worshipping idols wasn’t just a matter of bowing down to them. It was an attempt to manipulate the powers (spirits or ‘gods’) in the world. It meant looking to them for prosperity and success.   
  
Participating in meals in idols’ temples would indicate complicity in the worship of pagan gods and with the sexual immorality that went with it. How could a Christian be involved in that and then participate in the Lord’s Supper?  
  
**Idolatry now**  
  
People often think of idolatry as materialism. But that doesn’t quite capture the sin that makes God so angry. God created the material world and the means for us to enjoy it (see [1 Timothy 6:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%206:17;&version=72;)). Idolatry creeps in when we turn to material things to do for us what only God can do – fulfil our longings, give meaning to our lives, fulfil our need for relationships.  
  
**Here are some ways we can commit idolatry:**• Put all our waking hours into making money.   
  
• Think that using this or that advertised product will give us greater sex appeal.  
   
• Turn to material things for meaning and satisfaction in life.   
  
• Take horoscopes or astrology seriously.   
  
• Copy the lifestyle of celebrities.  
   
• Be greedy (see [Colossians 3:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%203:5;&version=72;)).   
  
• Be superstitious.   
  
• Uncritically apply secular models to Christian work, eg thinking of evangelism as ‘marketing’.   
  
[Annabel Robinson](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/R-S/3527737.id)

# Today in the Word – 1/26/18

# Practice: Parents’ Authority

[**Ephesians 6:1–4**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206:1–4)

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— 3“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206:1%E2%80%934#fen-NIV-29341a)]

4Fathers,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206:1%E2%80%934" \l "fen-NIV-29342b" \o "See footnote b)] do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 6:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206:1%E2%80%934#en-NIV-29341) Deut. 5:16
2. [Ephesians 6:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206:1%E2%80%934#en-NIV-29342) Or Parents

Two kids were talking one day. The first said, “I’m really worried. My parents work hard to give me a nice home, food, and clothing. They cook and clean and drive me places. I’m worried sick!” The other responded, “Worried about what? It sounds like you’ve got it made!” “I know,” the first one said, “but what if they try to escape?”

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Ephesians 6:1

Parenting jokes aside, part of God’s order for the family includes children who are obedient to their parents. This is the third command in this “household code”: first, wives submit to husbands; second, husbands love wives; and now third, children obey parents (v. 1). This is actually the fifth of the Ten Commandments (vv. 2–3), and “the first commandment with a promise.” Originally, it was “so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you” (Deut. 5:16). Paul broadened it here to “enjoy long life on the earth,” a phrase that implies a general state of blessedness. In other words, keeping proper order and authority in this relationship is essential to our wellbeing. Obedience and disobedience to God’s commands have consequences.

Children’s disobedience is a serious sin, included in a list of what godless people do (see Rom. 1:30). In addition, honoring one’s parents extends past childhood. Paul also taught that caring for aged parents is part of this command (see 1 Tim. 5:4).

Parents have a reciprocal responsibility not to be tyrannical or abusive in their exercise of authority. Fathers, as the head of the home, are told not to “exasperate” their children (v. 4). This term can be translated “provoke” and means to anger or discourage. Instead, he should raise his children in a God-honoring manner (see Prov. 22:6).

### **Apply the Word**

Not all of us might have spouses or children—but all of us have had parents! Pray about how you can glorify God by respecting your parents. If they’re believers, give thanks for that spiritual heritage. If your past includes painful experiences with your parents, ask the Lord to heal your brokenness and thank Him for being your perfect Father.

### **Pray with Us**

Continue to remember Moody Radio’s WCRF in your prayers today. Doug Hainer, Paul Carter, and Scott Krus all serve to keep the station running smoothly, so more people can learn about God and His Word.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/26/18

# Holy, Holy, Holy



**Read:** [**Revelation 4**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4)

### **The Throne in Heaven**

4 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” 2At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. 3And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. 4Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. 5From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4#fen-NIV-30774a)] of God. 6Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 7The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. 8Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

“‘Holy, holy, holy

is the Lord God Almighty,’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4#fen-NIV-30777b)]

who was, and is, and is to come.”

9Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

11“You are worthy, our Lord and God,  
    to receive glory and honor and power,  
for you created all things,  
    and by your will they were created  
    and have their being.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Revelation 4:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4#en-NIV-30774) That is, the sevenfold Spirit
2. [Revelation 4:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4#en-NIV-30777) Isaiah 6:3

Day and night they never stop saying: “ ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come.” [Revelation 4:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4%3A8)

“Time flies when you’re having fun.” This cliché has no basis in fact, but experience makes it seem true.

When life is pleasant, time passes all too quickly. Give me a task that I enjoy, or a person whose company I love, and time seems irrelevant.

[“ ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come.” Revelation 4:8](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=%E2%80%9C+%E2%80%98Holy%2C+holy%2C+holy+is+the+Lord+God+Almighty%2C%E2%80%99+who+was%2C+and+is%2C+and+is+to+come.%E2%80%9D+Revelation+4%3A8&via=ourdailybread&hashtags=holy&url=https://odb.org/mF6/)

My experience of this “reality” has given me a new understanding of the scene described in Revelation 4. In the past, when I considered the four living creatures seated around God’s throne who keep repeating the same few words, I thought, What a boring existence!

I don’t think that anymore. I think about the scenes they have witnessed with their many eyes (v. 8). I consider the view they have from their position around God’s throne (v. 6). I think of how amazed they are at God’s wise and loving involvement with wayward earthlings. Then I think, What better response could there be? What else is there to say but, “Holy, holy, holy”?

Is it boring to say the same words over and over? Not when you’re in the presence of the one you love. Not when you’re doing exactly what you were designed to do.

Like the four creatures, we were designed to glorify God. Our lives will never be boring if we’re focusing our attention on Him and fulfilling that purpose.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee; holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!  Reginald Heber

The author of this article, Julie, is now worshiping her Lord in heaven.

A heart in tune with God can’t help but sing His praise.

By [Julie Ackerman Link](https://odb.org/author/julieackermanlink/)

# God Calling – 1/26/18

# Keep Calm

"Keep your Spirit-Life calm and unruffled."

Keep your Spirit-Life calm and unruffled. Nothing else matters. Leave all to Me. This is your great task, to get calm in My Presence, not to let one ruffled feeling stay for one moment. Years of blessing may be checked in one moment by that.

No matter who frets you or what, yours is the task to stop all else until absolute calm comes. Any block means My Power diverted into other channels.

Pour forth - pour forth - pour forth - I cannot bless a life that does not act as a channel. My Spirit brooks no stagnation, not even in rest. Its Power must flow on. Pass on everything, every blessing. Abide in Me.

See how many you can bless each day. Dwell much in My Presence.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." - Proverbs 4:23

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/27/18

# Look Again And Think

Take no thought for your life. — [Matthew 6:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+6%3A25)

A warning which needs to be reiterated is that the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things entering in, will choke all that God puts in. We are never free from the recurring tides of this encroachment. If it does not come on the line of clothes and food, it will come on the line of money or lack of money; of friends or lack of friends; or on the line of difficult circumstances. It is one steady encroachment all the time, and unless we allow the Spirit of God to raise up the standard against it, these things will come in like a flood.

"Take no thought for your life." "Be careful about one thing only," says our Lord – "your relationship to Me." Common sense shouts loud and says – "That is absurd, I must consider how I am going to live, I must consider what I am going to eat and drink." Jesus says you must not. Beware of allowing the thought that this statement is made by One Who does not understand our particular circumstances. Jesus Christ knows our circumstances better than we do, and He says we must not think about these things so as to make them the one concern of our life. Whenever there is competition, be sure that you put your relationship to God first.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." How much evil has begun to threaten you to-day? What kind of mean little imps have been looking in and saying – Now what are you going to do next month – this summer? "Be anxious for nothing," Jesus says. Look again and think. Keep your mind on the "much more" of your heavenly Father.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Beware of bartering the Word of God for a more suitable conception of your own.  Disciples Indeed, 386 R

# CCEL – 1/27/18

**Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is no sin.**—[I JOHN 3:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.5)

God, . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.—He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.—The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

[Heb. 1:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.1.html" \l "Heb.1.13). -[II Cor. 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html#iiCor.5.21).[I Pet. 1:17-20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.17). -[II Cor. 5:14,15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.14).

“And of his fulness have all we received.”

### [John 1:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.16)

These words tell us that there is a fulness in Christ. There is a fulness of essential Deity, for “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead.” There is a fulness of perfect manhood, for in him, bodily, that Godhead was revealed. There is a fulness of atoning efficacy in his blood, for “the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” There is a fulness of justifying righteousness in his life, for “there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” There is a fulness of divine prevalence in his plea, for “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” There is a fulness of victory in his death, for through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. There is a fulness of efficacy in his resurrection from the dead, for by it “we are begotten again unto a lively hope.” There is a fulness of triumph in his ascension, for “when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men.” There is a fulness of blessings of every sort and shape; a fulness of grace to pardon, of grace to regenerate, of grace to sanctify, of grace to preserve, and of grace to perfect. There is a fulness at all times; a fulness of comfort in affliction; a fulness of guidance in prosperity. A fulness of every divine attribute, of wisdom, of power, of love; a fulness which it were impossible to survey, much less to explore. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” Oh, what a fulness must this be of which all receive! Fulness, indeed, must there be when the stream is always flowing, and yet the well springs up as free, as rich, as full as ever. Come, believer, and get all thy need supplied; ask largely, and thou shalt receive largely, for this “fulness” is inexhaustible, and is treasured up where all the needy may reach it, even in Jesus, Immanuel—God with us.

# Word Live – 1/27/18

# To sum up…

## **Prepare**

Look back over the week’s readings. What has struck you most from Paul’s discussion?



## Bible passage 1 Corinthians 10:23 – 11:1

##### **The Believer's Freedom**

##### 

23"Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is constructive. 24Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

25Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, 26for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

27If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. 28But if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake— 29the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? 30If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

31So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 33even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

#### **1 Corinthians 11**

1Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Final answers**

Paul comes to the end of his discussion about whether or not it is right to eat food offered to idols, and in these verses he sums up:

We are free – but not everything we are free to do is helpful to our spiritual growth.

We have rights – but so do others and we should put their good before our own.

In everything we do, we should be mindful of the effect of our behaviour on other people’s faith, and on God’s reputation.

**Living for God and others**

Our Christian faith is not a private thing, between us and God. The Corinthian Christians had only been considering ‘what is the harm to me if I do this or that?’. Paul challenges us to consider what might be harmful, and what might be loving, to others in the choices we make.

The purpose of our lives is not to see how much we can ‘get away with’. It is to give glory to God and work for the good of others. And we are not on our own in this – we have the example of other more mature Christians, and the example of Jesus himself!

## **Respond**

As we try to live for God in the 21st century, thank God for the example of Christian leaders and of Jesus. ‘Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever’ ([Hebrews 13:7,8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+13%3A7-8&version=NIVUK)).

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

## **Deeper Bible study**

**‘And if our fellowship below in Jesus be so sweet, what heights of rapture shall we know when round his throne we meet!’ (Charles Wesley, ‘All praise to our redeeming Lord’)**

‘The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion’: so said ‘a serious man’ to John Wesley1. Although there may well be an occasional exception to this rule, for good reason, the Christian life is one lived in community with our neighbours and in the church. Our task is to make sense of God’s word in relation to those communities and the wider world. Paul is aware of this and so wants to educate and inspire his hearers to live with the attitude of service that puts the needs and wants of others first, even if this is inconvenient. On the principle of individual Christian freedom, he emphasises that everything is permitted, but not everything will bring benefit to us or others. He’s talking specifically about the matter of food and drink offered to idols and he reminds the Corinthians that it is not the food itself that is the problem but what it represents to us and to others. Food is part of God’s good creation, so we are to enjoy what he gives with gratitude and praise. The caveat he offers is that if someone else draws a link between the food they eat and its pagan links, it’s probably better to abstain, lest the other person is offended or it unhelpfully reminds them of the pagan life they have left.

This doesn’t mean that Christians are to be exceedingly fussy. We are free to eat and act as we please, but should ensure that what we do doesn’t hurt others and therefore hinder the gospel. Paul, because of his passion for those who were not yet Christians, tried to always do the best by others in preference to himself and he asserts that in doing so he mirrored the attitude of Christ, our great example. Sometimes that attitude and example is easy to recognise in believers today; at other times, it is more hidden.

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

1 <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesley-the-methodist/chapter-ix-society-and-class/>

## **Conscience: contemporary parallels**

We can apply this line of thinking to a number of matters of conscience today. Here are some to get you thinking.   
  
**Alcohol**There is nothing intrinsically wrong with drinking alcohol – responsibly. Jesus turned water into wine. However, there are some situations in which it would be wrong to drink. For example, if you’re in the company of someone who has overcome an alcohol addiction, don’t drink!   
  
**Diet**Some people are vegetarian on principle. On the other hand cogent reasons can be put forward for a diet that includes meat. Neither lifestyle is intrinsically Christian.   
  
Paul’s advice: go along with what your friends are eating. (Do you think the same might apply to Christian vegetarians faced with a meal that includes meat?)  
  
**Fairtrade**A similar argument applies to those who commit themselves to using only Fairtrade coffee, chocolate, etc.  
  
**Recycling**Here’s a complicated issue that has become close to a religion for some. Respect those people, and when in their presence, do as the Romans do.  
  
**Dress**You can wear almost anything anywhere these days. But some people see a symbolism in dress. Respect them.  
  
**Going to certain places**What do you do if a friend’s wedding or funeral is performed according to the rites of another religion? How might these principles apply?  
  
**Some good advice**Don’t be too rigid in your behaviour when the issue is at least debatable. There is something beautiful about the person who, out of love, is gracious enough to put their (debatable) principles aside.   
  
[Annabel Robinson](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/R-S/3527737.id)

# Today in the Word – 1/27/18

# Practice: Other Authorities

[**Ephesians 6:5–9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206:5–9)

5Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, 8because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

9And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Slavery is not just an injustice of the past, though it is officially illegal in every nation. One report estimates that nearly 46 million people live in some form of slavery today, typically involving forced labor or sexual exploitation. Sixty percent of these modern-day slaves live in just five countries: India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Uzbekistan.

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people.Ephesians 6:7

In the Roman Empire, the institution of slavery sometimes differed from what we know from American history. While it did involve ownership of human beings and many cruelties, abuse, and injustices, it was often more like indentured servitude. Slaves may have comprised as much as one third of the population of Ephesus. Most could expect emancipation by age 30. Nonetheless, owning another human being is clearly unjust. Paul didn’t endorse it, and his teaching here should be seen as a temporary measure within a fallen world (see 1 Cor. 7:21–24).

Within the context of that social institution, God again outlines a proper order, which was for slaves to obey their masters (vv. 5–8; see Titus 2:9–10). As a matter of Christian integrity, this obedience was not to be grudging, reluctant, or only when under observation, but at all times “as you would obey Christ.” The service should be given willingly and wholeheartedly. Ultimately, slaves were accountable to God and would be rewarded by Him.

Throughout this passage, Paul gave the masters the countercultural command of a reciprocal responsibility. They were to treat their slaves fairly, as if Christ’s eyes were on them at all times (v. 9). Specifically, they were not to “threaten” or verbally abuse them, nor to show favoritism nor use their authority capriciously. They would ultimately be held accountable by God.

### **Apply the Word**

For many of us, this passage applies to our work experience. Our work should be done honestly and well, “as if you were serving the Lord.” Putting on a show for a performance review doesn’t honor the Lord, nor does snitching office supplies because “they’ll never miss them.” Doing our jobs with integrity is part of our Christian witness!

### **Pray with Us**

Ken Heulitt, Moody’s chief financial officer, asks for your prayers today. We are thankful to have a person of integrity, character, and kindness over-seeing Moody’s finances. Pray for his wise leadership of our financial decisions.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/27/18

# The Last Word



**Read:** [**Ecclesiastes 5:1–7**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+5%3A1%E2%80%937)

### **Fulfill Your Vow to God**

5 [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+5%3A1%E2%80%937#fen-NIV-17399a)]Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

2Do not be quick with your mouth,  
    do not be hasty in your heart  
    to utter anything before God.  
God is in heaven  
    and you are on earth,  
    so let your words be few.  
3A dream comes when there are many cares,  
    and many words mark the speech of a fool.

4When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. 5It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it. 6Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, “My vow was a mistake.” Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? 7Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore fear God.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ecclesiastes 5:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+5%3A1%E2%80%937#en-NIV-17399) In Hebrew texts 5:1 is numbered 4:17, and 5:2-20 is numbered 5:1-19.

Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart. [Ecclesiastes 5:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+5%3A2)

One day during a university philosophy class, a student made some inflammatory remarks about the professor’s views. To the surprise of the other students, the teacher thanked him and moved on to another comment. When he was asked later why he didn’t respond to the student, he said, “I’m practicing the discipline of not having to have the last word.”

This teacher loved and honored God, and he wanted to embody a humble spirit as he reflected this love. His words remind me of another Teacher—this one from long ago, who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. Although not addressing how to handle an angry person, he said that when we approach the Lord we should guard our steps and “go near to listen” rather than being quick with our mouths and hasty in our hearts. By doing so we acknowledge that God is the Lord and we are those whom He has created (Ecclesiastes 5:1–2).

[Lord, teach me how to pray and how to listen.](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Lord%2C+teach+me+how+to+pray+and+how+to+listen.&via=ourdailybread&url=https://odb.org/mF7/)

How do you approach God? If you sense that your attitude could use some adjustment, why not spend some time considering the majesty and greatness of the Lord? When we ponder His unending wisdom, power, and presence, we can feel awed by His overflowing love for us. With this posture of humility, we too need not have the last word.

Lord God, I want to honor You and I bow before You now in silence. Teach me how to pray and how to listen.

Carefully chosen words honor God.

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

#### **INSIGHT**

The power and significance of our words is a repeated topic in Scripture. Following the admonitions of Proverbs and anticipating the words of Jesus and James (see Proverbs 10:13, 32; 12:16–17; 13:3; 16:1; Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45; James 3:3–12), the writer of Ecclesiastes warns about controlling our tongues.

Why do we need to watch what we say? Because our words are a recognition of who we are in relationship to God. When the writer warns, “God is in heaven and you are on earth” (Ecclesiastes 5:2), he is saying that humility is the proper attitude toward our words because we do not know everything. Being “quick with your mouth” (v. 2) may lead us to say things that are untrue and make plans based on wrong information.

How does knowing that God—the Creator of the universe—is in heaven and we are on earth help you to humbly choose your words?

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

# God Calling – 1/27/18

# Height of the Storm

"It is a part of My method to wait till the storm is at its full violence."

"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." - John 6:68

I am with you both. Go forward unafraid. Health and strength, peace and happiness and joy - they are all My gifts. Yours for the asking. In the spiritual (as in the material) world there is no empty space, and as self and fears and worries depart out of your lives, it follows that the things of the Spirit, that you crave so, rush in to take their places. All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. What a wonderful cycle, because ye are God's.

Be not afraid. Fear not. It is to the drowning man the Rescuer comes. To the brave swimmer who can fare well alone He comes not. And no rush of Joy can be like that of a man towards his Rescuer.

It is a part of My method to wait till the storm is at its full violence. So did I with My disciples on the Lake. I could have bidden the first angry wave be calm, the first gust of wind be still, but what a lesson unlearned? What a sense of tender nearness of refuge and safety would have been lost.

Remember this - My disciples thought that in sleep I had forgotten them. Remember how mistaken they were. Gain strength and confidence and joyful dependence and anticipation from that.

Never fear. Joy is yours, and the radiant joy of the rescued shall be yours.

"Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths." - Psalm 25:4

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/28/18

# But It Is Hardly Credible That One Could So Persecute Jesus!

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? — [Acts 26:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+26%3A14)

Am I set on my own way for God? We are never free from this snare until we are brought into the experience of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. Obstinacy and self-will will always stab Jesus Christ. It may hurt no one else, but it wounds His Spirit. Whenever we are obstinate and self-willed and set upon our own ambitions, we are hurting Jesus. Every time we stand on our rights and insist that this is what we intend to do, we are persecuting Jesus. Whenever we stand on our dignity we systematically vex and grieve His Spirit; and when the knowledge comes home that it is Jesus Whom we have been persecuting all the time, it is the most crushing revelation there could be.

Is the word of God tremendously keen to me as I hand it on to you, or does my life give the lie to the things I profess to teach? I may teach sanctification and yet exhibit the spirit of Satan, the spirit that persecutes Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Jesus is conscious of one thing only – a perfect oneness with the Father, and He says, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." All I do ought to be founded on a perfect oneness with Him, not on a self-willed determination to be godly. This will mean that I can be easily put upon, easily over-reached, easily ignored; but if I submit to it for His sake, I prevent Jesus Christ being persecuted.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The vital relationship which the Christian has to the Bible is not that he worships the letter, but that the Holy Spirit makes the words of the Bible spirit and life to him.  The Psychology of Redemption, 1066 L

# CCEL – 1/28/18

**As thy days, so shall thy strength be.**—[DEUT. 33:25.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.33.html" \l "Deut.33.25)

When they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.—Take no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.—He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.—I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

[Matt. 13:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.13.html" \l "Matt.13.11). -[Matt. 6:34](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.34).[Psa. 68:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.68.html" \l "Ps.68.35). -[Isa. 40:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.40.html" \l "Isa.40.29).[II Cor. 12:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.12.html" \l "iiCor.12.9). -[Phi. 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.13). -[Judg. 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Judg.5.html" \l "Judg.5.21).

“Perfect in Christ Jesus.”

### [Colossians 1:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.28)

Do you not feel in your own soul that perfection is not in you? Does not every day teach you that? Every tear which trickles from your eye, weeps “imperfection;” every harsh word which proceeds from your lip, mutters “imperfection.” You have too frequently had a view of your own heart to dream for a moment of any perfection in yourself. But amidst this sad consciousness of imperfection, here is comfort for you—you are “perfect in Christ Jesus.” In God’s sight, you are “complete in him;” even now you are “accepted in the Beloved.” But there is a second perfection, yet to be realized, which is sure to all the seed. Is it not delightful to look forward to the time when every stain of sin shall be removed from the believer, and he shall be presented faultless before the throne, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing? The Church of Christ then will be so pure, that not even the eye of Omniscience will see a spot or blemish in her; so holy and so glorious, that Hart did not go beyond the truth when he said—

“With my Saviour’s garments on,

Holy as the Holy One.”

Then shall we know, and taste, and feel the happiness of this vast but short sentence, “Complete in Christ.” Not till then shall we fully comprehend the heights and depths of the salvation of Jesus. Doth not thy heart leap for joy at the thought of it? Black as thou art, thou shalt be white one day; filthy as thou art, thou shalt be clean. Oh, it is a marvellous salvation this! Christ takes a worm and transforms it into an angel; Christ takes a black and deformed thing and makes it clean and matchless in his glory, peerless in his beauty, and fit to be the companion of seraphs. O my soul, stand and admire this blessed truth of perfection in Christ.

# Word Live – 1/28/18

# Living for God

## **Prepare**

When in your day-to-day life do you find it hardest to live for the glory of God? Talk to God about these issues.



## **Bible passage Psalm 137**

1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept   
       when we remembered Zion.

2 There on the poplars   
       we hung our harps,

3 for there our captors asked us for songs,   
       our tormentors demanded songs of joy;   
       they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

4 How can we sing the songs of the LORD   
       while in a foreign land?

5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,   
       may my right hand forget its skill .

6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth   
       if I do not remember you,   
       if I do not consider Jerusalem   
       my highest joy.

7 Remember, O LORD, what the Edomites did   
       on the day Jerusalem fell.   
       "Tear it down," they cried,   
       "tear it down to its foundations!"

8 O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction,   
       happy is he who repays you   
       for what you have done to us-

9 he who seizes your infants   
       and dashes them against the rocks.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Living in the world**

In our readings from 1 Corinthians over the past week, Paul has been answering the question, ‘How can we live for God in a pagan society?’ Here we see the Israelites asking the same question.

Clearly some Jews did manage to ‘sing the Lord’s songs in a foreign land’ – the Bible records the stories of Daniel, Nehemiah and Esther among others. In these stories we see individuals wrestling with the issues of living within a particular culture but being distinctively God’s people, just as we have to do today.

**Sin and righteousness**

That said, how do we reconcile verse 9 with a psalm inspired by a loving merciful God? Perhaps the psalmist is crying out for God to fulfil his purposes to judge all evil. Certainly, God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked ([Ezekiel 33:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+33%3A11&version=NIVUK)), much less the weak and defenceless ([Psalm 82:3,4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+82%3A3-4&version=NIVUK)).

How horrified are we when we see sin in the world? How distinct are we as children of God in our world? How committed are we to seeking God’s kingdom and his righteousness?

## **Respond**

‘Restore, O Lord, the honour of Your name, In works of sovereign power come shake the earth again … And in Your anger, Lord, remember mercy.’ (Graham Kendrick, Chris Rolinson; Copyright © 1981 Thankyou Music)

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

## **Deeper Bible study**

**Loving God, we remember today your faithfulness and grace. Help us to rest in the reassurance that you ever remember us.**

Memory is a powerful thing. In my work as a local church minister, I’m often confronted with death and its sadness and pain. As part of the process of preparing the bereaved for the funeral, I will often ask to listen to the many and varied memories that a family or partner may have of a loved one who has recently died. This is carried over into the liturgy of my denomination where space is given to recall memories of the deceased and thank God for them. For many, this is a cathartic part of the process of grief; but for others, memories can bring up troubling emotions and experiences long forgotten or hidden away. In this psalm, the author is struggling with the pain of remembering tragedy and loss. The Judean exile of 587 BC caused great anguish and pain to the whole nation (v 1). The torment was only increased when the captors sought to make them perform their songs as cheap entertainment (vs 3,4).

The psalmist knows that, for him, remembering is painful, but he would rather experience the pain of remembering than forget Jerusalem altogether (vs 5,6). Jerusalem represents the place of worship and communion with God, the place of God’s dwelling. The psalmist is keen to remain anchored in his heritage and not forget his origins.

Lastly, and with some anger, the psalmist pleads with God not to forget the suffering of his people (v 7) and expresses some of the pain and anger he is experiencing in his tirade against Babylon. It is important to have a safe and trusted place where one can find a voice for memories that cause pain and deep hurt. Facing up to such memories can bring healing and liberty from the desire to inflict revenge or pain on others.

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

# Today in the Word – 1/28/18

# Our Spiritual Battle

[**Ephesians 6:10–12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206:10–12)

### **The Armor of God**

10Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

The Great Wall of Gorgan is one of the most impressive structures ever built. Constructed 1,500 years ago to protect the Persian Empire from enemy raiding parties, it stretches for more than 120 miles in northwestern Iran. Recent excavations have revealed the quality and careful engineering that went into it. At any given time, about 20,000 soldiers would have been stationed along the wall to protect the border.

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. Ephesians 6:11

A strong defense is an important dimension of spiritual warfare. “Finally,” Paul wrote, “be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” (v. 10). Having discussed God’s purposes and plans in salvation, and having urged the Ephesians to live worthy of the gospel and to be filled with the Holy Spirit, he now moved to close his epistle with an exhortation regarding spiritual warfare.

Christ has finished His work of redemption and is seated at God’s right hand, far above all other spiritual powers. Yet at the same time, the battle rages on in the history of the church and in our own lives. We shouldn’t try to fight in our own strength but instead rely on God’s “mighty power” given to us in His “full armor” (v. 11).

Spiritual warfare consists of standing against the devil’s schemes. Satan is the enemy or adversary of God and the gospel, so by definition any plan or intention he has is wicked. He and his fallen angels, all the “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms,” take every opportunity to try and undercut God’s work in the world (v. 12).

We shouldn’t view other people as the enemy. They are made in God’s image and loved by Him. Instead, our real enemy and the real battle are spiritual (see 3:10–11).

### **Apply the Word**

The literary genre of fantasy is one way Christian writers have explored what spiritual warfare might look or feel like. Three insightful novels that take spiritual realities seriously are That Hideous Strength by C. S. Lewis, War in Heaven by Charles Williams, and The Alpine Tales (actually four books) by Paul J. Willis.

### **Pray with Us**

Your prayers will be an encouragement to the faculty and staff at Moody Theological Seminary’s Michigan campus. Pray for Amber Tucker, Eric Moore, and Eugene Mayhew as they minister to students this semester.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/28/18

# Joy



### **Read:** [**Psalm 92**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+92) **[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+92#fen-NIV-15413a)**]**

#### A psalm. A song. For the Sabbath day.

1It is good to praise the Lord  
    and make music to your name, O Most High,  
2proclaiming your love in the morning  
    and your faithfulness at night,  
3to the music of the ten-stringed lyre  
    and the melody of the harp.

4For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord;  
    I sing for joy at what your hands have done.  
5How great are your works, Lord,  
    how profound your thoughts!  
6Senseless people do not know,  
    fools do not understand,  
7that though the wicked spring up like grass  
    and all evildoers flourish,  
    they will be destroyed forever.

8But you, Lord, are forever exalted.

9For surely your enemies, Lord,  
    surely your enemies will perish;  
    all evildoers will be scattered.  
10You have exalted my horn[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+92#fen-NIV-15422b)] like that of a wild ox;  
    fine oils have been poured on me.  
11My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries;  
    my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.

12The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,  
    they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;  
13planted in the house of the Lord,  
    they will flourish in the courts of our God.  
14They will still bear fruit in old age,  
    they will stay fresh and green,  
15proclaiming, “The Lord is upright;  
    he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 92:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+92#en-NIV-15413) In Hebrew texts 92:1-15 is numbered 92:2-16.
2. [Psalm 92:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+92#en-NIV-15422) Horn here symbolizes strength.

I sing for joy at what your hands have done. [Psalm 92:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+92%3A4)

I’m fast approaching a new season—the “winter” of old age—but I’m not there yet. Even though the years are galloping by and sometimes I’d like to slow them down, I have joy that sustains me. Each day is a new day given me by the Lord. With the psalmist, I can say, “It is good to praise the Lord . . . proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night”! (Psalm 92:1–2).

Even though my life has its struggles and the pain and difficulties of others sometimes overwhelm me, God enables me to join the psalmist in “[singing] for joy at what [His] hands have done” (v. 4). Joy for blessings given: family, friends, and satisfying work. Joy because of God’s wondrous creation and His inspired Word. Joy because Jesus loved us so much He died for our sins. And joy because He gave us the Spirit, the source of true joy (Romans 15:13). Because of the Lord, believers in Him can “flourish like a palm tree . . . [and] still bear fruit in old age” (Psalm 92:12–14).

[No matter our circumstances or season of life, we can be examples of His love.](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=No+matter+our+circumstances+or+season+of+life%2C+we+can+be+examples+of+His+love.&via=ourdailybread&hashtags=examples&url=https://odb.org/mF8/)

What fruit is that? No matter our circumstances or season of life, we can be examples of His love through the life we lead and the words we say. There is joy in knowing and living for the Lord and telling others about Him.

Dear Lord, thank You for the joy that is ours through the Spirit.

God is the giver of joy.

By [Alyson Kieda](https://odb.org/author/akieda/)

#### **INSIGHT**

The psalmist proclaims that the righteous—the faithful—will flourish like a palm tree and grow like the cedars of Lebanon (Psalm 92:12). The palm tree was associated with value—both ornamental and economic—and palm fronds were already being used in worship (Leviticus 23:40). The cedars of Lebanon are almost always used in Scripture to illustrate strength, stability, and majesty. When this psalm was written, magnificent evergreen (cedar) forests graced the mountains of Lebanon. With low branches and expansive canopies, these trees can reach up to 100 feet. The psalmist prays for the righteous to increase like the cedar and blossom like the palm tree; this fruitfulness can then spill over into the lives of others.

[Dennis Moles](https://odb.org/author/dmoles/)

# God Calling – 1/28/18

# Low Ambitions

"There is not one want of the soul that I do not supply for the asking, and to you, too, I long to be all."

Fear not. Do not fear to be busy. You are the servant of all. "He that would be the greatest among you, let him be the servant of all."

Service is the word of My disciples. I served indeed, the humblest, the lowliest. I was at their command. My highest powers were at their service.

Be used. Be used by all, by the lowest, the smallest. How best you can serve? Let that be your daily seeking, not how best can you be served.

Look around you. Do the aims and ambitions that man strives for bring peace, or the world's awards bring heart-rest and happiness? No! indeed, man is at war with man. Those whom the world has most rewarded, with name, fame, honour, wealth, are weary and disappointed.

And yet, to the listening ear, above the jangle of the world's discordant cries, there echoes down the 1900 years My message, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."

And the weary and disappointed who listen and turn to Me find indeed that rest. Joy of the Weary I am, Music to the Heart I am, Health to the Sick, Wealth to the Poor, Food to the Hungry, Home to the Wanderer, Rapture to the Jaded, Love to the Lonely.

There is not one want of the soul that I do not supply for the asking, and to you too, I long to be all.

"Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you." - Isaiah 30:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/29/18

# But It Is Hardly Credible That One Could Be So Positively Ignorant!

Who art Thou, Lord? — [Acts 26:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+26%3A15)

"The Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand." There is no escape when Our Lord speaks, He always comes with an arrestment of the understanding. Has the voice of God come to you directly? If it has, you cannot mistake the intimate insistence with which it has spoken to you in the language you know best, not through your ears, but through your circumstances.

God has to destroy our determined confidence in our own convictions. "I know this is what I should do" – and suddenly the voice of God speaks in a way that overwhelms us by revealing the depths of our ignorance. We have shown our ignorance of Him in the very way we determined to serve Him. We serve Jesus in a spirit that is not His, we hurt Him by our advocacy for Him, we push His claims in the spirit of the devil. Our words sound all right, but our spirit is that of an enemy. "He rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." The spirit of our Lord in an advocate of His is described in 1 Corinthians 13.

Have I been persecuting Jesus by a zealous determination to serve Him in my own way? If I feel I have done my duty and yet have hurt Him in doing it, I may be sure it was not my duty, because it has not fostered the meek and quiet spirit, but the spirit of self-satisfaction. We imagine that whatever is unpleasant is our duty! Is that anything like the spirit of our Lord – "I delight to do Thy will, O My God."

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

To live a life alone with God does not mean that we live it apart from everyone else. The connection between godly men and women and those associated with them is continually revealed in the Bible, e.g., 1 Timothy 4:10.  Not Knowing Whither, 867 L

# CCEL – 1/29/18

**Thou God seest me.**—[GEN. 16:13.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.16.html" \l "Gen.16.13)

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether . . . Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.—The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.—God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.—The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.

Jesus . . . knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man.—Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.

[Psa. 139:1-4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.1),[6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.6).[Prov. 15:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.15.html" \l "Prov.15.3). -[Prov. 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.5.html" \l "Prov.5.21). -[Luke 16:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.16.html" \l "Luke.16.15). -[II Chr. 16:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiChr.16.html" \l "iiChr.16.9).[John 2:24,25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.2.html" \l "John.2.24).[John 21:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.21.html" \l "John.21.17).

“The things which are not seen.”

### [2 Corinthians 4:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html#iiCor.4.18)

In our Christian pilgrimage it is well, for the most part, to be looking forward. Forward lies the crown, and onward is the goal. Whether it be for hope, for joy, for consolation, or for the inspiring of our love, the future must, after all, be the grand object of the eye of faith. Looking into the future we see sin cast out, the body of sin and death destroyed, the soul made perfect, and fit to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Looking further yet, the believer’s enlightened eye can see death’s river passed, the gloomy stream forded, and the hills of light attained on which standeth the celestial city; he seeth himself enter within the pearly gates, hailed as more than conqueror, crowned by the hand of Christ, embraced in the arms of Jesus, glorified with him, and made to sit together with him on his throne, even as he has overcome and has sat down with the Father on his throne. The thought of this future may well relieve the darkness of the past and the gloom of the present. The joys of heaven will surely compensate for the sorrows of earth. Hush, hush, my doubts! death is but a narrow stream, and thou shalt soon have forded it. Time, how short—eternity, how long! Death, how brief—immortality, how endless! Methinks I even now eat of Eshcol’s clusters, and sip of the well which is within the gate. The road is so, so short! I shall soon be there.

“When the world my heart is rending

With its heaviest storm of care,

My glad thoughts to heaven ascending,

Find a refuge from despair.

Faith’s bright vision shall sustain me

Till life’s pilgrimage is past;

Fears may vex and troubles pain me,

I shall reach my home at last.”

# Word Live – 1/29/18

# In desperation

## **Prepare**

What do you long for? Do you believe God would give that to you? Whatever your answer, invite the Holy Spirit to give you greater understanding of Christ and to deepen your belief in him.



## **Bible passage Matthew 8:1–13**

##### **The Man With Leprosy**

1 When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. 2 A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

3 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cured of his leprosy. 4 Then Jesus said to him, “See that you don’t tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

##### **The Faith of the Centurion**

5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6 “Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering.”

7 Jesus said to him, “I will go and heal him.”

8 The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

10 When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, “I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that very hour.

## **Explore the Bible**

**Fearful approach**

In Jesus’ day, leprosy was an incurable disease with devastating physical and social consequences. Leprosy sufferers were ceremonially unclean ([Leviticus 14:2–32](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+14%3A2%E2%80%9332&version=NIVUK)), excluded from the religious life of their community, and they were forced to suffer and die away from their loved ones.

Life couldn’t get any tougher for this man with leprosy. Imagine the expressions in the crowd as the man approaches. Imagine the desperation driving him forward to Jesus. He believes that Jesus has the power to do the impossible and transform his situation but deep down there is a dull, nagging doubt – ‘… if you are willing’ (v 2). Will Jesus want to help him?

**Surprising welcome**

Many in the crowd, possibly even the man himself, may have believed that the disease was a consequence of personal sin (see [John 9:1,2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+9%3A1-2&version=NIVUK)). If the God of the Old Testament law rejected him as unclean, wouldn’t Jesus do the same?

Gloriously, Jesus’ answer and actions proclaim something new (v 3). He is willing to touch the unclean to make them whole. Through Jesus, God deals with sin-sickness. Instead of being sent away from God’s presence, outcasts (vs 10–12) who trust Jesus are restored and welcomed by God.

## **Respond**

Reflect on all that Jesus has been willing to do to make you whole.

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

## **Introduction to Matthew 8–10**

Many Bible scholars believe that Matthew led a community of believers who ensured the survival of his testimony: this is the Gospel created within that community. Time has passed. Old stories are being retold for second- and third-generation Christians. The miracles described in [chapters 8 and 9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+8-9&version=NIVUK), the first in this Gospel, were previously reported in Mark’s Gospel, which the writer almost certainly held in his hand, but Matthew arranged them differently to communicate the message of his Gospel. Trying to harmonise the Gospels is sometimes unhelpful, destroying each unique Gospel’s carefully crafted message. Why try to devise a more precise history of Jesus’ ministry than the Gospel writers themselves intended?

Matthew places this group of miracle stories immediately before the account of Jesus sending out the disciples ([ch 10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+10&version=NIVUK" \t "_blank)). They are not written to prove that Jesus was the Christ. They were teaching stories, enacted for the first disciples but now retold to new generations of Christians so that they too could learn from Jesus, learn about their own faith and about how they should follow him. We live in a sceptical generation, when miracles are no longer accepted as normal. No one then doubted them. Even Jesus’ critics only questioned by whose authority he did them. To the first-century Jewish historian, Josephus, Jesus was simply a ‘doer of wonderful works’ (The Antiquities of the Jews, 18.3.3). ‘The Gospel of Matthew is not directed at outsiders to convert them by reciting miracle stories, but to insiders to express and clarify faith1.’

Matthew grouped the miracles to make three essential claims about Jesus. First, Jesus used his power to help people whom society had marginalised and excluded. Second, he used his power to embolden his disciples by showing his mastery over both the physical and the human worlds. Third, he used his power in ways which elicited both positive and negative responses, preparing his disciples for the future which lay before them. Thus taught, encouraged and forewarned, they could be sent into a world sometimes receptive but often hostile.

1 ME Boring, ‘The Gospel of Matthew’, The New Interpreters Bible, Vol VIII, Abingdon Press, 1995, p249

## **Deeper Bible study**

**Lord, be in our hearts and minds and help us to see you as Matthew saw you, the Son of God and the culmination of all prophecy.**

This first set of miracles shows Jesus using his power for the marginalised. No affliction was more personally degrading and socially isolating than leprosy. People with leprosy felt punished by God. Even the Law sentenced them to a living death – to wear ragged clothes, cover their mouths, cry ‘unclean’ and live alone ([Leviticus 13:45,46](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+13%3A45-46&version=NIVUK)). They were ceremonially unclean ([Leviticus 13:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+13%3A11&version=NIVUK)). Anyone who touched them sinned, becoming unclean, required to offer a sacrifice to be clean again ([Leviticus 5:3–6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+5%3A3%E2%80%936&version=NIVUK)). Torn between willingness to heal the man and reluctance to create fame, Jesus ‘reached out his hand and touched the man’ (v 3). Jesus broke the Law – but did he sin? In a remote Aboriginal community I met an elderly woman terribly disfigured with leprosy. She spoke of the ‘old mission days’, affectionately naming the ‘really Christian missionaries’, the ones willing to shake her deformed hand.

Matthew then introduces an officer of the occupying Roman army. Occupation was a fact of life, but Romans were still Gentiles, unclean worshippers of pagan gods. To deal with them was to become unclean (eg [Acts 10:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+10%3A28&version=NIVUK)). That Jesus used his healing power to help a Gentile was a crucial lesson for Matthew’s community of Jewish and Gentile Christians. We can debate what Jesus called faith (v 10), but it would have included humility. There is no military swagger. The officer, not too proud to approach an itinerant Jewish preacher, confessed he was ‘not worthy’ (v 8, [AV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+8%3A8&version=AKJV)) to receive a personal visit – a euphemism for uncleanness – and asked only for a word of authority.

We must learn the lesson of Jesus’ healing miracles, working always for the good of those marginalised by disease, disability or ethnicity. We are to accept those whom society excludes and act compassionately to people whose beliefs do not match our own – even when we ourselves also need healing.

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

## **The horrors of leprosy**

Leprosy was one of the most dreaded diseases in New Testament times. The term covered a range of skin diseases, and although not all may have been contagious, they were all considered serious enough to be dealt with according to the ‘quarantine’ regulations of [Leviticus 13 and 14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%2013-14&version=72).  
  
The suffering of the individuals was more than merely physical, though. They were believed to be:   
  
• incurable   
• a health hazard to others   
• religiously unclean (sufferers were ‘cleansed’ by Jesus rather than merely ‘healed’, Matthew 8:2,3)   
• under God’s judgement   
• a spiritual health hazard to others    
  
They therefore had to live their lives alienated from society. If they approached crowds, they announced their arrival by calling out, ‘Unclean, unclean!’ They were avoided, shunned and feared because of their condition.   
  
To touch them would be to take the risk of contamination and be condemned to the same wretched existence. They lived out in their own bodies the consequences of the ravages of a fallen, fractured world.  
  
People with leprosy had no hope of any relief, except that they might meet the Messiah. One of the expected actions of the Messiah was that he would cleanse the lepers (see [11:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2011:5;&version=72;)). But that the Messiah would touch the leper (8:3) was more than any would have ever hoped for.   
  
This, the first healing miracle in Matthew’s Gospel, raises the question of the identity of Jesus. If he is the Messiah, what sort of Messiah is he?

## **Purify my heart**

[https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/My God.mp3](https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/My%20God.mp3)

Sit back. Fix your mind and heart on God. Imagine his light – holy, pure, perfect – searching your life.  
  
Where does his light fall? What does he reveal?  
  
Is there…  
  
• something you are ashamed of?   
• a secret sin?   
• something you have tried to conquer but failed?   
• something that makes you feel unclean?   
  
**Come to Jesus**

Jesus is with you now. However ‘unclean’ you feel, Jesus does not turn away. He accepts you. He loves you more than you can imagine. He wants to make you clean.  
  
Whatever it is that makes you feel ‘unclean’…   
  
that shame  
that secret sin  
that addiction  
that guilt  
  
…give it to Jesus now.  
  
Know that his hand is upon you.  
He stretches out his hand now to forgive, to cleanse, to restore you.  
  
Stay in his deeper presence as you listen to this song: ‘My God’ by Stuart Townend.  
  
[Penny Boshoff](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/A-B/3525685.id)

'My God' was written by Stuart Townend and can be found on his album Monument to Mercy. To find out more go to [www.missionworship.com](http://www.missionworship.com/).  
  
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# Today in the Word – 1/29/18

# Putting On the Armor of God

[**Ephesians 6:13–17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206:13–17)

13Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Crews installing cables recently at St. John’s College, Cambridge University, found a “magic shoe” inside a wall. Placed there perhaps 300 years ago, its purpose was to “protect” college administrators from evil spirits. In addition to shoes, dead cats and horse’s skulls were sometimes put into walls in order to prevent evil spirits from entering the room.

Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Ephesians 6:16

Such notions are superstitions based on fear. The armor of God, however, is based on God’s truth and God’s power. With it, we can stand our ground against spiritual attacks (v. 13). The idea behind the metaphor is intense, hand-to-hand combat.

Paul listed six pieces of armor that must be put on. First, there is the belt of truth (v. 14). Just as a belt holds everything together, so spiritual warfare is hopeless without a firm grasp on truth. Second, there is the breastplate of righteousness. A breastplate protected the heart, the source of life. God Himself is pictured as wearing this when doing battle (see Isa. 59:17). Third, there are “feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace” (v. 15). The gospel provides a firm place for us to stand and is the only “pair of shoes” we should ever wear in spiritual warfare.

Fourth, there is the shield of faith (v. 16). Paul was no doubt thinking of the leather shields of the Romans, which they soaked in water before battle so they would act as fire extinguishers. In the same way, the shield of faith helps us resist Satan’s “flaming arrows.” Fifth, there is the helmet of salvation (v. 17). Sixth and finally, there is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (see Heb. 4:12). Notice that this is the only offensive weapon on the list.

### **Apply the Word**

Some people read this passage every morning before getting out of bed in order to “get dressed” for the day. Look online for a picture of the armor worn by Roman soldiers, which Paul likely had in mind when he created the metaphor of the “full armor of God.” As you do, focus on Paul’s instruction to be prepared for spiritual battle.

### **Pray with Us**

Continue to remember in prayer the faculty and staff at Moody Theological Seminary in Michigan. James Wood, John Restum, and Joseph Tucker are investing in student’s lives for the gospel. May the Lord turn their faithful service into a spiritual harvest!

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 1/29/18

# Like a Little Child



**Read:** [**Matthew 18:1–5**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3A1%E2%80%935%3B+19%3A13%E2%80%9314)

### **The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven**

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

2He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. 3And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

**Read:** [**Matthew 19:13–14**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3A1%E2%80%935%3B+19%3A13%E2%80%9314)

### **The Little Children and Jesus**

13Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

14Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew 18:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3A3)

One evening many years ago, after saying a goodnight prayer with our two-year-old daughter, my wife was surprised by a question. “Mommy, where is Jesus?”

Luann replied, “Jesus is in heaven and He’s everywhere, right here with us. And He can be in your heart if you ask Him to come in.”

[Our faith in Jesus is to be like that of a trusting child.](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Our+faith+in+Jesus+is+to+be+like+that+of+a+trusting+child.&via=ourdailybread&url=https://odb.org/mFa/)

“I want Jesus to be in my heart.”

“One of these days you can ask Him.”

“I want to ask Him to be in my heart now.”

So our little girl said, “Jesus, please come into my heart and be with me.” And that started her faith journey with Him.

When Jesus’s disciples asked Him who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He called a little child to come and join them (Matthew 18:1–2). “Unless you change and become like little children,” Jesus said, “you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. . . . And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me” (vv. 3–5).

Through the eyes of Jesus we can see a trusting child as our example of faith. And we are told to welcome all who open their hearts to Him. “Let the little children come to me,” Jesus said, “and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (19:14).

Lord Jesus, thank You for calling us to follow You with the confident faith of a child.

Help the children in your life come to know Jesus. Introduce them to Our Daily Bread for Kids at [ourdailybreadforkids.org](https://ourdailybreadforkids.org).

Our faith in Jesus is to be like that of a trusting child.

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

#### **INSIGHT**

Jesus likens greatness to childlikeness. Anyone coming to Him must come in childlike dependency, expectancy, receptivity, and humility (Matthew 18:2–4). While on earth, Jesus lovingly embraced His disciples as “my children” (John 13:33), and the apostle John affectionately addressed us as “dear children” (1 John 2:1, 12, 18, 28). Used negatively, however, children or “infants” denote weak or immature believers (1 Corinthians 3:1–3; Ephesians 4:13–14; Hebrews 5:13). “Don’t be childish,” Paul warned us (1 Corinthians 14:20 nlt). Christians are to be childlike, not childish (1 Corinthians 13:11).

When have you needed to trust Christ with childlike faith?

[K. T. Sim](https://odb.org/author/ktsim/)

# God Calling – 1/29/18

# I Clear the Path

"Never fear, whatever may happen. You are both being led."

"Wait on the Lord." - Psalm 27:14

I am thy shield. Have no fear. You must know that "All is well." I will never let anyone do to you both, other than My Will for you.

I can see the future. I can read men's hearts. I know better than you what you need. Trust me absolutely. You are not at the mercy of Fate, or buffeted about by others. You are being led in a very definite way, and others, who do not serve your purpose, are being moved out of your Path by Me.

Never fear, whatever may happen. You are both being led. Do not try to plan. I have planned. You are the builder, not the Architect.

Go very quietly, very gently. All is for the very best for you.

Trust me for all. Your very extremity will ensure My activity for you. And having your foundation on the Rock - Christ, Faith in Him, and "being rooted and grounded in Him," and having belief in My Divinity as your Corner Stone, it is yours to build, knowing all is well.

Literally, you have to depend on Me for everything - everything. It was out of the depths that David cried unto Me, and I heard his voice. All is well.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." - Psalm 37:23