# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/11/25

# Is Your Mind Stayed on God?



You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. —[Isaiah 26:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Isaiah+26%3A3)

Is your mind stayed on God or is it starved? Starvation of the mind, caused by neglect, is one of the chief sources of exhaustion and weakness in a servant’s life. If you have never used your mind to place yourself before God, begin to do it now. There is no reason to wait for God to come to you. You must turn your thoughts and your eyes away from the face of idols and look to Him and be saved (see [Isaiah 45:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+45:22)).

Your mind is the greatest gift God has given you and it ought to be devoted entirely to Him. You should seek to be “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ…” ([2 Corinthians 10:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+10:5)). This will be one of the greatest assets of your faith when a time of trial comes, because then your faith and the Spirit of God will work together. When you have thoughts and ideas that are worthy of credit to God, learn to compare and associate them with all that happens in nature— the rising and the setting of the sun, the shining of the moon and the stars, and the changing of the seasons. You will begin to see that your thoughts are from God as well, and your mind will no longer be at the mercy of your impulsive thinking, but will always be used in service to God.

“We have sinned with our fathers…[and]…did not remember…” ([Psalm 106:6-7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+106:6-7)). Then prod your memory and wake up immediately. Don’t say to yourself, “But God is not talking to me right now.” He ought to be. Remember whose you are and whom you serve. Encourage yourself to remember, and your affection for God will increase tenfold. Your mind will no longer be starved, but will be quick and enthusiastic, and your hope will be inexpressibly bright.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Awe is the condition of a man’s spirit realizing Who God is and what He has done for him personally. Our Lord emphasizes the attitude of a child; no attitude can express such solemn awe and familiarity as that of a child.  Not Knowing Whither, 882 L

# CCEL – 2/11/25

**They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord harkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.**—[MAL. 3:16.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mal.3.html" \l "Mal.3.16)

It came to pass that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.—Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst ot them.—My fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.—Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.—Behold, it is written before me.

[Luke 24:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.24.html" \l "Luke.24.15). -[Matt. 18:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.18.html" \l "Matt.18.20). -[Phi. 4:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.3).[Col. 3:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.16). -[Heb. 3:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.3.html" \l "Heb.3.13).[Matt. 12:36,37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.12.html" \l "Matt.12.36). -[Isa. 65:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.65.html" \l "Isa.65.6).

“And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” [Acts 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.4.html" \l "Acts.4.13)

A Christian should be a striking likeness of Jesus Christ. You have read lives of Christ, beautifully and eloquently written, but the best life of Christ is his living biography, written out in the words and actions of his people. If we were what we profess to be, and what we should be, we should be pictures of Christ; yea, such striking likenesses of him, that the world would not have to hold us up by the hour together, and say, “Well, it seems somewhat of a likeness;” but they would, when they once beheld us, exclaim, “He has been with Jesus; he has been taught of him; he is like him; he has caught the very idea of the holy Man of Nazareth, and he works it out in his life and every-day actions.” A Christian should be like Christ in his boldness. Never blush to own your religion; your profession will never disgrace you: take care you never disgrace that. Be like Jesus, very valiant for your God. Imitate him in your loving spirit; think kindly, speak kindly, and do kindly, that men may say of you, “He has been with Jesus.” Imitate Jesus in his holiness. Was he zealous for his Master? So be you; ever go about doing good. Let not time be wasted: it is too precious. Was he self-denying, never looking to his own interest? Be the same. Was he devout? Be you fervent in your prayers. Had he deference to his Father’s will? So submit yourselves to him. Was he patient? So learn to endure. And best of all, as the highest portraiture of Jesus, try to forgive your enemies, as he did; and let those sublime words of your Master, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,” always ring in your ears. Forgive, as you hope to be forgiven. Heap coals of fire on the head of your foe by your kindness to him. Good for evil, recollect, is godlike. Be godlike, then; and in all ways and by all means, so live that all may say of you, “He has been with Jesus.”

# Word Live – 2/11/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 2/11/25

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# Today in the Word – 2/11/25

# A Failure to Resist

A person sitting at a table

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[**Read Genesis 3:1–13**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Genesis+3:1%e2%80%9313)

**The Fall**

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

2The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

11And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

12The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

13Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Did God really say? [Genesis 3:1](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Gen.3.1)

The first failure to resist temptation happened in the Garden of Eden. Where was this garden? We don’t know, but many suggestions have been put forward. They include locations in Armenia, Iran, Bahrain, Azerbaijan, India, Venezuela, and Iraq, as well as Charleston, South Carolina, and even the North Pole!

While we may not know exactly where the Fall took place, we are familiar with the story: God gave Adam and Eve one rule—not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan, taking the form of a serpent (Rev. 12:9), tempted Eve. She ate the fruit and gave some to Adam who joined her in disobedience. What can we learn from their failure to resist temptation? First, we become vulnerable to temptation and deception when we call God’s words into question. That’s how the serpent began, by saying, “Did God really say…?” (v. 1). Notice how Eve then misquoted God by adding to the original prohibition, “and you must not touch it” (v. 3). In fact, her legalism only weakened her for Satan’s next move. The serpent contradicted God’s words and slandered God’s motives: You won’t die, he insisted, in fact you’ll gain knowledge and everything that God is trying to keep from you (vv. 4–5). Finally, he appealed to her pride, “you will be like God.” Not surprisingly, pride was central to Satan’s own fall (see Isa. 14:12–15).

We see the basic dynamics of temptation here. This temptation was surrounded by lies; they promise what they cannot deliver and suggest that disobedience is better than obedience.

In the next days, we’ll look at people in the Bible who failed to resist temptation. Just as Paul wrote that Eve’s deception is a warning for us (2 Cor. 11:3), so these other biblical examples can teach spiritual lessons in what not to do.

**Go Deeper**

What do we learn about temptation from Adam and Eve? What lessons can you take away from this narrative?

**Pray with Us**

Adam and Eve’s disobedience in today’s reading reminds us, Lord, that there’s nothing about us that You do not already know. Give us courage not to hide from You, but to come to You with all our doubts and fears.

# Our Daily Bread – 2/11/25

# GOD RUNS AFTER US

A close-up of a hand reaching for a hand

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**Read: EZEKIEL 34:11-16**

**11**“‘For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. **12**As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. **13**I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. **14**I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. **15**I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. **16**I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

The Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. EZEKIEL 34:11

For years, Evan struggled with an addiction that kept him from drawing close to God. How can I be worthy of His love? he wondered. So, while he kept going to church, he felt that there was an unbridgeable chasm that kept him separated from God.

Yet, whenever Evan prayed earnestly for something, God seemed to answer him. God also sent people to encourage and comfort him in difficult times. After some years, Evan realized God was constantly pursuing him and showing that He'd always loved and cared for him, and that's when he began to trust in God's forgiveness and love. "Now, I know that I'm forgiven and can let God draw me close to Him, even though I'm still struggling with my addiction," he said.

Ezekiel 34:11-16 tells us of a God who pursued His people. "I myself will search for my sheep and look after them," He said, vowing to rescue them and provide for them abundantly (V.11). This was after their human leaders had abandoned them, and they themselves disobeyed their true Shepherd (vv 1-6). Whether we're helpless victims of circumstances or struggling with the consequences of our own sin, God pursues us in love. In His mercy and grace, He draws us back to Him. If you've forgotten God, turn back to Him. Then, as He leads, continue to walk with Him each day.

**LESLIE KOH**

**Reflect and Pray**

How has God shown you that He cares for you and loves you? How can you let Him draw you closer to Him?

Dear God, thank You for always loving me despite my struggles and doubts. Please teach me to trust In Your love anew.

**INSIGHT**

Ezekiel was both a priest and a prophet, prophesying from 593 to 571 BC. He was among the ten thousand captives brought out of Judea to Babylon in 597 BC, which included officers, soldiers, skilled workers, artisans, and eighteen-year-old King Jehoiachin and his family (2 KINGS 24:10-15; 2 CHRONICLES 36:9). In Babylon, Ezekiel had his first vision at age thirty by the Kebar River (Ezekiel 1:1-3). He prophesied to a people who desperately needed to hear from God. The book's main themes include the holiness of God and the sin of the people (36:22-23), which included judgment on those who turn away from God and mercy and hope for those who repent and trust in Him. During Ezekiel's captivity (586 BC), Babylon besieged Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and burned down the city, carrying away the remnant of the people. The captivity lasted seventy years (2 KINGS 25; 2 CHRONICLES 36:21).

**ALYSON KIEDA**

# God Calling – 2/11/25

# The Difficult Path

Your path is difficult, difficult for you both. There is no work in life so hard as waiting, and yet I say wait. Wait until I show you My Will. Proof it is of My Love and of My certainty of your true discipleship, that I give you both hard tasks.

Again, I say wait. All motion is more easy than calm waiting. So many of My followers have marred their work and hindered the progress of My Kingdom by activity.

Wait. I will not overtry your spiritual strength. You are both like two persons, helpless on a raft in mid-ocean. But, lo! there cometh towards you One walking on the waters, like unto the Son of Man. When He comes and you receive Him, it will be with you, as it was with My Disciples when I was on earth, that straightway you will be at the place where you would be.

All your toil in rowing and all your activity could not have accomplished the journey so soon. Oh, wait and trust. Wait, and be not afraid.

"Wait on the Lord, and keep his way." Psalm 37:34

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/12/25

# Are You Listening to God?



They said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." —[Exodus 20:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Exodus+20%3A19)

We don’t consciously and deliberately disobey God— we simply don’t listen to Him. God has given His commands to us, but we pay no attention to them— not because of willful disobedience, but because we do not truly love and respect Him. “If you love Me, keep My commandments” ([John 14:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14:15)). Once we realize we have constantly been showing disrespect to God, we will be filled with shame and humiliation for ignoring Him.

“You speak with us,…but let not God speak with us….” We show how little love we have for God by preferring to listen to His servants rather than to Him. We like to listen to personal testimonies, but we don’t want God Himself to speak to us. Why are we so terrified for God to speak to us? It is because we know that when God speaks we must either do what He asks or tell Him we will not obey. But if it is simply one of God’s servants speaking to us, we feel obedience is optional, not imperative. We respond by saying, “Well, that’s only your own idea, even though I don’t deny that what you said is probably God’s truth.”

Am I constantly humiliating God by ignoring Him, while He lovingly continues to treat me as His child? Once I finally do hear Him, the humiliation I have heaped on Him returns to me. My response then becomes, “Lord, why was I so insensitive and obstinate?” This is always the result once we hear God. But our real delight in finally hearing Him is tempered with the shame we feel for having taken so long to do so.

**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 – 2/12/25

**They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.**—[MAL. 3:17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mal.3.html" \l "Mal.3.17)

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

I will come again, and receive you unto myself.—He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day.—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.—Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

[John 17:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.6),[9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.9),[24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.24).[John 14:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.3). -[II Thes. 1:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiThess.1.html" \l "iiThess.1.10). -[I Thes. 4:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.4.html" \l "iThess.4.17). -[Isa. 62:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.62.html" \l "Isa.62.3).

“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” [2 Corinthians 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.5)

There is a blessed proportion. The Ruler of Providence bears a pair of scales—in this side he puts his people’s trials, and in that he puts their consolations. When the scale of trial is nearly empty, you will always find the scale of consolation in nearly the same condition; and when the scale of trials is full, you will find the scale of consolation just as heavy. When the black clouds gather most, the light is the more brightly revealed to us. When the night lowers and the tempest is coming on, the Heavenly Captain is always closest to his crew. It is a blessed thing, that when we are most cast down, then it is that we are most lifted up by the consolations of the Spirit. One reason is, because trials make more room for consolation. Great hearts can only be made by great troubles. The spade of trouble digs the reservoir of comfort deeper, and makes more room for consolation. God comes into our heart—he finds it full—he begins to break our comforts and to make it empty; then there is more room for grace. The humbler a man lies, the more comfort he will always have, because he will be more fitted to receive it. Another reason why we are often most happy in our troubles, is this—then we have the closest dealings with God. When the barn is full, man can live without God: when the purse is bursting with gold, we try to do without so much prayer. But once take our gourds away, and we want our God; once cleanse the idols out of the house, then we are compelled to honour Jehovah. “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.” There is no cry so good as that which comes from the bottom of the mountains; no prayer half so hearty as that which comes up from the depths of the soul, through deep trials and afflictions. Hence they bring us to God, and we are happier; for nearness to God is happiness. Come, troubled believer, fret not over your heavy troubles, for they are the heralds of weighty mercies.

# Word Live – 2/12/25

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# Scripture Union – 2/12/25

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# Today in the Word – 2/12/25

# Learn from Example

A path in a forest

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[**Read 1 Corinthians 10:6–13**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=1+Corinthians+10:6%e2%80%9313)

6Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 7Do 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 revelry.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010%3A6%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28575a)] 8We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. 9We should not test Christ,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010%3A6%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28577b)] as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. 10And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

11These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. 12So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! 13No temptation[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010%3A6%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28581c)] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010%3A6%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28581d)] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010%3A6%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28581e)] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

**Footnotes**

1. [1 Corinthians 10:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010%3A6%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-28575) Exodus 32:6
2. [1 Corinthians 10:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010%3A6%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-28577) Some manuscripts *test the Lord*
3. [1 Corinthians 10:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010%3A6%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-28581) The Greek for *temptation* and *tempted* can also mean *testing* and *tested*.
4. [1 Corinthians 10:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010%3A6%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-28581) The Greek for *temptation* and *tempted* can also mean *testing* and *tested*.
5. [1 Corinthians 10:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2010%3A6%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-28581) The Greek for *temptation* and *tempted* can also mean *testing* and *tested*.

These things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things.[1 Corinthians 10:6](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=1Cor.10.6)

As they journeyed through the wilderness, the Israelites, who had just witnessed miracle after miracle, began complaining. “Give us water to drink,” they demanded of Moses. He rebuked them for testing the Lord’s patience, but they continued grumbling. So God told Moses to strike a rock and water would be provided (Ex. 17:1–7).

In 1 Corinthians 10, the apostle Paul points to their example saying that these stories are recorded “to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things “ (vv. 6, 11). On what did God’s people set their hearts? They gave into the temptations of idolatry (v. 7) and immorality (v. 8). What else? They grumbled against God and tested Christ (vv. 9–10). Christ? Yes. Remember that Jesus’ life didn’t begin in Mary’s womb. The Second Person of the Trinity has always existed.

Their negative example should remind us to be on our guard (v. 12). We cannot live the Christian life on cruise control but should watch our mindset. What do we focus our hearts upon? The Corinthians were being tempted to return to their old way of life, including idolatry and the sexual immorality that went on at pagan temples. By reflecting on Israelite history, however, they were encouraged to resist that temptation and continue obediently following Christ and growing in their faith. So can we!

Be encouraged: God will not let us be tempted or tried beyond what we can bear (v. 13). There will always be a way out. Of course, we have to choose it, so this verse also means we have no valid rationalization for sin. Hard times, suffering, victimhood, Satan’s cleverness—none of these are excuses for giving in to temptation. The Israelites didn’t have to do the things they did, neither did the Corinthians, and neither do we.

**Go Deeper**

Why did the Israelites give into temptation so soon after witnessing God’s miraculous provision on their behalf? Why do we sometimes have the same sort of spiritual amnesia?

**Pray with Us**

Today’s passage gives us another warning about the dangers of giving in to temptation, away from God’s grace. Father God, thank You that darkness can never overcome the light of Jesus. May we receive Your light and walk in Your grace.

# Our Daily Bread – 2/12/25

# OUR PLANS AND GOD'S PLANS

A person standing outside of a building

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**Read: ISAIAH 55:8-12**

**8**“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
    neither are your ways my ways,”  
declares the Lord.  
**9**“As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
    so are my ways higher than your ways  
    and my thoughts than your thoughts.  
**10**As the rain and the snow  
    come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
    without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
    so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,  
**11**so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
    It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
    and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.  
**12**You will go out in joy  
    and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
    will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
    will clap their hands.

"Neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. ISAIAH 55:8

Many years ago, my husband decided to take a trip to Africa with a group of people from his church. At the last minute, the group was prevented from going on its journey. Everyone was disappointed, but the money they'd collected for airfare, lodging, and food was donated to the people they'd tried to visit. The people used it to construct a building that would shelter victims of abuse.

Recently, at a prayer breakfast, my husband met someone who lived in the village he'd almost traveled to so many years ago. This person was a teacher who said he walked by the building every day. He confirmed that God had used it to provide for the most vulnerable people in the area.

Our plans and desires don't always match what God has in mind. For His " thoughts are not [our] thoughts, neither are [our] ways [His] ways" (ISAIAH 55:8). God's ways aren't just different from ours; His ways are "higher" and better because what He does is consistent with who He is (V. 9). This truth gives us hope when our efforts to serve Him don't turn out the way we'd planned.

It might be years before we're able to look back and trace God's influence through certain situations. For now, though, as we continue to reach out to the world in His name, we can remember that God is always powerfully at work (V. 11 ).

**JENNIFER BENSON SCHULDT**

**Reflect and Pray**

When have you felt disappointed with an experience? How might God use this to teach you something about Himself?

Dear God, You're the all-knowing one. When I don't understand what's happening, please help me to trust You.

**INSIGHT**

The book of Isaiah is the first of the five books referred to as the Major Prophets, so named because of their length, not their importance. The other Major Prophets are Jeremiah, lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Isaiah is the sixth longest book of the Bible, and two other prophetical books-Jeremiah and Ezekiel-are even longer. Isaiah contains many prophecies related to divine judgment and many others about the coming Messiah. J. A. Martin in The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out; "Isaiah had a lofty view of God. The LORD is seen as the Initiator of events in history. He is apart from and greater

than His Creation; yet He is involved in the affairs of that Creation. Whether in his dealings with sin or his promise of redemption Isaiah portrays God's greatness as above all that he has created.”

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Visit ODBU.org/OT247 to discover more from the book of Isaiah.

**BILL CROWDER**

# God Calling – 2/12/25

# Meet Me Everywhere

Life is really consciousness of Me.

Have no fear. A very beautiful future lies before you. Let it be a new life, a new existence, in which in every single happening, event, plan, you are conscious of Me.

"And this is Life Eternal, that we might know Thee, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

Get this ever-consciousness and you have Eternal Life -- the Life of the Ages. Be in all things led by the Spirit of God and trust Me in all. And the consciousness of Me must bring Joy. Give Me not only trust but gladness.

"For as many as our led by the Spirit of God,   
they are the Sons of God." Romans 8:14

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/13/25

# The Devotion of Hearing



Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." —[1 Samuel 3:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Samuel+3%3A10)

Just because I have listened carefully and intently to one thing from God does not mean that I will listen to everything He says. I show God my lack of love and respect for Him by the insensitivity of my heart and mind toward what He says. If I love my friend, I will instinctively understand what he wants. And Jesus said, “You are My friends…” ([John 15:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:14)). Have I disobeyed some command of my Lord’s this week? If I had realized that it was a command of Jesus, I would not have deliberately disobeyed it. But most of us show incredible disrespect to God because we don’t even hear Him. He might as well never have spoken to us.

The goal of my spiritual life is such close identification with Jesus Christ that I will always hear God and know that God always hears me (see [John 11:41](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+11:41)). If I am united with Jesus Christ, I hear God all the time through the devotion of hearing. A flower, a tree, or a servant of God may convey God’s message to me. What hinders me from hearing is my attention to other things. It is not that I don’t want to hear God, but I am not devoted in the right areas of my life. I am devoted to things and even to service and my own convictions. God may say whatever He wants, but I just don’t hear Him. The attitude of a child of God should always be, “Speak, for Your servant hears.” If I have not developed and nurtured this devotion of hearing, I can only hear God’s voice at certain times. At other times I become deaf to Him because my attention is to other things— things which I think I must do. This is not living the life of a child of God. Have you heard God’s voice today?

**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 – 2/13/25

**Upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.**—[EZEK. 1:26.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.1.html" \l "Ezek.1.26)

The man Christ Jesus.—Made in the likeness of men . . . found in fashion as a man.—Forasmuch . . . as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death.

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.—Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.—What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?—He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.—In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God.

[I Tim. 2:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.2.html" \l "iTim.2.5). -[Phi. 2:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.7). -[Heb. 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.14).[Rev. 1:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.1.html" \l "Rev.1.18). -[Rom. 6:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.9). -[John 6:62](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.6.html" \l "John.6.62). -[Eph. 1:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.20). -[Col. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.9).[II Cor. 13:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.13.html" \l "iiCor.13.4).

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” [1 John 3:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.1)

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.” Consider who we were, and what we feel ourselves to be even now when corruption is powerful in us, and you will wonder at our adoption. Yet we are called “the sons of God.” What a high relationship is that of a son, and what privileges it brings! What care and tenderness the son expects from his father, and what love the father feels towards the son! But all that, and more than that, we now have through Christ. As for the temporary drawback of suffering with the elder brother, this we accept as an honour: “Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” We are content to be unknown with him in his humiliation, for we are to be exalted with him. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” That is easy to read, but it is not so easy to feel. How is it with your heart this morning? Are you in the lowest depths of sorrow? Does corruption rise within your spirit, and grace seem like a poor spark trampled under foot? Does your faith almost fail you? Fear not, it is neither your graces nor feelings on which you are to live: you must live simply by faith on Christ. With all these things against us, now—in the very depths of our sorrow, wherever we may be—now, as much in the valley as on the mountain, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” “Ah, but,” you say, “see how I am arrayed! my graces are not bright; my righteousness does not shine with apparent glory.” But read the next: “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” The Holy Spirit shall purify our minds, and divine power shall refine our bodies; then shall we see him as he is.

# Word Live – 2/13/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 2/13/25

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 2/13/25

# Hiding the Truth

A plant growing in water

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[**Read Genesis 12:10–20**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Genesis+12:10%e2%80%9320)

**Abram in Egypt**

10Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. 11As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “I know what a beautiful woman you are. 12When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will let you live. 13Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.”

14When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. 15And when Pharaoh’s officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. 16He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

17But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram’s wife Sarai. 18So Pharaoh summoned Abram. “What have you done to me?” he said. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? 19Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!” 20Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy. [Proverbs 12:22](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Prov.12.22)

In Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter,* Hester Prynne was forced to wear the letter A on her dress as a shaming symbol of adultery. But what about her partner in immorality, Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale? He kept his sin secret. Daily he played the “holy man” in his church, but his life was a lie that caught up with him by the end of the novel.

In Genesis 12, Abram was hiding his guilt. When he and his family fled to Egypt to escape famine, he told his wife Sarai to lie and say she was his sister (v. 13). Why? He was afraid some powerful Egyptian would see her beauty and take her for himself, probably killing him in the process. He wasn’t mistaken: Powerful people can be like that. And socially vulnerable people are often mistreated by those in control.

Abram’s problem wasn’t that he misunderstood the situation, but that he failed to trust the Lord for protection. He yielded to temptation and to protect himself, pretended Sarai was his sister (vv. 11–13). As predicted, a powerful Egyptian—Pharaoh, in fact—saw her, wanted her, and took her (vv. 14–16). This resulted in riches for Abram, which he may have also known.

What he didn’t predict was that God would not let him get away with it. No matter how well we try to hide our actions, sin always comes to light (Num. 32:23). The Lord intervened to protect Sarai (from adultery) and His covenant (vv. 1–8). God revealed the truth to Pharaoh, whose anger was righteous and who probably spared Abram’s life only due to fear of the Lord (vv. 17–20). Furthermore, commentators note that Egyptian ethics highly valued truthfulness, so Abram’s sin was a very poor witness. Did he repent? Apparently not at this time, since he did it again and rationalized it in Genesis 20.

**Go Deeper**

What was Abram’s mistake? Why do fear, excuses, and rationalizations weaken our resistance to temptation? How does this mindset make sin seem reasonable to us?

**Pray with Us**

Lord, we are amazed at Your work in Abraham’s life that shows us how Your love breaks through our human deceit and lack of repentance. Forgive us for striving to control the things and people around us.

# Our Daily Bread – 2/13/25

# NEVER OVERLOOKED BY GOD

A person holding a piece of paper

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: NUMBERS 6:22-27**

**The Priestly Blessing**

22The Lord said to Moses, 23“Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

24“‘“The Lord bless you  
    and keep you;  
25the Lord make his face shine on you  
    and be gracious to you;  
26the Lord turn his face toward you  
    and give you peace.”’

27“So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

The LORD make his face shine on you. NUMBERS 6:25

"Sometimes I just feel so ... invisible." The word hung in the air as Joanie talked to her friend. Her husband had left for another woman, leaving Jeanie with young children still at home. “I gave him my best years," she confided. "And now I don't know If anyone would really see me or take the time to actually know me."

"I'm so sorry," her friend responded. "My dad walked out when I was six, and it was hard for us, especially Mom. But she said this thing when she tucked me in at night that I never forgot: 'God never closes His eyes.' When I was older, she explained she was trying to teach me that God loved me and watched over me always, even while I slept."

The Bible presents words God gave Moses to share with His people during a challenging time, when they were wandering in Sinai's desert: "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace" (NUMBERS 6:24-26). The blessing was to be spoken by the priests over the people.

Even in life's wildernesses-those places where we wonder if anyone sees us or truly understands-God is faithful. God's favor – His shining face and enduring love-is always turned toward those who love Him, even when we can't feel Him because of our pain. No one is Invisible to God.

**JAMES BANKS**

**Reflect and Pray**

How does it comfort you to know that God truly sees you? Who can you share that comfort with today?

Thank You, Father; for seeing me, knowing me, and loving me. Please help me to turn my face to You always!

Visit ODBU.org/SF120 to learn more from James Banks on how God sees our needs and hears our prayers.

**INSIGHT**

In showering the people with His favor, God instructed the high priest to bestow on them the blessing found in Numbers 6:24-26. “The LORD make his face shine on you" (v. 25) is rendered “the LORD smile on you" in the New Living Translation. God smiling and turning his face toward you (V. 26) expresses the idea that the people have God's special attention and approval. This benediction, pronounced by many pastors at the end of church services today, affirms that God provides for and protects His people, assuring us of His presence, pardon, and peace. The Hebrew concept of peace (shalom) is all-embracing and includes the concepts of completeness, security, health, wealth, tranquility, contentment, friendship, and peace with God and humanity.

**K. T. SIM**

# God Calling – 2/13/25

# Near The Goal

In a race it is not the start that hurts, not even the pace of the long stretch. It is when the goal is in sight that heart and nerves and courage and muscles are strained almost beyond human endurance, almost to the breaking point.

So with you now the goal is in sight, you need your final cry to Me. Can you not see by the nerve and heart rack of the past few days that your race is nearly run? Courage, courage. Heed My voice of encouragement. Remember that I am by your side, spurring you on to victory.

In the annals of heaven, the saddest records are those that tell of the many who ran well, with brave stout hearts, until in sight of the goal, of victory, and then their courage failed. The whole host of heaven longed to cry out how near the end was, to implore the last spurt, but they fell out, never to know until the last day of revealing, how near they were to victory.

Would that they had listened to Me in the silence as you two meet with Me. They would have known. There must be the listening ear, as well as the still small voice.

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Galatians 6:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/14/25

# The Discipline of Hearing



Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. —[Matthew 10:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+10%3A27)

Sometimes God puts us through the experience and discipline of darkness to teach us to hear and obey Him. Song birds are taught to sing in the dark, and God puts us into “the shadow of His hand” until we learn to hear Him ([Isaiah 49:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+49:2)). “Whatever I tell you in the dark…” — pay attention when God puts you into darkness, and keep your mouth closed while you are there. Are you in the dark right now in your circumstances, or in your life with God? If so, then remain quiet. If you open your mouth in the dark, you will speak while in the wrong mood— darkness is the time to listen. Don’t talk to other people about it; don’t read books to find out the reason for the darkness; just listen and obey. If you talk to other people, you cannot hear what God is saying. When you are in the dark, listen, and God will give you a very precious message for someone else once you are back in the light.

After every time of darkness, we should experience a mixture of delight and humiliation. If there is only delight, I question whether we have really heard God at all. We should experience delight for having heard God speak, but mostly humiliation for having taken so long to hear Him! Then we will exclaim, “How slow I have been to listen and understand what God has been telling me!” And yet God has been saying it for days and even weeks. But once you hear Him, He gives you the gift of humiliation, which brings a softness of heart— a gift that will always cause you to listen to God now.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

“I have chosen you” (John 15:16). Keep that note of greatness in your creed. It is not that you have got God, but that He has got you.  My Utmost for His Highest, October 25, 837 R

# CCEL – 2/14/25

Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.—[MATT. 3:15.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.3.html" \l "Matt.3.15)

I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.—The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.—Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.—Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

[Psa. 40:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.40.html" \l "Ps.40.8).[Matt. 5:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.17). -[Isa. 42:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.42.html" \l "Isa.42.21). -[Matt. 5:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.20).[Rom. 8:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.3). -[Rom. 10:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.10.html" \l "Rom.10.4).

“And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.” [2 Kings 25:30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiKgs.25.html" \l "iiKgs.25.30)

Jehoiachin was not sent away from the king’s palace with a store to last him for months, but his provision was given him as a daily pension. Herein he well pictures the happy position of all the Lord’s people. A daily portion is all that a man really wants. We do not need tomorrow’s supplies; that day has not yet dawned, and its wants are as yet unborn. The thirst which we may suffer in the month of June does not need to be quenched in February, for we do not feel it yet; if we have enough for each day as the days arrive we shall never know want. Sufficient for the day is all that we can enjoy. We cannot eat or drink or wear more than the day’s supply of food and raiment; the surplus gives us the care of storing it, and the anxiety of watching against a thief. One staff aids a traveller, but a bundle of staves is a heavy burden. Enough is not only as good as a feast, but is all that the greatest glutton can truly enjoy. This is all that we should expect; a craving for more than this is ungrateful. When our Father does not give us more, we should be content with his daily allowance. Jehoiachin’s case is ours, we have a sure portion, a portion given us of the king, a gracious portion, and a perpetual portion. Here is surely ground for thankfulness.

Beloved Christian reader, in matters of grace you need a daily supply. You have no store of strength. Day by day must you seek help from above. It is a very sweet assurance that a daily portion is provided for you. In the word, through the ministry, by meditation, in prayer, and waiting upon God you shall receive renewed strength. In Jesus all needful things are laid up for you. Then enjoy your continual allowance. Never go hungry while the daily bread of grace is on the table of mercy.

# Word Live – 2/14/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 2/14/25

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 2/14/25

# A Lack of Love

A whale tail with water splashing out

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

[**Read Jonah 1**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Jonah+1)

**Jonah Flees From the Lord**

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

3But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

4Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. 5All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

7Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. 8So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

9He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

10This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

11The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?”

12“Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”

13Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. 14Then they cried out to the Lord, “Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.” 15Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. 16At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

**Jonah’s Prayer**

17Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh?[Jonah 4:11](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Jonah.4.11)

Who do you view as “the enemy”? In Jonah’s day, Assyria was Israel’s despised enemy. While the country was not as militarily strong as it had been or would become, it was still a threat. Assyria would conquer the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC. As the *Moody Bible Commentary* summarizes: “Assyria was a hated and cruel nation. To bless them was to curse Israel in Jonah’s mind.”

So Jonah’s jaw likely hit the floor when God commanded him to prophesy to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria (vv. 1–2). He was tempted to disobey. Why? A lack of godly love. He knew that if he brought a message of judgment, the Assyrians might repent and then God might relent or even forgive them (Jonah 4:1–3). Frankly, he didn’t want that to happen. He preferred to see God’s judgment crush Israel’s enemies.

Jonah’s failure didn’t lie in misunderstanding the situation, but rather in not trusting the Lord and not imitating His grace and mercy. Jonah loved as normal humans do. We love our own group, our own people. But Israel was supposed to be a blessing to the nations (Gen. 12:3). And as Jesus preached in the Sermon on the Mount, our “neighbor” might be our enemy (Matt. 5:43–48). God’s love is far greater than human love. Jonah knew that, but he chose the wrong direction.

Jonah fled in the opposite direction, directly disobeying God’s command (v. 3). What did he think would happen? After all, God is everywhere (Ps. 139:7–12). Did he really think he could stall or derail God’s plan? God could have given up on Jonah or sent another prophet. Instead, the same love that pursued the Assyrians pursued Jonah—via a storm and a pagan ship’s crew. The Lord showed grace and mercy to His sinful prophet.

**Go Deeper**

Why did Jonah resist God’s command? Why was it so difficult for him to preach to his enemy? What does this teach us?

**Pray with Us**

Jesus, You tell us to love one another as You have loved us. Yet, we confess how difficult it is to care deeply for the well-being of others. Like Jonah, we are quick to judge. Show us the “Ninevites” You want us to reach.

# Our Daily Bread – 2/14/25

# WEDDED TO LOVE

A picture frame with a person and person in a suit and tie

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**Read: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-13**

4Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Love never fails. 1 CORINTHIANS 13:8

At Meredith's wedding, her mother read a beautiful Scripture from 1 Corinthians. Often called "the love chapter" of the Bible, the thirteenth chapter sounded perfect for the occasion. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud" (V.4). Listening, I wondered if modern brides and grooms knew what prompted the apostle's stirring words. Paul wasn't writing a love poem. The apostle penned a plea to a divided church in an effort to heal its raging divisions.

Simply put, the church at Corinth "was a mess,” says scholar Douglas A. Campbell. Seething problems included incest, prostitution, and rivalry among leaders. Lawsuits between members weren't uncommon. Worship was often chaotic-with those speaking in tongues competing to be heard first, and others prophesying to look impressive (SEE 1 CORINTHIANS 14).

Underlying this chaos, says Campbell, was "a basic failure in relating to one another in love," To show the more excellent way, Paul preached love because "love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away" (13:8).

Paul's loving reminders can certainly encourage a wedding party. May they also inspire all of us to live out love and kindness too.

**PATRICIA RAYBON**

**Reflect and Pray**

How do you show kindness and love in your relationships? How do you show love In the body of Christ?

Your love never fails, loving God, so please guide me in relating to all with the excellence of love.

**INSIGHT**

In 1 Corinthians 13, the well-known chapter of love so often recited at weddings, Paul defines love not as an emotion but as an action (vv 4-8). These verses call to mind the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23, also written by Paul. We can't love as the apostle calls us to love without a relationship with Jesus and the work of the Spirit in our lives. This is the process of sanctification, whereby we grow to become more like God. Paul compares it to becoming an adult and leaving our childish ways behind (1 CORINTHIANS 13:11-12). Just as we need to do today, the Corinthian church needed to learn to ,love as Christ called them to love and to use their gifts to serve others (SEE CH. 12). Spiritual gifts are temporary (13:8-12) and will disappear (v. 10), but "faith, hope and love" will remain and "the greatest of these is love" (V. 13).

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

# God Calling – 2/14/25

# In My Presence

You do not realize that you would have broken down under the weight of your cares but for the renewing time with Me. It is not what I say; it is I, Myself. It is not the hearing Me so much as the being in My Presence. The strengthening and curative powers of this you cannot know. Such knowledge is beyond your human reckoning.

This would cure the poor sick world, if every day, each soul, or group of souls, waited before Me. Remember, that you must never fail to keep this time apart with Me. Gradually you will be transformed, physically, mentally, spiritually, into My likeness. All who see you, or contact with you will be, by this intercourse with you, brought near to Me, and gradually the influence will spread.

You are making one spot of earth a Holy Place, and though you must work and spend yourself ceaselessly because that is for the present your appointed task, yet the greatest work either of you can do, and are doing, is done in this time apart with Me. Are you understanding that?

Do you know that every thought, every activity, every prayer, every longing of the day is gathered up and offered to Me, now? Oh! Joy that I am with you. For this I came to earth, to lead man back to spirit-converse with his God.

"Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." Proverbs 8:34

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/15/25

# “Am I My Brother’s Keeper?”



None of us lives to himself… —[Romans 14:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+14%3A7)

Has it ever dawned on you that you are responsible spiritually to God for other people? For instance, if I allow any turning away from God in my private life, everyone around me suffers. We “sit together in the heavenly places…” ([Ephesians 2:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2:6)). “If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it…” ([1 Corinthians 12:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+12:26)). If you allow physical selfishness, mental carelessness, moral insensitivity, or spiritual weakness, everyone in contact with you will suffer. But you ask, “Who is sufficient to be able to live up to such a lofty standard?” “Our sufficiency is from God…” and God alone ([2 Corinthians 3:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+3:5)).

“You shall be witnesses to Me…” ([Acts 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:8)). How many of us are willing to spend every bit of our nervous, mental, moral, and spiritual energy for Jesus Christ? That is what God means when He uses the word witness. But it takes time, so be patient with yourself. Why has God left us on the earth? Is it simply to be saved and sanctified? No, it is to be at work in service to Him. Am I willing to be broken bread and poured-out wine for Him? Am I willing to be of no value to this age or this life except for one purpose and one alone— to be used to disciple men and women to the Lord Jesus Christ. My life of service to God is the way I say “thank you” to Him for His inexpressibly wonderful salvation. Remember, it is quite possible for God to set any of us aside if we refuse to be of service to Him— “…lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” ([1 Corinthians 9:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+9:27)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The great word of Jesus to His disciples is Abandon. When God has brought us into the relationship of disciples, we have to venture on His word; trust entirely to Him and watch that when He brings us to the venture, we take it.  Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, 1459 R

# CCEL – 2/15/25

Who can say, I have made my heart clean?—[PROV. 20:9.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.20.html" \l "Prov.20.9)

The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.—They that are in the flesh cannot please God.

To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.—We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags: and we all do fade as a leaf: and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.—God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[Psa. 14:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.14.html" \l "Ps.14.2). -[Rom. 8:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.8).[Rom. 7:18,19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html" \l "Rom.7.18). -[Isa. 64:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.64.html" \l "Isa.64.6).[Gal. 3:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.3.html" \l "Gal.3.22). -[II Cor. 5:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.19).[I John 1:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.1.html" \l "iJohn.1.8).

“To him be glory both now and forever.” [2 Peter 3:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.3.html" \l "iiPet.3.18)

Heaven will be full of the ceaseless praises of Jesus. Eternity! thine unnumbered years shall speed their everlasting course, but forever and forever, “to him be glory.” Is he not a “Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek?” “To him be glory.” Is he not king forever?—King of kings and Lord of lords, the everlasting Father? “To him be glory forever.” Never shall his praises cease. That which was bought with blood deserves to last while immortality endures. The glory of the cross must never be eclipsed; the lustre of the grave and of the resurrection must never be dimmed. O Jesus! thou shalt be praised forever. Long as immortal spirits live—long as the Father’s throne endures—forever, forever, unto thee shall be glory. Believer, you are anticipating the time when you shall join the saints above in ascribing all glory to Jesus; but are you glorifying him now? The apostle’s words are, “To him be glory both now and forever.” Will you not this day make it your prayer? “Lord, help me to glorify thee; I am poor; help me to glorify thee by contentment; I am sick; help me to give thee honour by patience; I have talents; help me to extol thee by spending them for thee; I have time; Lord, help me to redeem it, that I may serve thee; I have a heart to feel; Lord, let that heart feel no love but thine, and glow with no flame but affection for thee; I have a head to think; Lord, help me to think of thee and for thee; thou hast put me in this world for something; Lord, show me what that is, and help me to work out my life-purpose: I cannot do much; but as the widow put in her two mites, which were all her living, so, Lord, I cast my time and eternity too into thy treasury; I am all thine; take me, and enable me to glorify thee now, in all that I say, in all that I do, and with all that I have.”

# Word Live – 2/15/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 2/15/25

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 2/15/25

# A Lack of Courage

A landscape with trees and clouds

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[**Read John 18:28–19:16**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=John+18:28%e2%80%9319:16)

**Jesus Before Pilate**

28Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. 29So Pilate came out to them and asked, “What charges are you bringing against this man?”

30“If he were not a criminal,” they replied, “we would not have handed him over to you.”

31Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”

“But we have no right to execute anyone,” they objected. 32This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

33Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

34“Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

35“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

36Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

37“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

38“What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. 39But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews’?”

40They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

**Jesus Sentenced to Be Crucified**

19 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. 2The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe 3and went up to him again and again, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they slapped him in the face.

4Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.” 5When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!”

6As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!”

But Pilate answered, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.”

7The Jewish leaders insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

8When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, 9and he went back inside the palace. “Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10“Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?”

11Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

12From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.”

13When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). 14It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon.

“Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews.

15But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!”

“Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered.

16Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

**The Crucifixion of Jesus**

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.

If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them. [James 4:17](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Jas.4.17)

We are used to confessing our sins to God, asking Him to forgive the things we have done wrong. But what about the things we did not do? James 4:17 explains: “If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.” From God’s perspective, “sins of omission” are real and should be confessed like any others.

Pilate knew Jesus was innocent. As a just judge, he should have set Him free. Instead, he was tempted to condemn an innocent man. Why? He lacked courage to do the right thing. What if the mob got out of control? What if the Jewish leaders sent a negative report about him to Rome? What would happen to his career? He offered the crowd Barabbas, and their response confirmed his fears (18:39–40).

As with Abram and Jonah, Pilate hadn’t misunderstood. He comprehended the situation quite well. Though he was not a worshiper of the one true God, justice was his official responsibility. To fail to do it was sinful. He had an extra warning from the Lord, in the form of a dream given to his wife (Matt. 27:19).

Pilate sought to escape responsibility in several ways: He tried to hand Jesus’ case back to the Jews (18:31). He twice interrogated Jesus, perhaps to get Him to say something incriminating or to see if He would offer a bribe. He tried to use the custom of the prisoner release at Passover to set Jesus free. And he tried to satisfy the mob by “merely” flogging and torturing Jesus (19:1–5). Three times in today’s reading Pilate affirmed Jesus’ innocence (18:38; 19:4, 6). He “tried to set Jesus free” (19:12), but in the end he gave in and made the sinful choice. God, of course, remained in control (19:11).

**Go Deeper**

What situations in your life call for courage? What in your culture requires brave faith? Do you have “sins of omission” to confess today?

**Pray with Us**

Gracious Father, we confess we often believe the lie that there is no hope for sinners like us. Show us the truth of Your steadfast love revealed in Jesus, that we may know rest, joy, and hope. Amen!

# Our Daily Bread – 2/15/25

# PERFECTLY PERFECT SAVIOR

A vase of flowers on a shelf in a shower

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**Read: HEBREWS 4:12-16**

12For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

**Jesus the Great High Priest**

14Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=HEBREWS%204%3A12-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30029a)] Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

**Footnotes**

1. [Hebrews 4:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=HEBREWS%204%3A12-16&version=NIV#en-NIV-30029) Greek *has gone through the heavens*

We have a great high priest . . . who has been tempted in every way. just as we are yet He did not sin. HEBREWS 4:14-15

The interior designer on the home improvement show raved about the handmade ceramic tiles selected for the home's new shower area. Different from commercially manufactured tiles,

which are all identical, these handcrafted pieces were "imperfectly perfect." The imperfections gave each tile unique beauty, adding to the charm and style of an otherwise practical space.

I know little of style or charm, let alone how tiles might contribute positively or negatively to it. Yet while those tiles were imperfectly perfect, Jesus, in the incarnation (His coming to earth as a human being), was perfectly perfect. The writer of Hebrews affirmed, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet he did not sin" (HEBREWS 4:15). At no time during His earthly journey did Jesus speak a sinful word or commit a sinful act. He is perfectly perfect.

The encouragement for us, as Hebrews says, is to "hold firmly to the faith we profess" in Jesus (v. 14) because He understands and empathizes with the struggles we endure. He has been there and done that-but perfectly. Our perfectly perfect Savior can help us with all things.

**BILL CROWDER**

**Reflect and Pray**

When have you seen your own imperfections on display? How can you give thanks for the perfect Savior who endured all as our perfect high priest before our Father?

Loving Father, I'm thankful for the incarnate experience of Jesus that He lived, walked, and worked in our broken world, yet was without sin.

**INSIGHT**

Scripture teaches that Jesus was a perfect priest who offered Himself to God without blemish for the forgiveness of all who accept HIS sacrifice as payment for their sins (HEBREWS 9:12-14). The book of Hebrews is filled with the aroma of this good news! The permanence of Christ's priesthood is noted in Hebrews 7:23-25. Then the author describes His perfection: "[He) is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever" (VV. 26-28).

**ARTHUR JACKSON**

# God Calling – 2/15/25

# Inspiration -- Not Aspiration

You shall be used. The Divine Force is never less. It is sufficient for all the work in the world. I only need the instruments for Me to use. To know that would remake the world.

The world does not need supermen, but supernatural men. Men who will persistently turn the self out of their lives and let Divine Power work through them. England could be saved tomorrow if only her politicians just let Me use them.

Let inspiration take the place of aspiration. All unemployment would cease. I have always plenty of work to be done and always pay My people well as you will see, as more and more you get the right attitude of thought about the work being Mine only.

"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Job 32:8

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/16/25

# The Inspiration of Spiritual Initiative



Not all initiative, the willingness to take the first step, is inspired by God. Someone may say to you, “Get up and get going! Take your reluctance by the throat and throw it overboard— just do what needs to be done!” That is what we mean by ordinary human initiative. But when the Spirit of God comes to us and says, in effect, “Get up and get going,” suddenly we find that the initiative is inspired.

We all have many dreams and aspirations when we are young, but sooner or later we realize we have no power to accomplish them. We cannot do the things we long to do, so our tendency is to think of our dreams and aspirations as dead. But God comes and says to us, “Arise from the dead….” When God sends His inspiration, it comes to us with such miraculous power that we are able to “arise from the dead” and do the impossible. The remarkable thing about spiritual initiative is that the life and power comes after we “get up and get going.” God does not give us overcoming life— He gives us life as we overcome. When the inspiration of God comes, and He says, “Arise from the dead…,” we have to get ourselves up; God will not lift us up. Our Lord said to the man with the withered hand, “Stretch out your hand” ([Matthew 12:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+12:13)). As soon as the man did so, his hand was healed. But he had to take the initiative. If we will take the initiative to overcome, we will find that we have the inspiration of God, because He immediately gives us the power of life.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

We never enter into the Kingdom of God by having our head questions answered, but only by commitment. The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption, 565 R

# CCEL – 2/16/25

“To him be glory both now and forever.” [2 Peter 3:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.3.html#iiPet.3.18)

Heaven will be full of the ceaseless praises of Jesus. Eternity! thine unnumbered years shall speed their everlasting course, but forever and forever, “to him be glory.” Is he not a “Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek?” “To him be glory.” Is he not king forever?—King of kings and Lord of lords, the everlasting Father? “To him be glory forever.” Never shall his praises cease. That which was bought with blood deserves to last while immortality endures. The glory of the cross must never be eclipsed; the lustre of the grave and of the resurrection must never be dimmed. O Jesus! thou shalt be praised forever. Long as immortal spirits live—long as the Father’s throne endures—forever, forever, unto thee shall be glory. Believer, you are anticipating the time when you shall join the saints above in ascribing all glory to Jesus; but are you glorifying him now? The apostle’s words are, “To him be glory both now and forever.” Will you not this day make it your prayer? “Lord, help me to glorify thee; I am poor; help me to glorify thee by contentment; I am sick; help me to give thee honour by patience; I have talents; help me to extol thee by spending them for thee; I have time; Lord, help me to redeem it, that I may serve thee; I have a heart to feel; Lord, let that heart feel no love but thine, and glow with no flame but affection for thee; I have a head to think; Lord, help me to think of thee and for thee; thou hast put me in this world for something; Lord, show me what that is, and help me to work out my life-purpose: I cannot do much; but as the widow put in her two mites, which were all her living, so, Lord, I cast my time and eternity too into thy treasury; I am all thine; take me, and enable me to glorify thee now, in all that I say, in all that I do, and with all that I have.”

“I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.” [Philippians 4:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.11)

These words show us that contentment is not a natural propensity of man. “Ill weeds grow apace.” Covetousness, discontent, and murmuring are as natural to man as thorns are to the soil. We need not sow thistles and brambles; they come up naturally enough, because they are indigenous to earth: and so, we need not teach men to complain; they complain fast enough without any education. But the precious things of the earth must be cultivated. If we would have wheat, we must plough and sow; if we want flowers, there must be the garden, and all the gardener’s care. Now, contentment is one of the flowers of heaven, and if we would have it, it must be cultivated; it will not grow in us by nature; it is the new nature alone that can produce it, and even then we must be specially careful and watchful that we maintain and cultivate the grace which God has sown in us. Paul says, “I have learned ... to be content;” as much as to say, he did not know how at one time. It cost him some pains to attain to the mystery of that great truth. No doubt he sometimes thought he had learned, and then broke down. And when at last he had attained unto it, and could say, “I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,” he was an old, grey-headed man, upon the borders of the grave—a poor prisoner shut up in Nero’s dungeon at Rome. We might well be willing to endure Paul’s infirmities, and share the cold dungeon with him, if we too might by any means attain unto his good degree. Do not indulge the notion that you can be contented without learning, or learn without discipline. It is not a power that may be exercised naturally, but a science to be acquired gradually. We know this from experience. Brother, hush that murmur, natural though it be, and continue a diligent pupil in the College of Content.

# Word Live – 2/16/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 2/16/25

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 2/16/25

# A Lack of Faith

A blue hallway with prison bars

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[**Read Mark 14:66–72**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Mark+14:66%e2%80%9372)

**Peter Disowns Jesus**

66While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. 67When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

“You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said.

68But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2014%3A66%E2%80%9372&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24823a)]

69When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” 70Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”

71He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

72Immediately the rooster crowed the second time.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2014%3A66%E2%80%9372&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24827b)] Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2014%3A66%E2%80%9372&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24827c)] you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

**Footnotes**

1. [Mark 14:68](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2014%3A66%E2%80%9372&version=NIV#en-NIV-24823) Some early manuscripts *entryway and the rooster crowed*
2. [Mark 14:72](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2014%3A66%E2%80%9372&version=NIV#en-NIV-24827) Some early manuscripts do not have *the second time.*
3. [Mark 14:72](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2014%3A66%E2%80%9372&version=NIV#en-NIV-24827) Some early manuscripts do not have *twice.*

Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.[Luke 22:33](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Luke.22.33)

The baseball player settles in at home plate, waiting for the pitch. A blazing fastball right down the middle. Strike one. Next, a wicked curveball over the outside corner. Swing and a miss, strike two. One more chance. He crouches alertly, ready. The pitcher fires a low, hard slider over the left corner of the plate. The batter swings too high. Three strikes, he’s out! Head down, he heads back to the dugout.

That’s how Peter must have felt in today’s reading. He had been warned by Jesus, and with three opportunities to stand up for his Lord, he’d completely blown it. Three strikes, he was out! Thankfully, God does not give up on us so easily.

Skulking near the trial of Jesus, Peter was tempted to deny his identity as a disciple of Christ. Why? Fear. His Messiah was under arrest and in trouble with both Jews and Romans. Powerful people wanted Him dead. Very likely they’d come for His followers next. Peter wasn’t wrong. Humanly speaking, he had a solid grasp on the situation. But his fear was mixed with his lack of understanding regarding God’s plan. His failure lay in his choice of fear over faith.

For Peter, likely the main source for Mark’s account, this was an embarrassing but essential story from Passion Week. Jesus had given Peter a clear prophetic warning (Luke 22:33–34). In addition, Peter had three opportunities to choose differently—but his third denial was the most vehement of all (v. 71). To his credit, though, when the rooster crowed his immediate response was heartfelt weeping and sorrow over his sin (v. 72). The Greek in verse 72 literally means “wept deeply” or “wept bitterly” (see also Luke 22:61–62).

Jesus’ reinstatement of Peter in John 21:15–19 is often read as a bookend for today’s passage—three affirmations to balance the three denials. We can take hope from this!

**Go Deeper**

Why didn’t Peter admit to knowing Jesus? Have you ever been tempted to deny your allegiance to Him?

**Pray with Us**

Peter’s denial gives us sorrow, but also great joy. It helps us overcome fear. Christ didn’t give up on him! Thank You for Your forgiveness, Lord! “If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts” (1 John 3:20).

# Our Daily Bread – 2/16/25

# REFLECTING GOD'S MERCY

A group of soldiers in the snow

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**Read: MATTHEW 7:7-12**•

**Ask, Seek, Knock**

**7**“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **8**For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

**9**“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? **10**Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? **11**If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! **12**So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

We have a great high priest . . . who has been tempted in every way. just as we are yet he did not sin. HEBREWS 4:14

A Finnish soldier in the three· month Winter War with Russia (1939-1940) lay wounded on the battlefield. A Russian soldier walked his way, pointing his rifle. The Finn was certain he'd met his end . However, the Russian handed him a medic kit, then kept moving. Remarkably, the Finn later found himself in a similar situation, only the roles were reversed- a Russian soldier lay wounded and helpless on the battlefield. The Finn handed him medical supplies and walked on.

Jesus gave us a central, guiding principle for our lives: "In everything. do to others what you would have them do to you"(MATTHEW 7:12). Can you imagine how different our world would be if believers kept this one simple principle? Can we calculate how much oppression would end if we collectively obeyed Jesus' wisdom? If only, as He guides us, we would give others the same compassion and mercy we'd hope to receive ourselves. As we "give good gifts" to others, we reflect the heart of our "Father in heaven [who gives] good gifts to those" He loves (V. 11).

It's vital that we see others as not merely enemies or strangers or people with whom we compete for resources or opportunities. Instead, we should see their need for mercy and kindness just as we need it. And as we do, our posture and perspective will change. Then, as God provides, we can freely offer them the love He's freely offered to us.

**WINN COLLIER**

**Reflect and Pray**

Why is it vital to treat others the way you'd like to be treated? How can Jesus help you?

Dear God, please help me reflect Your mercy and love in how I treat others.

**INSIGHT**

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (MATTHEW 5-7) wasn't His first public address. Matthew 4:13-17 tells us that His teaching ministry had already begun: "Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum...From that time on Jesus began to preach." The Sermon on the Mount, however, was His first recorded public message. He shares what life in His kingdom looks like-in sharp contrast to the kingdoms of this world. The Beatitudes (5:3-10) show that His kingdom values people and things differently than the surrounding cultures. It describes how we're to impact the world around us and relates to issues of the heart (as opposed to the letter) of the law. It even calls His kingdom citizens to love their enemies. Life in His kingdom is characterized by care for the poor, prayer that rests in God's good will, and a trust in the Father that precludes the need for worry. A very different kind of kingdom indeed!

**BILL CROWDER**

# God Calling – 2/16/25

# Never Ruffled

Even were I never to speak to you, you would be well rewarded for the setting apart this time, if you only sat still and longed for Me, if you just drew hungering breaths for Me, as you do for the fresh pure air of the open.

Be still, be calm. Wait before Me. Learn of Me, patience, humility, peace. When will you be absolutely unruffled whatever happens? You are slow to learn your lesson. In the rush and work and worry, the very seeking a silence must help.

In bustle so little is accomplished. You must learn to take the calm with you in the most hurried days.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusts in thee." Isaiah 26:3

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/17/25

# Taking the Initiative Against Depression



Arise and eat. —[1 Kings 19:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Kings+19%3A5)

The angel in this passage did not give Elijah a vision, or explain the Scriptures to him, or do anything remarkable. He simply told Elijah to do a very ordinary thing, that is, to get up and eat. If we were never depressed, we would not be alive— only material things don’t suffer depression. If human beings were not capable of depression, we would have no capacity for happiness and exaltation. There are things in life that are designed to depress us; for example, things that are associated with death. Whenever you examine yourself, always take into account your capacity for depression.

When the Spirit of God comes to us, He does not give us glorious visions, but He tells us to do the most ordinary things imaginable. Depression tends to turn us away from the everyday things of God’s creation. But whenever God steps in, His inspiration is to do the most natural, simple things— things we would never have imagined God was in, but as we do them we find Him there. The inspiration that comes to us in this way is an initiative against depression. But we must take the first step and do it in the inspiration of God. If, however, we do something simply to overcome our depression, we will only deepen it. But when the Spirit of God leads us instinctively to do something, the moment we do it the depression is gone. As soon as we arise and obey, we enter a higher plane of life.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

There is nothing, naturally speaking, that makes us lose heart quicker than decay—the decay of bodily beauty, of natural life, of friendship, of associations, all these things make a man lose heart; but Paul says when we are trusting in Jesus Christ these things do not find us discouraged, light comes through them. The Place of Help

# CCEL – 2/17/25

The whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire.—[LEV. 4:12.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lev.4.html" \l "Lev.4.12)

They took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him.—The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.—The fellowship of his sufferings.

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.—Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

[John 19:16-18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.19.html" \l "John.19.16). -[Heb. 13:11-13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.11). -[Phi. 3:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.10).[I Pet. 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.13). -[II Cor. 4:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html" \l "iiCor.4.17).

“Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi.” [Genesis 25:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.25.html" \l "Gen.25.11)

Hagar had once found deliverance there and Ishmael had drank from the water so graciously revealed by the God who liveth and seeth the sons of men; but this was a merely casual visit, such as worldlings pay to the Lord in times of need, when it serves their turn. They cry to him in trouble, but forsake him in prosperity. Isaac dwelt there, and made the well of the living and all-seeing God his constant source of supply. The usual tenor of a man’s life, the dwelling of his soul, is the true test of his state. Perhaps the providential visitation experienced by Hagar struck Isaac’s mind, and led him to revere the place; its mystical name endeared it to him; his frequent musings by its brim at eventide made him familiar with the well; his meeting Rebecca there had made his spirit feel at home near the spot; but best of all, the fact that he there enjoyed fellowship with the living God, had made him select that hallowed ground for his dwelling. Let us learn to live in the presence of the living God; let us pray the Holy Spirit that this day, and every other day, we may feel, “Thou God seest me.” May the Lord Jehovah be as a well to us, delightful, comforting, unfailing, springing up unto eternal life. The bottle of the creature cracks and dries up, but the well of the Creator never fails; happy is he who dwells at the well, and so has abundant and constant supplies near at hand. The Lord has been a sure helper to others: his name is Shaddai, God All-sufficient; our hearts have often had most delightful intercourse with him; through him our soul has found her glorious Husband, the Lord Jesus; and in him this day we live, and move, and have our being; let us, then, dwell in closest fellowship with him. Glorious Lord, constrain us that we may never leave thee, but dwell by the well of the living God.

# Word Live – 2/17/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 2/17/25

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 2/17/25

# A Lack of Humility

A close up of a purple and white background

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[**Read Acts 5:1–11**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Acts+5:1%e2%80%9311)

**Ananias and Sapphira**

5 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. 2With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet.

3Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? 4Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.”

5When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. 6Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

7About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8Peter asked her, “Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?”

“Yes,” she said, “that is the price.”

9Peter said to her, “How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.”

10At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit? [Acts 5:3](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Acts.5.3)

The book of Proverbs warns us to avoid pride: “Pride brings a person low” (29:23) and “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall” (16:18). These are serious warnings, but this one is the most grim: “The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished” (16:5).

Ananias and Sapphira illustrate this truth. They were tempted to lie about the price of the land they had sold and thus the nature of their gift to the church. Why? Pride. They wanted to be praised for their generosity. They’d missed the point of the early church sharing resources and giving to those in need for the sake of the gospel (Acts 4:34–37). They’d also missed the point of giving as an act of worship to the Lord (Matt 6:1–4).

The two conspired to hold back some of the money and lie about it. Their sin was public and deliberate. Peter went so far as to say that Ananias’s heart was filled or controlled by Satan (5:3–4). The couple’s pride, dishonesty, and lack of generosity cost them their lives (vv. 5, 9). The early believers needed to learn that they were not playing a social game. The “great fear” that “seized the whole church” (vv. 5, 11) was a valid “fear of the Lord,” indicating a proper respect and reverence for His glory. Verse 11 is actually the first occurrence of *ekklesia* (“congregation” or “church”) in the Book of Acts.

We can try to fake generosity or worship, but God knows our hearts. When we are tempted to treat these matters lightly, the story of Ananias and Sapphira should warn us away from pride and toward proper humility before the Lord and others.

**Go Deeper**

In this age of social media, posing and pretense are strong temptations. What are some practical ways we can combat this prideful desire to look good and receive praise? How can we be authentic?

**Pray with Us**

Loving God, teach us how to follow You wholeheartedly, without hypocrisy. By Your Spirit draw us together, inflame us with a desire to do Your will, and to be Your faithful people in the name of Your Son, our Lord.

# Our Daily Bread – 2/17/25

# WISE RESTRAINT IN GOD

A close-up of a person

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: PROVERBS 29:4-11**

4By justice a king gives a country stability,  
    but those who are greedy for[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PROVERBS%2029%3A4-11%2C%2020&version=NIV#fen-NIV-17229a)] bribes tear it down.

5Those who flatter their neighbors  
    are spreading nets for their feet.

6Evildoers are snared by their own sin,  
    but the righteous shout for joy and are glad.

7The righteous care about justice for the poor,  
    but the wicked have no such concern.

8Mockers stir up a city,  
    but the wise turn away anger.

9If a wise person goes to court with a fool,  
    the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace.

10The bloodthirsty hate a person of integrity  
    and seek to kill the upright.

11Fools give full vent to their rage,  
    but the wise bring calm in the end.

**Footnotes**

1. [Proverbs 29:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PROVERBS%2029%3A4-11%2C%2020&version=NIV#en-NIV-17229) Or *who give*

**Proverbs 29:20**

20Do you see someone who speaks in haste?  
    There is more hope for a fool than for them.

Do you see someone who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for them. PROVERBS 29:20

Following the South's catastrophic loss at Gettysburg in the American Civil War (1863), General Robert E. Lee led his battered troops back to Southern territory. Heavy rains flooded the Potomac River, blocking his retreat. President Abraham Lincoln urged General George Meade to attack. But Meade's men were just as weary as Lee's. He rested his troops.

Lincoln picked up his quill and wrote a letter in which he confessed he was "distressed immeasurably" at Meade's reluctance to pursue Lee. On the envelope are these words in the president's handwriting: "To Gen. Meade, never sent, or signed." And indeed, it never was.

Long before Lincoln, another great leader grasped the importance of reining in our emotions. Anger, no matter how justified, is a dangerously powerful force. "Do you see someone who speaks in haste?" King Solomon asked. "There is more hope for a fool than for them" (PROVERBS 29:20). Solomon knew that "by justice a king gives a country stability" (V.4). He also understood that "fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end" (v. 11).

And in the end, not sending that letter prevented Lincoln from demoralizing his top general. helped win a necessary war, and contributed to the healing of a nation. We do well to learn from examples like his of wise restraint.

**TIM GUSTAFSON**

**Reflect and Pray**

Why is it important to cautiously give vent to your emotions? How will you do this the next time you're angry?

Father, I give my emotions to You so that Your Spirit will help me avoid speaking in haste.

For further study~ read Why Am I Angry? Understanding Anger's Roots at DiscoverODB.org.

**INSIGHT**

Proverbs 29 cautions us to restrain and overcome our anger. "The wise turn away anger" (v.8), whereas "fools give full vent to their rage" (v. 11). An angry person inevitably "stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins" (V. 22). Unrest rained anger resulted in humanity's first murder. God warned Cain to rein in his anger lest he be consumed by it. Succumbing to his anger, Cain killed his own brother in cold blood (GENESIS 4:6-8). Moses, another classic example, killed an Egyptian taskmaster in a moment of rage (EXODUS 2:11-12). Years later, angered by the Israelites' persistent grumblings, Moses disobeyed and dishonored God and unsympathetically disparaged God's people by striking the rock (NUMBERS 20:1-13). The psalmist says that "they made Moses angry, and he spoke foolishly" (PSALM 106:33 NLT). Indeed, "A quick-tempered person does foolish things" (PROVERBS 14:17). Paul warns, "Don't sin by letting anger control you .. for anger gives a foothold to the devil" (EPHESIANS 4:26-27 NLT).

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

# God Calling – 2/17/25

# Psychic Powers

Psychic powers are not necessarily Spiritual Powers. Do not seek the spiritual through material means. Could you but see, it is weighing beautiful spirit-wings down with earth's mud.

Seek this time as a time of communion with Me -- not as a time to ask questions and have them answered. And meet Me in Communion. It is soul-food that I have provided.

Do not expect a perfect Church, but find in a church the means of coming very near to Me. That alone matters, then the much, that is husk, falls away. Hold it of no account. Grasp the truth and find Me -- the true Bread of Life. The lesson of the grain is the lesson of My Church and Me. The real life is all that matters, the outward Church is the husk; but the husk was necessary to present a life-grain to men.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20