# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/29/25

# Gracious Uncertainty



…it has not yet been revealed what we shall be… —[1 John 3:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+John+3%3A2)

Our natural inclination is to be so precise– trying always to forecast accurately what will happen next– that we look upon uncertainty as a bad thing. We think that we must reach some predetermined goal, but that is not the nature of the spiritual life. The nature of the spiritual life is that we are certain in our uncertainty. Consequently, we do not put down roots. Our common sense says, “Well, what if I were in that circumstance?” We cannot presume to see ourselves in any circumstance in which we have never been.

Certainty is the mark of the commonsense life– gracious uncertainty is the mark of the spiritual life. To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways, not knowing what tomorrow may bring. This is generally expressed with a sigh of sadness, but it should be an expression of breathless expectation. We are uncertain of the next step, but we are certain of God. As soon as we abandon ourselves to God and do the task He has placed closest to us, He begins to fill our lives with surprises. When we become simply a promoter or a defender of a particular belief, something within us dies. That is not believing God– it is only believing our belief about Him. Jesus said, “…unless you…become as little children…” ([Matthew 18:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18:3)). The spiritual life is the life of a child. We are not uncertain of God, just uncertain of what He is going to do next. If our certainty is only in our beliefs, we develop a sense of self-righteousness, become overly critical, and are limited by the view that our beliefs are complete and settled. But when we have the right relationship with God, life is full of spontaneous, joyful uncertainty and expectancy. Jesus said, “…believe also in Me” ([John 14:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14:1)), not, “Believe certain things about Me”. Leave everything to Him and it will be gloriously and graciously uncertain how He will come in– but you can be certain that He will come. Remain faithful to Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 4/29/25

Consider how great things He hath done for you.—[I SAM. 12:24.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.12.html" \l "iSam.12.24)

Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.—The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.—He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

[Deut. 8:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.2),[5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.5).[Psa. 119:75](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.75),[71](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.71),[67](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.67). -[Psa. 118:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.118.html" \l "Ps.118.18). -[Psa. 103:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.10),[14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.14).

“Thou art my hope in the day of evil.” **[Jeremiah 17:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.17.html" \l "Jer.17.17)**

The path of the Christian is not always bright with sunshine; he has his seasons of darkness and of storm. True, it is written in God’s Word, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;” and it is a great truth, that religion is calculated to give a man happiness below as well as bliss above; but experience tells us that if the course of the just be “As the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day,” yet sometimes that light is eclipsed. At certain periods clouds cover the believer’s sun, and he walks in darkness and sees no light. There are many who have rejoiced in the presence of God for a season; they have basked in the sunshine in the earlier stages of their Christian career; they have walked along the “green pastures” by the side of the “still waters,” but suddenly they find the glorious sky is clouded; instead of the Land of Goshen they have to tread the sandy desert; in the place of sweet waters, they find troubled streams, bitter to their taste, and they say, “Surely, if I were a child of God, this would not happen.” Oh! say not so, thou who art walking in darkness. The best of God’s saints must drink the wormwood; the dearest of his children must bear the cross. No Christian has enjoyed perpetual prosperity; no believer can always keep his harp from the willows. Perhaps the Lord allotted you at first a smooth and unclouded path, because you were weak and timid. He tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, but now that you are stronger in the spiritual life, you must enter upon the riper and rougher experience of God’s full-grown children. We need winds and tempests to exercise our faith, to tear off the rotten bough of self-dependence, and to root us more firmly in Christ. The day of evil reveals to us the value of our glorious hope.

# Word Live – 4/29/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/29/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/29/25

# Seeking the Risen Christ

A person standing in a field

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

[**Read Colossians 3:1–14**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Colossians+3:1%e2%80%9314)

**Living as Those Made Alive in Christ**

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ, who is your[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%203%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29522a)] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%203%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29524b)] 7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

**Footnotes**

1. [Colossians 3:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%203%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-29522) Some manuscripts *our*
2. [Colossians 3:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%203%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-29524) Some early manuscripts *coming on those who are disobedient*

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above. [Colossians 3:1](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Col.3.1)

What does it mean to be “heavenly minded”? The negative stereotype is of a person whose head is in the clouds. Their hope is so fixed on the world to come that they are useless in this present world. I would say that today, we move too far in the opposite direction. We lean away from heaven and concentrate on the world. We are activists who would rather work than wait.

Heavenly-mindedness is, first of all, a way of thinking about ourselves in terms of our relation to Christ and the world. It assumes that a fundamental change in our spiritual condition has occurred. Our inclusion in the resurrection of Christ means that we have moved from death to life. We have been “raised with Christ” (v. 1). Paul is not talking about the believer’s bodily resurrection, which is still in the future but about our inclusion in the resurrection of Christ. When the apostle urges believers to set their minds on things above, he is not telling them to fantasize about heavenly life by dwelling on streets of gold and a “mansion just over the hilltop.” He is describing a mindfulness that begins with understanding Christ’s victorious position and its power to transform us (vv. 7–10).

To be heavenly minded is to live in a way that demonstrates the earthly effects of heavenly reality. But Paul’s assertion is more than a general exhortation to “be good.” It is a call to engage in an ongoing struggle with sin on this side of eternity. The sinful actions Paul lists have no place in the heavenly sphere. But willpower and discipline alone are not enough to defeat them. The cross is their only remedy because it has been made effective by the vindication of Christ’s resurrection and ascension.

**Go Deeper**

Paul urges the Colossians to “put on” characteristics that reflect the image of Christ. What does this imply about the practice of holiness in the Christian life?

**Pray with Us**

Holy Spirit, minister to our hearts, teach us to look to Jesus in every situation. May we surrender everything to Christ, living for Him and serving Him.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/29/25

# HOPELESS OR HOPEFUL

A close-up of a plant

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**Read: NUMBERS 13:26-33**

**Report on the Exploration**

**26**They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. **27**They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. **28**But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. **29**The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.”

**30**Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”

**31**But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” **32**And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. **33**We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it. NUMBERS 13:30

Every fall, plants like ragweed irritate my son's sinuses. One night, his symptoms became so severe I thought he should see a doctor. Our family had just recovered from months of serious health issues, and I was so discouraged I didn't even want to pray. My husband, however, found hope in all that God had already helped us through. He prayed for direction. Shortly after, with the help of medicine, our son's condition improved.

Though some of their companions were discouraged, Caleb and Joshua also showed hope and optimism after scouting out the land of Canaan (NUMBERS 14:6-9). God had promised the area to Israel, and Caleb said, "We should ... take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it" (13:30). The others felt it was impossible, that the Canaanites were too powerful and their cities too well fortified (vv. 28,31-33).

These were serious challenges, but Caleb's faith rested on God's past faithfulness to His people in their struggles. God's people did eventually conquer Canaan, and Caleb received his share because he had followed Him "wholeheartedly" (JOSHUA 14:9).

Many situations feel hopeless, but for those who know God and believe in His faithfulness, there's always a reason for hope as we trust His power and grace to carry us through.

**JENNIFER BENSON SCHULDT**

**Reflect and Pray**

How do you think God responds to your prayers when you're discouraged, overwhelmed, or fearful? How does it help to know that He's for you?

Dear God, please let courage and hope flow from my relationship with You to inspire others to turn to You when life is hard.

**INSIGHT**

The negative report of the ten faithless spies must have created quite a commotion within the Israelite camp. We read that Caleb "silenced the people before Moses" (NUMBERS 13:30). The silence didn't last. A mass protest soon broke out. "That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud" (14:1). There was serious talk of returning to the land of their enslavement (V. 4). God's response was stern. None of the adults, save for the two faithful spies - Caleb and Joshua - would enter the promised land. Why? Because the people had disbelieved God by thinking He couldn't bring them into the land He'd promised to give them. Caleb and Joshua, however, placed their hope and trust in Him.

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

# God Calling – 4/29/25

# Disharmony

Seek and ye shall find. Shall find that inner knowledge that makes the problems of life plain.

The difficulties of life are caused by disharmony in the individual. There is no discord in My Kingdom, only a something unconquered in My disciples. The rule of My Kingdom is perfect order, perfect harmony, perfect supply, perfect love, perfect honesty, perfect obedience -- all power, all conquest, all success,

But so often My servants lack power, conquest, success, supply, harmony, and think I fail in My promises because these are not manifested in their lives.

These are but the outward manifestations that result from the obedience, honesty, order, love -- and they come, not in answer to urgent prayer, but naturally as light results from a lighted candle.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Luke 11:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/30/25

# Spontaneous Love



Love suffers long and is kind… —[1 Corinthians 13:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+13%3A4)

Love is not premeditated– it is spontaneous; that is, it bursts forth in extraordinary ways. There is nothing of precise certainty in Paul’s description of love. We cannot predetermine our thoughts and actions by saying, “Now I will never think any evil thoughts, and I will believe everything that Jesus would have me to believe.” No, the characteristic of love is spontaneity. We don’t deliberately set the statements of Jesus before us as our standard, but when His Spirit is having His way with us, we live according to His standard without even realizing it. And when we look back, we are amazed at how unconcerned we have been over our emotions, which is the very evidence that real spontaneous love was there. The nature of everything involved in the life of God in us is only discerned when we have been through it and it is in our past.

The fountains from which love flows are in God, not in us. It is absurd to think that the love of God is naturally in our hearts, as a result of our own nature. His love is there only because it “has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit…” ([Romans 5:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5:5)).

If we try to prove to God how much we love Him, it is a sure sign that we really don’t love Him. The evidence of our love for Him is the absolute spontaneity of our love, which flows naturally from His nature within us. And when we look back, we will not be able to determine why we did certain things, but we can know that we did them according to the spontaneous nature of His love in us. The life of God exhibits itself in this spontaneous way because the fountains of His love are in the Holy Spirit.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

When you are joyful, be joyful; when you are sad, be sad. If God has given you a sweet cup, don’t make it bitter; and if He has given you a bitter cup, don’t try and make it sweet; take things as they come.  Shade of His Hand, 1226 L

# CCEL – 4/30/25

Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.—[I JOHN 2:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.5)

The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.—If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.—Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.—Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

[Heb. 13:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.20).[I John 2:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.3). -[John 14:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.23). -[I John 3:6,7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.6). -[I John 4:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.17).

“And all the children of Israel murmured.” **[Numbers 14:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.14.html" \l "Num.14.2)**

There are murmurers amongst Christians now, as there were in the camp of Israel of old. There are those who, when the rod falls, cry out against the afflictive dispensation. They ask, “Why am I thus afflicted? What have I done to be chastened in this manner?” A word with thee, O murmurer! Why shouldst thou murmur against the dispensations of thy heavenly Father? Can he treat thee more hardly than thou deservest? Consider what a rebel thou wast once, but he has pardoned thee! Surely, if he in his wisdom sees fit now to chasten thee, thou shouldst not complain. After all, art thou smitten as hardly as thy sins deserve? Consider the corruption which is in thy breast, and then wilt thou wonder that there needs so much of the rod to fetch it out? Weigh thyself, and discern how much dross is mingled with thy gold; and dost thou think the fire too hot to purge away so much dross as thou hast? Does not that proud rebellious spirit of thine prove that thy heart is not thoroughly sanctified? Are not those murmuring words contrary to the holy submissive nature of God’s children? Is not the correction needed? But if thou wilt murmur against the chastening, take heed, for it will go hard with murmurers. God always chastises his children twice, if they do not bear the first stroke patiently. But know one thing—“He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” All his corrections are sent in love, to purify thee, and to draw thee nearer to himself. Surely it must help thee to bear the chastening with resignation if thou art able to recognize thyFather's hand. For “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.” “Murmur not as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.”

# Word Live – 4/30/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/30/25

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# Today in the Word – 4/30/25

# Waiting in Faith

A hand holding a compass

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[**Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=1+Thessalonians+1:1%e2%80%9310)

1 Paul, Silas[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Thessalonians%201%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29562a)] and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you.

**Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians’ Faith**

2We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. 3We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

4For we know, brothers and sisters[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Thessalonians%201%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29565b)] loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, 9for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

**Footnotes**

1. [1 Thessalonians 1:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Thessalonians%201%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-29562) Greek *Silvanus*, a variant of *Silas*
2. [1 Thessalonians 1:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Thessalonians%201%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-29565) The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in 2:1, 9, 14, 17; 3:7; 4:1, 10, 13; 5:1, 4, 12, 14, 25, 27.

Your faith in God has become known everywhere. [1 Thessalonians 1:8](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=1Thess.1.8)

Today, we wait with great longing for the return of the risen Christ. According to one of Jesus’ parables, it is like servants who waited for their master to return from a wedding feast. “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning,” Jesus urged his disciples in Luke 12:35.

In today’s reading, Paul encourages the Thessalonians to wait and serve. On this side of the Second Coming, waiting is one of the marks of genuine faith. But this type of waiting is not passive, but both expectant and active. As the Thessalonians waited for the return of the risen Christ, they served Him, motivated by a combination of love and hope (v. 3). For those who have faith, the gospel comes “not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction” (v. 5). This combination of truth and power enables those who wait for Jesus to imitate His life (v. 6). This is not a matter of trying to live up to Jesus’ example. It is living in the power of His resurrection.

Faith involves turning. The Thessalonians turned away from idols “to serve the living and true God” (vv. 9–10). Paul emphasizes the contrast between the empty promise offered by false idols that the Thessalonians had previously served and the living hope of the true God. Although it may seem as if there are two distinct motions in this, the text only speaks of one. It is a turning toward God. The very act of turning toward God sets us on a path away from the one which is not of God. The Greek term that the NIV translates as “turned” can also mean “to return.” This meaning implies that the conversion Paul describes is not only a return to God but also a kind of homecoming.

**Go Deeper**

How can you live today in the power of Christ’s resurrection? What does it look like for you to wait for the return of our risen Savior?

**Pray with Us**

As we conclude this month’s study, we praise You, the living Christ, for sharing with us the power of Your resurrection. Thank You for the reminder that turning

# Our Daily Bread – 4/30/25

# TRULY TRUSTING GOD

A cat standing next to a cat

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: PSALM 32:6-11**

**6**Therefore let all the faithful pray to you  
    while you may be found;  
surely the rising of the mighty waters  
    will not reach them.  
**7**You are my hiding place;  
    you will protect me from trouble  
    and surround me with songs of deliverance.

**8**I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
    I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.  
**9**Do not be like the horse or the mule,  
    which have no understanding  
but must be controlled by bit and bridle  
    or they will not come to you.  
**10**Many are the woes of the wicked,  
    but the Lord’s unfailing love  
    surrounds the one who trusts in him.

**11**Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous;  
    sing, all you who are upright in heart!

I will instruct ... you in the way you should go ... with my loving eye on you. PSALM 32:8

The stray cat mewed pitifully, stopping me in my tracks. I had just walked past a pile of food that someone had carelessly discarded on the ground. Wow, God's provided a meal for this hungry cat, I thought. The food was hidden behind a nearby pillar, so I tried to lure the emaciated cat to it. It moved toward me trustingly-then stopped and refused to follow me further. I wanted to ask, Why don't you trust my directions? There's a whole meal waiting for you!

Then it struck me: Don't I act Similarly in my relationship with God? How often have I responded to His directions thinking, I do trust You, God, but I don't think Your instructions are reliable – not realizing that His divine provision might be waiting right around the corner.

God's paths are trustworthy, for He loves us and has our best interests at heart. "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you," He tells us (PSALM 32:8). Yet He doesn't treat us like animals that need to be controlled (V. 9). He desires for us to follow Him willingly and promises His everlasting presence as we do so: "The LORD'S unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him” (V. 10). All we need to do is just keep following Him, knowing that He'll be with us every step of the way.

**LESLIE KOH**

**Reflect and Pray**

What fears or concerns keep you from trusting God completely? What is He guiding you to do at this time?

Dear Father, please teach me to trust You completely, for I know You love me and desire nothing but the best for me.

For further study, read A Prayer for Wondering if God Is There at DiscoverODB.org.

**INSIGHT**

A penitential psalm is a personal lament where the author confesses sin, expresses sorrow in repentance, and entrusts himself to God's mercy and forgiveness. David wrote five of the seven penitential psalms (PSALMS 6, 32, 38, 51, 143). Scholars also attribute the remaining two - Psalms 102 and 130 - to him, though the author isn't identified. For about a year after his adultery with Bathsheba, David refused to repent until the prophet Nathan confronted him (2 SAMUEL l1-l2). The superscription to Psalm 51 indicates it was written when "Nathan came to [David]." Many scholars believe this was also the background of Psalm 32. David speaks of the crushing burden of guilt in his denial of sin (32:3-4) and the joy of receiving God's forgiveness when he confessed and repented (vv, 1-2, 5). He contrasts the blessedness of repentance (vv, 1-2) with the anguish of living with unconfessed Sin (vv. 3-4). Repentance reveals our desire to willingly follow God and experience His purifying presence (1 JOHN 1:9).

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

# God Calling – 4/30/25

# Springtime

Rejoice in the Spring time of the year. Let there be Spring time in your hearts. The full time of fruit is not yet but there is the promise of the blossom.

Know surely that your lives too are full of glad promise. Such blessings are to be yours. Such joys, such wonders.

All is indeed well. Live in My Sunshine and My Love.

"Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." Psalm 4:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/1/25

# Faith— Not Emotion



We walk by faith, not by sight. —[2 Corinthians 5:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+5%3A7)

For a while, we are fully aware of God’s concern for us. But then, when God begins to use us in His work, we begin to take on a pitiful look and talk only of our trials and difficulties. And all the while God is trying to make us do our work as hidden people who are not in the spotlight. None of us would be hidden spiritually if we could help it. Can we do our work when it seems that God has sealed up heaven? Some of us always want to be brightly illuminated saints with golden halos and with the continual glow of inspiration, and to have other saints of God dealing with us all the time. A self-assured saint is of no value to God. He is abnormal, unfit for daily life, and completely unlike God. We are here, not as immature angels, but as men and women, to do the work of this world. And we are to do it with an infinitely greater power to withstand the struggle because we have been born from above.

If we continually try to bring back those exceptional moments of inspiration, it is a sign that it is not God we want. We are becoming obsessed with the moments when God did come and speak with us, and we are insisting that He do it again. But what God wants us to do is to “walk by faith.” How many of us have set ourselves aside as if to say, “I cannot do anything else until God appears to me”? He will never do it. We will have to get up on our own, without any inspiration and without any sudden touch from God. Then comes our surprise and we find ourselves exclaiming, “Why, He was there all the time, and I never knew it!” Never live for those exceptional moments— they are surprises. God will give us His touches of inspiration only when He sees that we are not in danger of being led away by them. We must never consider our moments of inspiration as the standard way of life— our work is our standard.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The attitude of a Christian towards the providential order in which he is placed is to recognize that God is behind it for purposes of His own.  Biblical Ethics, 99 R

# CCEL – 5/1/25

The fruit of the Spirit is peace.—[GAL. 5:22.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.22)

To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

God hath called us to peace.—Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.—The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.—Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.—Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Great peace have they which love thy law.

[Rom. 8:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.6).[I Cor. 7:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.7.html" \l "iCor.7.15). -[John 14:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.27). -[Rom. 15:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.15.html" \l "Rom.15.13).[II Tim. 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.1.html" \l "iiTim.1.12). -[Isa. 26:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.26.html" \l "Isa.26.3).[Isa. 32:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.32.html" \l "Isa.32.17). -[Prov. 1:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.1.html" \l "Prov.1.33).[Psa. 119:165](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.165).

“His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.” **[Song of Solomon 5:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.13)**

Lo, the flowery month is come! March winds and April showers have done their work, and the earth is all bedecked with beauty. Come my soul, put on thine holiday attire and go forth to gather garlands of heavenly thoughts. Thou knowest whither to betake thyself, for to thee “the beds of spices” are well known, and thou hast so often smelt the perfume of “the sweet flowers,” that thou wilt go at once to thy well-beloved and find all loveliness, all joy in him. That cheek once so rudely smitten with a rod, oft bedewed with tears of sympathy and then defiled with spittle—that cheek as it smiles with mercy is as fragrant aromatic to my heart. Thou didst not hide thy face from shame and spitting, O Lord Jesus, and therefore I will find my dearest delight in praising thee. Those cheeks were furrowed by the plough of grief, and crimsoned with red lines of blood from thy thorn-crowned temples; such marks of love unbounded cannot but charm my soul far more than “pillars of perfume.” If I may not see the whole of his face I would behold his cheeks, for the least glimpse of him is exceedingly refreshing to my spiritual sense and yields a variety of delights. In Jesus I find not only fragrance, but a bed of spices; not one flower, but all manner of sweet flowers. He is to me my rose and my lily, my heartsease and my cluster of camphire. When he is with me it is May all the year round, and my soul goes forth to wash her happy face in the morning-dew of his grace, and to solace herself with the singing of the birds of his promises. Precious Lord Jesus, let me in very deed know the blessedness which dwells in abiding, unbroken fellowship with thee. I am a poor worthless one, whose cheek thou hast deigned to kiss! O let me kiss thee in return with the kisses of my lips.

# Word Live – 5/1/25

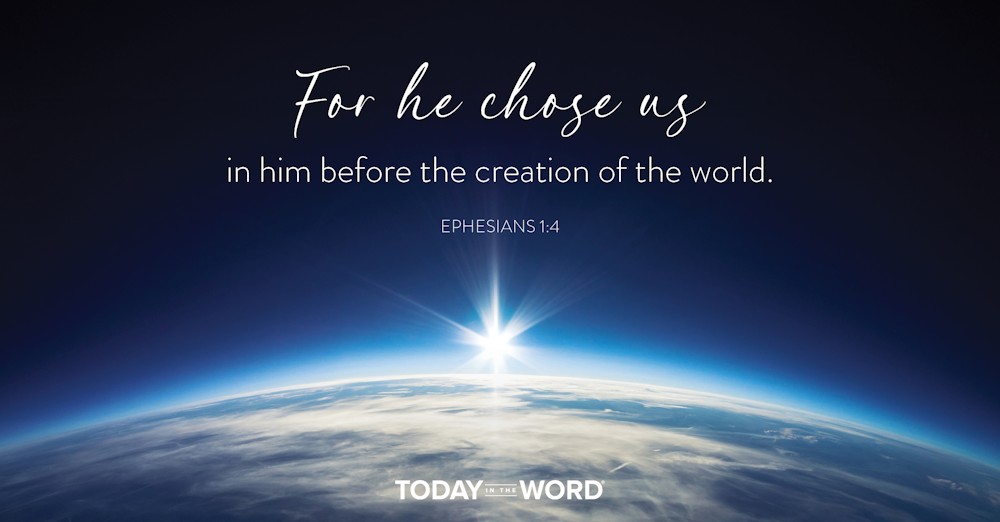
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# Scripture Union – 5/1/25

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

# Today in the Word – 5/1/25

# Chosen in Christ



[**Read Ephesians 1:1–14**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Ephesians+1:1%e2%80%9314)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To God’s holy people in Ephesus,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29208a)] the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ**

3Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5he[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29212b)] predestined us for adoption to sonship[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29212c)] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace 8that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9he[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29216d)] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

11In him we were also chosen,[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29218e)] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

**Footnotes**

1. [Ephesians 1:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-29208) Some early manuscripts do not have *in Ephesus.*
2. [Ephesians 1:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-29212) Or *sight in love. 5He*
3. [Ephesians 1:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-29212) The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a legal term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.
4. [Ephesians 1:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-29216) Or *us with all wisdom and understanding. 9And he*
5. [Ephesians 1:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-29218) Or *were made heirs*

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world. [Ephesians 1:4](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Eph.1.4)

I have the privilege to serve as a professor at Moody Theological Seminary. When I was hired, I was informed of my benefits. Benefits include vacation time, medical coverage, or retirement savings plans. The older I get and the longer I work the more I see that benefits are just as important as the salary.

In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul was informing the church in Ephesus of the benefits we have received by being chosen in Christ. In the original Greek (vv. 3–14), Paul writes one long sentence that sets the tone for the rest of the letter, explaining what it means to be in Christ. “In Christ” or “in him” is mentioned at least 10 times in 12 verses and many more times throughout the letter.

Jesus Christ is the source of who we are and all we have as believers. He has chosen us, and as a result, “has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing” (v. 3). He has made us “holy and blameless in his sight” (v. 4). He has adopted us (v. 5). He has redeemed and forgiven us (v. 7). He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit and guaranteed us our eternal inheritance (v. 13). All this is done for the praise of His glory!

Unfortunately, many believers live without fully understanding the blessings we have in Christ. God has “made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ” (v. 9). Mystery refers to what was once hidden, but now God has revealed it to us. In this study of Paul’s letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, we will learn what it means to be in Christ and all it entails to the praise of His glory!

**Go Deeper**

What do you know about the spiritual blessings you have in Christ? In what ways have the blessings of being “in Christ” (vv. 3–7) impacted your daily walk?

**Pray with Us**

As we start this month’s study, let us thank God for Paul’s prayers in today’s passage. Thank you, Lord, for your faithful follower who is teaching us how to pray for our fellow believers with wisdom and understanding.

# Our Daily Bread – 5/1/25

# LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE"

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**Read: 1 KINGS 19:8-14**

**8**So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. **9**There he went into a cave and spent the night.

**The Lord Appears to Elijah**

And the word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

**10**He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

**11**The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. **12**After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. **13**When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

**14**He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

After the fire came a gentle whisper. 1 KINGS 19:12

In the early twentieth century, New York City had become a noisy place. With an overhead train, cars, trolleys, newsboys yelling, and people rushing around - life was loud! Yet, one day at Broadway and 34th Street. a man named Charles Kellogg declared to his friend, "Listen, I hear a cricket.”

"Impossible" his friend answered. "With all this racket, you couldn't hear a tiny sound like that." Yet Mr. Kellogg insisted and eventually found the cricket chirping in the window of a bakery. "What astonishing hearing you have," his friend proclaimed. "Not at all," Mr. Kellogg replied, “It’s a matter of where you focus your attention."

Elijah was a prophet of God who'd just seen Him perform an amazing display of his power, but now the prophet was hiding in a cave for fear of the pagan queen (1 KINGS 19:1-9). This time, however, God didn’t want to communicate in a powerful way. Even though He had sent a great wind, an earthquake, and even a roaring fire (vv 11-12), it was time now for Elijah to commune with God personally and quietly. God wanted to speak to the prophet in “a gentle whisper” (v. 11).

Today there’s a surplus of noise in our lives, yet God still speaks in a quiet voice through the Scriptures and by His Spirit. Taking time to prayerfully focus our attention on God will help us tune in to His comforting, guiding voice.

**BRENT HACKETT**

**Reflect and Pray**

What noises are crowding in on your life? How can you listen for God’s voice in your busy world?

Dear Father; I thank You that I can listen for Your Spirit to speak to me quietly.

Visit ODBU.org/SFJ20 to learn how prayer helps us tune in to God's voice and focus our thoughts on Him.

**INSIGHT**

Some scholars believe that in 1 Kings 19, Elijah was suffering from depression. He was weary after three and a half hard years of ministry, the events on Mount Carmel, and his flight from the wrath of Jezebel. But notice how kindly God cares for his discouraged servant. He gives Elijah rest to compensate for his fatigue and then provides him with food to restore his strength (vv. 5-7). Later, God would continue His care for him by assigning him new tasks to focus on-anointing kings and training Elisha (VV. 15-18). Today, as we serve God, we can listen for His voice and receive His compassionate care.

**By: B1LL CROWDER**

# God Calling – 5/1/25

# Delay Is Not Denial

Read the lessons of Divine control in Nature's laws.

Nature is but the expression of Eternal Thought in Time. Study the outward form - grasp the Eternal Thought, and if you can read the thoughts of the Father, then indeed you know Him.

Leave Me out of nothing. Love all My ways with you. Know indeed that "All is well."  Delay is but the wonderful and all-loving restraint of your Father - not reluctance, not desire to deny - but the Divine control of a Father who can scarcely brook the delay.

Delay has to be - sometimes.  Your lives are so linked up with those of others, so bound by circumstances that to let your desire have instant fulfillment might in many cases cause another, as earnest prayer, to go unanswered.

But think for a moment of the Love and thoughtful care that seek to harmonize and reconcile all your desires and longings and prayers.

Delay is not denial - not even withholding. It is the opportunity for God to work out your problems and accomplish your desires in the most wonderful way possible for you.

Oh! children, trust Me. Remember that your Maker is also your Servant, quick to fulfill, quick to achieve, faithful in accomplishment.  Yes.  All is well.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than  your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.  Isaiah 55:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/2/25

# The Patience To Wait for the Vision



Though it tarries, wait for it… —[Habakkuk 2:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Habakkuk+2%3A3)

Patience is not the same as indifference; patience conveys the idea of someone who is tremendously strong and able to withstand all assaults. Having the vision of God is the source of patience because it gives us God’s true and proper inspiration. Moses endured, not because of his devotion to his principles of what was right, nor because of his sense of duty to God, but because he had a vision of God. “…he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” ([Hebrews 11:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+11:27)). A person who has the vision of God is not devoted to a cause or to any particular issue— he is devoted to God Himself. You always know when the vision is of God because of the inspiration that comes with it. Things come to you with greatness and add vitality to your life because everything is energized by God. He may give you a time spiritually, with no word from Himself at all, just as His Son experienced during His time of temptation in the wilderness. When God does that, simply endure, and the power to endure will be there because you see God.

“Though it tarries, wait for it….” The proof that we have the vision is that we are reaching out for more than we have already grasped. It is a bad thing to be satisfied spiritually. The psalmist said, “What shall I render to the Lord…? I will take up the cup of salvation…” ([Psalm 116:12-13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+116:12-13)). We are apt to look for satisfaction within ourselves and say, “Now I’ve got it! Now I am completely sanctified. Now I can endure.” Instantly we are on the road to ruin. Our reach must exceed our grasp. Paul said, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on…” ([Philippians 3:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+3:12)). If we have only what we have experienced, we have nothing. But if we have the inspiration of the vision of God, we have more than we can experience. Beware of the danger of spiritual relaxation.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The great point of Abraham’s faith in God was that he was prepared to do anything for God.  Not Knowing Whither, 903 R

# CCEL – 5/2/25

Surely theLordis in this place; and I knew it not.—[GEN. 28:16.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.28.html" \l "Gen.28.16)

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.—Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord, Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.

Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have builded?—Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.—Ye are the temple of living God.

[Matt. 18:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.18.html" \l "Matt.18.20). -[Matt. 28:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.28.html" \l "Matt.28.20). -[Exo. 33:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.33.html" \l "Exod.33.14).[Psa. 139:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.7). -[Jer. 23:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.23.html" \l "Jer.23.23).[I Kgs. 8:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iKgs.8.html" \l "iKgs.8.27). -[Isa. 57:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.57.html" \l "Isa.57.15). -[II Cor. 6:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.16).

“I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world.” **[John 17:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.15)**

It is a sweet and blessed event which will occur to all believers in God’s own time—the going home to be with Jesus. In a few more years the Lord’s soldiers, who are now fighting “the good fight of faith” will have done with conflict, and have entered into the joy of their Lord. But although Christ prays that his people may eventually be with him where he is, he does not ask that they may be taken at once away from this world to heaven. He wishes them to stay here. Yet how frequently does the wearied pilgrim put up the prayer, “O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest;” but Christ does not pray like that, he leaves us in his Father’s hands, until, like shocks of corn fully ripe, we shall each be gathered into our Master’s garner. Jesus does not plead for our instant removal by death, for to abide in the flesh is needful for others if not profitable for ourselves. He asks that we may be kept from evil, but he never asks for us to be admitted to the inheritance in glory till we are of full age. Christians often want to die when they have any trouble. Ask them why, and they tell you, “Because we would be with the Lord.” We fear it is not so much because they are longing to be with the Lord, as because they desire to get rid of their troubles; else they would feel the same wish to die at other times when not under the pressure of trial. They want to go home, not so much for the Saviour’s company, as to be at rest. Now it is quite right to desire to depart if we can do it in the same spirit that Paul did, because to be with Christ is far better, but the wish to escape from trouble is a selfish one. Rather let your care and wish be to glorify God by your life here as long as he pleases, even though it be in the midst of toil, and conflict, and suffering, and leave him to say when “it is enough.”

# Word Live – 5/2/25

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

# Scripture Union – 5/2/25

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

# Today in the Word – 5/2/25

# Praying for Others



[**Read Ephesians 1:15–23**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Ephesians+1:15%e2%80%9323)

**Thanksgiving and Prayer**

15For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, 16I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A15%E2%80%9323&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29224a)] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

**Footnotes**

1. [Ephesians 1:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A15%E2%80%9323&version=NIV#en-NIV-29224) Or *a spirit*

I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. [Ephesians 1:16](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Eph.1.16)

If I asked, “How can I pray for you?” What would you answer? I am always deeply appreciative when someone thinks enough of me to take the time to pray on my behalf. In Ephesians chapter 1, the Apostle Paul explains why intercessory prayer is so important in the body of Christ. Paul informed the saints in Ephesians that he continuously prayed for them (vv. 16–17). Then he became even more transparent and shared with them specifically what he was constantly asking God to do for them.

First, he prayed for them to have the “Spirit of wisdom and revelation” so they could know God better (v. 17). Second, he prayed for them to know the hope to which they were called, of being his “glorious inheritance” (v. 18). Lastly, he prayed for them to know the “incomparably great power” of God for those who believe in Him (v. 19). How great is this power? This is the same power that raised Christ from the dead and exalted Him to the right hand of God! In other words, He has all power and according to verse 22, He did it for the church!

Paul sets an excellent example for us to follow as believers. We should not only pray for one another but also know what to request on behalf of one another. He explains that it is very important for us to pray for one another lest we become prey. Paul understood this potential danger: “With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit, and stay alert in this, with all perseverance and intercession for all saints” (Eph. 6:18). It is a privilege to pray for fellow believers.

**Go Deeper**

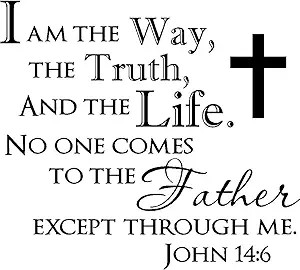
It is easy for our prayers to constantly consist of me, myself, and I. How often do you pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ? Can you reflect on a time when your prayers for others were answered?

**Pray with Us**

Lord, we want to be prayer warriors, lifting our brothers and sisters in Christ to Your throne of grace. It is indeed a privilege to “always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people” (Eph. 6:18).

# Our Daily Bread – 5/2/25

# SALTY ANSWERS



**Read: 1 PETER 3:15-16**

**15**But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, **16**keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. COLOSSIANS 4:6

Bert placed his debit card atop the restaurant bill. The waiter scooped it up and then paused to ask, Walt, who is this guy who says, 'I am the way and the truth and the life?' That's so conceited!" Bert realized the waiter was reacting to the words printed on the card by his Christian financial company-Jesus' words from John 14:6. Amused at the waiter's response, Bert explained the identity of "this guy" and His sacrificial offering to bring us to God.

When we encounter people who know nothing about our faith, we might respond with ridicule or even judgment. But the apostle Peter challenged us, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 PETER 3:15). Then he warned, "Do this with gentleness and respect” (v. 15). In Colossians 4:6, Paul explained the power of such a response "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt,, so that you may know how to answer everyone." Just as salt on our food enhances flavor, salty answers invite others to come closer to faith.

Questions may come in surprising settings from those completely unfamiliar with Jesus. When we respond with gentleness and grace, our answers offer a saltiness that entices questioners to yearn for more.

**ELISA MORGAN**

**Reflect and Pray**

How have you been surprised by a question about God? How might you prepare yourself to give a "salty" answer to the questioners in your life?

Dear God, please prepare me for the questions You bring my way, that I may give gracious and loving answers.

Visit ODBU.org/CA212 to help prepare you for the next time you need to give an answer for your faith in Jesus.

**INSIGHT**

First Peter was written to believers in Jesus who were being persecuted because of their faith. In chapter 2, echoing Christ's teachings in Matthew 5:10-16, Peter encourages believers to live holy lives and to do good so that those who don't believe might be won to Jesus (1 PETER 2:11-25). In chapter 3, he says to remain faithful, to continue to "revere Christ as Lord" and to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (v. 15). Paul makes similar calls for righteous living in his letters (SEE PHILIPPIANS 2:14-16; COLOSSIANS 4;5' 6; 1 THESSALONIANS 4:9' 12; TITUS 2:7-8)’

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

# God Calling – 5/2/25

# Souls That Smile

To conquer adverse circumstances, conquer yourselves. The answer to the desire of My Disciples to follow Me was "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

To accomplish much, be much.  In all cases the doing, to be well-doing, must be the mere unconscious expression of the being.

Fear not, fear not, all is well. Let the day be full of little prayers to Me, little turnings toward me. The smiles of the soul at one it loves.

Men call the Father the First Cause. Yes! See Him as the First Cause of every warm ray, every color in the sunset, every gleam on the water, every beautiful flower, every planned pleasure.

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.  Ephesians 4:32

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/3/25

# Vital Intercession



…praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit… —[Ephesians 6:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Ephesians+6%3A18)

As we continue on in our intercession for others, we may find that our obedience to God in interceding is going to cost those for whom we intercede more than we ever thought. The danger in this is that we begin to intercede in sympathy with those whom God was gradually lifting up to a totally different level in direct answer to our prayers. Whenever we step back from our close identification with God’s interest and concern for others and step into having emotional sympathy with them, the vital connection with God is gone. We have then put our sympathy and concern for them in the way, and this is a deliberate rebuke to God.

It is impossible for us to have living and vital intercession unless we are perfectly and completely sure of God. And the greatest destroyer of that confident relationship to God, so necessary for intercession, is our own personal sympathy and preconceived bias. Identification with God is the key to intercession, and whenever we stop being identified with Him it is because of our sympathy with others, not because of sin. It is not likely that sin will interfere with our intercessory relationship with God, but sympathy will. It is sympathy with ourselves or with others that makes us say, “I will not allow that thing to happen.” And instantly we are out of that vital connection with God.

Vital intercession leaves you with neither the time nor the inclination to pray for your own “sad and pitiful self.” You do not have to struggle to keep thoughts of yourself out, because they are not even there to be kept out of your thinking. You are completely and entirely identified with God’s interests and concerns in other lives. God gives us discernment in the lives of others to call us to intercession for them, never so that we may find fault with them.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

God engineers circumstances to see what we will do. Will we be the children of our Father in heaven, or will we go back again to the meaner, common-sense attitude? Will we stake all and stand true to Him? “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” The crown of life means I shall see that my Lord has got the victory after all, even in me.  The Highest Good—The Pilgrim’s Song Book, 530 L

# CCEL – 5/3/25

Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.—[MATT. 5:48.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.48)

I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.—Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.—Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.—Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.—Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.—Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

[Gen. 17:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.17.html" \l "Gen.17.1). -[Lev. 20:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lev.20.html" \l "Lev.20.26).[I Cor. 6:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.6.html" \l "iCor.6.20).[Col. 2:l0](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.10). -[Tit. 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.2.html" \l "Titus.2.14). –[II Pet. 3:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.3.html" \l "iiPet.3.14).[Psa. 119:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.1). –[Jas.1:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.25). -[Psa. 139:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.23).

“In the world ye shall have tribulation.” **[John 16:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.33)**

Art thou asking the reason of this, believer? Look upward to thy heavenly Father, and behold him pure and holy. Dost thou know that thou art one day to be like him? Wilt thou easily be conformed to his image? Wilt thou not require much refining in the furnace of affliction to purify thee? Will it be an easy thing to get rid of thy corruptions, and make thee perfect even as thy Father which is in heaven is perfect? Next, Christian, turn thine eye downward. Dost thou know what foes thou hast beneath thy feet? Thou wast once a servant of Satan, and no king will willingly lose his subjects. Dost thou think that Satan will let thee alone? No, he will be always at thee, for he “goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Expect trouble, therefore, Christian, when thou lookest beneath thee. Then look around thee. Where art thou? Thou art in an enemy’s country, a stranger and a sojourner. The world is not thy friend. If it be, then thou art not God’s friend, for he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of God. Be assured that thou shalt find foe-men everywhere. When thou sleepest, think that thou art resting on the battlefield; when thou walkest, suspect an ambush in every hedge. As mosquitoes are said to bite strangers more than natives, so will the trials of earth be sharpest to you. Lastly, look within thee, into thine own heart and observe what is there. Sin and self are still within. Ah! if thou hadst no devil to tempt thee, no enemies to fight thee, and no world to ensnare thee, thou wouldst still find in thyself evil enough to be a sore trouble to thee, for “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Expect trouble then, but despond not on account of it, for God is with thee to help and to strengthen thee. He hath said, “I will be with thee in trouble; I will deliver thee and honour thee.”

# Word Live – 5/3/25

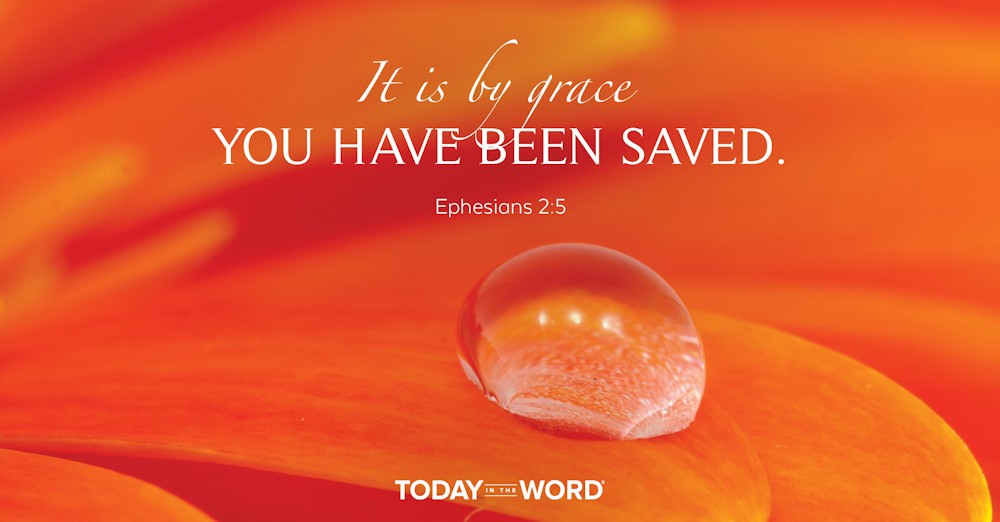
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# Scripture Union – 5/3/25

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

# Today in the Word – 5/3/25

# Invaluable Grace



[**Read Ephesians 2:1–10**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Ephesians+2:1%e2%80%9310)

**Made Alive in Christ**

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29233a)] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Footnotes**

1. [Ephesians 2:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-29233) In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.

It is by grace you have been saved. [Ephesians 2:5](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Eph.2.5)

I am grateful to be married to my lovely wife for over 28 years. I will never forget purchasing the engagement ring. I knew I could not afford a big expensive diamond ring, but I could afford a small one. To help me see and appreciate the value of the diamond, the jeweler placed it against a dark backdrop. The contrasting background helped me better recognize the value of the precious stone.

In Ephesians 2, Paul helps us better understand who we used to be before the grace of God transformed our lives. Before we knew Christ, we were dead in our “transgression and sins” (v. 1). We “followed the ways of this world” while being controlled by the devil (v. 2). We gratified the “cravings of our flesh”, following its desires and thoughts. We were even “deserving of wrath” (v. 3).

But look at the contrast that begins in verse 4! The conjunction “but” introduces God’s actions toward us while sinners. This is the good news: “But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ.” In the Greek text, the word “God” immediately follows “but,” placing it in an emphatic position. God is the subject of the passage. When highlighted against the backdrop of our desperate and sinful condition, God’s grace toward us is abundant and invaluable! To emphasize the fact, Ephesians mentions “riches” five times and “grace” twelve times.

God expressed the value of His grace by making us alive with Christ! He raised us up with Christ and “seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” (v. 6). Saved by His grace, we are His “handiwork” or “workmanship”—you are a work of art, God’s masterpiece! (v. 10). What an incredible contrast! What a transformation!

**Go Deeper**

How valuable is God’s grace to you? In what ways can you show God how valuable He is to you today?

**Pray with Us**

Faithful God, thank You for Your presence in our lives, no matter the circumstances. Your grace transforms us and makes us alive with Christ! We are forever grateful!

# Our Daily Bread – 5/3/25

# GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

A person and person standing together smiling

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**Read: PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18**

**Paul’s Chains Advance the Gospel**

12Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PHILIPPIANS%201%3A12-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29374a)] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PHILIPPIANS%201%3A12-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29375b)] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

15It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,

**Footnotes**

1. [Philippians 1:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PHILIPPIANS%201%3A12-18&version=NIV#en-NIV-29374) The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in verse 14; and in 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 8, 21.
2. [Philippians 1:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PHILIPPIANS%201%3A12-18&version=NIV#en-NIV-29375) Or *whole palace*

I want you to know ... what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. PHILIPPIANS 1:12

In 2018, pastor Tan Flippin had a cycling accident that landed him in the hospital with fractures to his hip. When the doctors ordered a CT scan to check for a concussion, they discovered a large malignant tumor on the front of his brain. The discovery led to a long medical journey with more masses found and extensive treatments performed-including a bone marrow transplant. Flippin believes that "God allowed the accident for my brain tumor to be found."

Paul told the Philippians that God can use accidents and other adversities for His glory. The apostle was under Roman house arrest, awaiting trial before the emperor Nero for a capital offense. Rather than being sad, Paul rejoiced. How could he be joyful? He counted being Hin chains for Christ" (PHILIPPIANS 1:13) as a privilege (v. 29). Next, looking at his adversity from God's perspective, Paul said, “What has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel" (V. 12). He used his incarceration as an opportunity to share the gospel with the guards chained to him. Finally, as he preached the good news of Jesus while in bondage, his example encouraged other believers "to proclaim the gospel without fear" (V. 14).

When adversity comes, let's trust God's perspective and believe that-even from what's difficult-He can bring something good.

**MARVIN WILLIAMS**

**Reflect and Pray**

How did you respond to a recent challenging situation? How can you embrace God's point of view and see Him working it out for good?

Heavenly Father please use my challenging moments to bring out Your will in my life.

**INSIGHT**

False teachers masquerading as apostles in the Corinthian church sought to discredit Paul's ministry and authority (2 CORINTHIANS 11:1-15). They falsely charged that he wasn't a true apostle and claimed he was dishonest, lacked official letters of authorization (2:17,3:6), was weak and unimpressive in appearance and speech (10:10), and lacked ecstatic spiritual experiences (12:1-10). In his defense, the apostle highlighted the hardships, imprisonments, and beatings he endured for the gospel (1:8-10; 6:4-10; 11:23-27) and argued that his suffering authenticated his apostleship and ministry (SEE ACTS 9:15·16).

In his letter to the Philippian church, Paul told them that his imprisonment had "actually served to advance the gospel"(1:12) by strengthening their faith and emboldening them to proclaim Christ without fear (VV.12-14). Just as Jesus willingly embraced suffering, He can help us possess "the same mindset as Christ Jesus" (2:5) even during suffering and trials.

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

# God Calling – 5/3/25

# Kill Self Now

Self dethroned - that is the lesson, but in its place put Love for Me, knowledge of Me.

Self, not only dethroned, but dead. A dead self is not an imprisoned self.  An imprisoned self is more potent to harm. In all training - (in Mine of you, and in yours of others) - let self die.

But for each blow to the life of self you must at the same time embrace and hold fast the new Life, Life with Me.

It is not a dead self that men have to fear, but a thwarted, captive, imprisoned self.  That self is infinitely more self-centered than the self allowed full play.  But to you, My children, I teach a higher science-law than even freedom of the self.  I teach death to the self.  No repressions, just death.  Petty self-life exchanged for Divine Life

And now I can make more clear to you what I would say about forgiveness of injuries.

But what you do not see is that you, the self in you, can never forgive injuries.  The very thought of them means self in the foreground, then the injury, instead of appearing less, appears greater. It is one of My commands that as you seek My forgiveness, so you must forgive.

No, My children, as all true Love is of God and is God, so all true forgiveness is of God and is God. The self cannot forgive. Kill self.

Cease trying to forgive those who fretted or wronged you.  It is a mistake to think about it.  Aim at killing the self now - in your daily life, and then, and not until then, you will find there is nothing that even remembers injury, because the only one injured, the self, is dead.

As long as it recurs to your mind you deceive yourself if you think it forgiven.

Many deceive themselves in this.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.  Romans 6:6

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/4/25

# Vicarious Intercession



…having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus… —[Hebrews 10:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Hebrews+10%3A19)

Beware of thinking that intercession means bringing our own personal sympathies and concerns into the presence of God, and then demanding that He do whatever we ask. Our ability to approach God is due entirely to the vicarious, or substitutionary, identification of our Lord with sin. We have “boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

Spiritual stubbornness is the most effective hindrance to intercession, because it is based on a sympathetic “understanding” of things we see in ourselves and others that we think needs no atonement. We have the idea that there are certain good and virtuous things in each of us that do not need to be based on the atonement by the Cross of Christ. Just the sluggishness and lack of interest produced by this kind of thinking makes us unable to intercede. We do not identify ourselves with God’s interests and concerns for others, and we get irritated with Him. Yet we are always ready with our own ideas, and our intercession becomes only the glorification of our own natural sympathies. We have to realize that the identification of Jesus with sin means a radical change of all of our sympathies and interests. Vicarious intercession means that we deliberately substitute God’s interests in others for our natural sympathy with them.

Am I stubborn or substituted? Am I spoiled or complete in my relationship to God? Am I irritable or spiritual? Am I determined to have my own way or determined to be identified with Him?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The sympathy which is reverent with what it cannot understand is worth its weight in gold.  Baffled to Fight Better, 69 L

# CCEL – 5/4/25

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.—[ISA. 59:1.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.59.html" \l "Isa.59.1)

In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.—While I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.—Be not thou far from me, O Lord, O my strength, haste thee to help me.

Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.—Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.—Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.

[Psa. 138:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.138.html" \l "Ps.138.3)-[Dan. 9:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Dan.9.html" \l "Dan.9.21).[Psa. 27:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.27.html" \l "Ps.27.9). -[Psa. 22:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.22.html" \l "Ps.22.19).[Jer. 32:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.32.html" \l "Jer.32.17). -[II Cor. 1:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.10). -[Luke 18:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.18.html" \l "Luke.18.7).

“Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods.” **[Jeremiah 16:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.16.html" \l "Jer.16.20)**

One great besetting sin of ancient Israel was idolatry, and the spiritual Israel are vexed with a tendency to the same folly. Remphan’s star shines no longer, and the women weep no more for Tammuz, but Mammon still intrudes his golden calf, and the shrines of pride are not forsaken. Self in various forms struggles to subdue the chosen ones under its dominion, and the flesh sets up its altars wherever it can find space for them. Favourite children are often the cause of much sin in believers; the Lord is grieved when he sees us doting upon them above measure; they will live to be as great a curse to us as Absalom was to David, or they will be taken from us to leave our homes desolate. If Christians desire to grow thorns to stuff their sleepless pillows, let them dote on their dear ones.

It is truly said that “they are no gods,” for the objects of our foolish love are very doubtful blessings, the solace which they yield us now is dangerous, and the help which they can give us in the hour of trouble is little indeed. Why, then, are we so bewitched with vanities? We pity the poor heathen who adore a god of stone, and yet worship a god of gold. Where is the vast superiority between a god of flesh and one of wood? The principle, the sin, the folly is the same in either case, only that in ours the crime is more aggravated because we have more light, and sin in the face of it. The heathen bows to a false deity, but the true God he has never known; we commit two evils, inasmuch as we forsake the living God and turn unto idols. May the Lord purge us all from this grievous iniquity!

“The dearest idol I have known,

Whate'er that idol be;

Help me to tear it from thy throne,

And worship only thee.”

# Word Live – 5/4/25

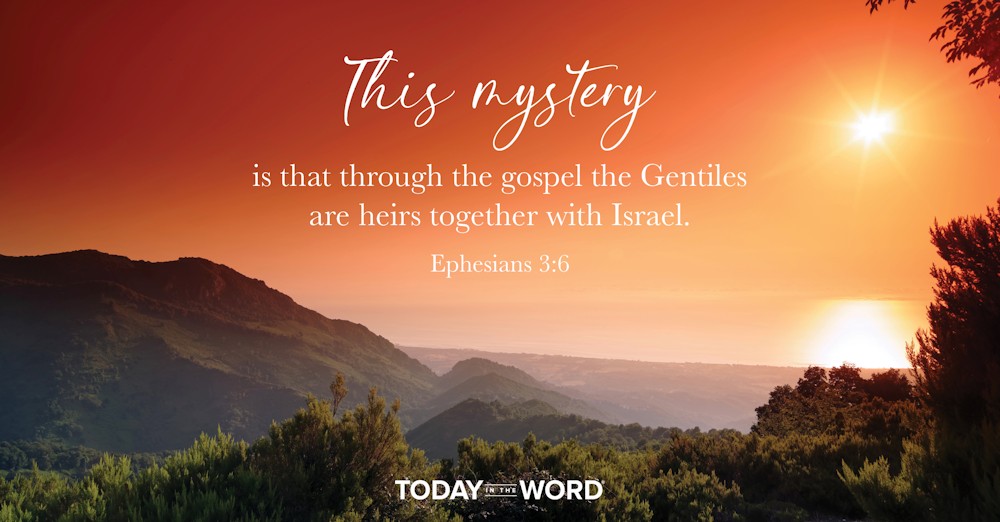
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# Scripture Union – 5/4/25

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# Today in the Word – 5/4/25

# God’s Mystery



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

**God’s Marvelous Plan for the Gentiles**

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

2Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, 3that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. 6This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

7I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. 8Although I am less than the least of all the Lord’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, 9and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 10His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. 13I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel. [Ephesians 3:6](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Eph.3.6)

Have you ever watched the plot unfold in a mystery and realize you are totally clueless about what will happen next? I am drawn to movies like that because just when I think I have it all figured out there is a twist in the plot.

Paul describes God’s plan of salvation for both the Jews and Gentiles as a mystery. The word *mystery* is mentioned six times in the book of Ephesians. In this context, *mystery* refers to content which was not known before but was revealed to a particular group.

In verse 6, Paul explains this mystery, “that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.” This had been God’s plan from the beginning or, as Paul puts it, “for ages past.” But only now was it being made “plain to everyone” (v. 9).

Can you imagine what it must have been like for those of Jewish and Gentile descent when this mystery was finally revealed? The plot of God’s divine purposes must have left them dumbfounded. Ephesians 2:15–17 tells us: “His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.” When we think about the hostility that once drove these people groups apart, this mystery ought to leave us in awesome wonder! Through Jesus Christ, God brought us together as one.

God’s plan had an unexpected, but joyous ending. We can be thankful to God that we are included. What was once hidden is now a joyful reality (v. 10).

**Go Deeper**

Through Jesus, people of Jewish and Gentile descent are “heirs together” (v. 6). People who were once separated, are now united! What are some practical ways we can put to death any residual hostilities we have toward one another?

**Pray with Us**

God of grace, open my eyes to see clearly the “mystery” Paul mentions in today’s reading—that all your people share together in the “promise of Christ Jesus.” Thank You for the joyful reality of being included in Your plan.

# Our Daily Bread – 5/4/25

# LASTING JOY

A blue and white sign with a person kicking a pedestrian crossing

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**Read: PSALM 16**

**A *miktam*[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2016&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14094a)**] of David.**

**1**Keep me safe, my God,  
    for in you I take refuge.

**2**I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord;  
    apart from you I have no good thing.”  
**3**I say of the holy people who are in the land,  
    “They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.”  
**4**Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.  
    I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods  
    or take up their names on my lips.

**5**Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup;  
    you make my lot secure.  
**6**The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
    surely I have a delightful inheritance.  
**7**I will praise the Lord, who counsels me;  
    even at night my heart instructs me.  
**8**I keep my eyes always on the Lord.  
    With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

**9**Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
    my body also will rest secure,  
**10**because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,  
    nor will you let your faithful[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2016&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14103b)] one see decay.  
**11**You make known to me the path of life;  
    you will fill me with joy in your presence,  
    with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

**Footnotes**

1. [Psalm 16:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2016&version=NIV#en-NIV-14094) Title: Probably a literary or musical term
2. [Psalm 16:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2016&version=NIV#en-NIV-14103) Or *holy*

You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence. PSALM 16:11

In 2014, residents of a village in Norway erected a traffic sign that encouraged people crossing the street to do so in a silly manner. The intent was to bring a few moments of humor-for “silly walkers" and onlookers alike-to brighten one another's days. These brief glimpses of silliness were a momentary encouragement to downcast spirits.

The Bible acknowledges that we'll have seasons of difficulty and hardship, causing us to feel demoralized and sad. The book of Lamentations and many psalms give voice to such pain. Yet the Scriptures also point us to what can bring us lasting joy in all circumstances: the presence of God. David penned the words of Psalm 16 with an eye to an eternal future with Him. Those of us alive today-after the death and resurrection of Jesus-know God's presence even now through the Holy Spirit.

Though they may only last a short time, humor and levity can lift our spirits in times of difficulty. However, to experience the lasting joy that sustains us through the most painful seasons of our lives, we must "take refuge" in God (V. l) who counsels and instructs us (V. 7). He'll never abandon us; instead, He'll "make known to {us} the path of life" and "fill {us} with joy" (V. 11).

**KIRSTEN HOLMBERG**

**Reflect and Pray**

What brings you joy during seasons of difficulty? How does God's presence lift your spirits?

Dear God, thank You for being with me through both good and bad days. You're the source of my joy.

**INSIGHT**

The superscription of Psalm 16 says that it's "a miktam of David," which some scholars believe is a musical term. But we don't know what prompted David to write the psalm. His prayer, however, is for God's continued care in dangerous times. This theme caused both Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (ACTS 2:25) and Paul at Antioch (13:35-37) to cite Psalm 16:8-11 as anticipating God's ultimate provision in Jesus. The Bible Knowledge Commentary adds: "So the words of David are also typological; they transcended his own experience and became historically true in Christ." And in Jesus we find our true source of joy.

**By: B1LL CROWDER**

# God Calling – 5/4/25

# Share With Me

Delight in My Love. Try to live in the rapture of the Kingdom.

Claim big things. Claim great things. Claim Joy and Peace and freedom from care. Joy in Me.

I am your Lord, your Creator. Remember too that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever. Your Creator, when My thought about the world called it into being - your Creator as much, too, today, when I can, by loving thought for you, call into being all you need on the material plane.

Joy in Me, trust in Me, share all life with Me, see Me in everything, rejoice in me. Share all with Me as a child shares its pains and cuts and griefs and newfound treasures of joys and little work with its Mother.

And give Me the joy of sharing all with you.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment.  1 John 4:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/5/25

# Judgment and the Love of God



The time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God… —[1 Peter 4:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Peter+4%3A17)

The Christian servant must never forget that salvation is God’s idea, not man’s; therefore, it has an unfathomable depth. Salvation is the great thought of God, not an experience. Experience is simply the door through which salvation comes into the conscious level of our life so that we are aware of what has taken place on a much deeper level. Never preach the experience— preach the great thought of God behind the experience. When we preach, we are not simply proclaiming how people can be saved from hell and be made moral and pure; we are conveying good news about God.

In the teachings of Jesus Christ the element of judgment is always brought out— it is the sign of the love of God. Never sympathize with someone who finds it difficult to get to God; God is not to blame. It is not for us to figure out the reason for the difficulty, but only to present the truth of God so that the Spirit of God will reveal what is wrong. The greatest test of the quality of our preaching is whether or not it brings everyone to judgment. When the truth is preached, the Spirit of God brings each person face to face with God Himself.

If Jesus ever commanded us to do something that He was unable to equip us to accomplish, He would be a liar. And if we make our own inability a stumbling block or an excuse not to be obedient, it means that we are telling God that there is something which He has not yet taken into account. Every element of our own self-reliance must be put to death by the power of God. The moment we recognize our complete weakness and our dependence upon Him will be the very moment that the Spirit of God will exhibit His power.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Defenders of the faith are inclined to be bitter until they learn to walk in the light of the Lord. When you have learned to walk in the light of the Lord, bitterness and contention are impossible. Biblical Psychology

# CCEL – 5/5/25

Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.—[MATT. 6:31,32.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.31)

O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.—No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

I would have you without carefulness.—Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.—Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?—Have faith in God.

[Psa. 34:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.34.html" \l "Ps.34.9). -[Psa. 84:11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.84.html" \l "Ps.84.11).[I Cor. 7:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.7.html" \l "iCor.7.32). -[Phi. 4:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.6).[Matt. 10:29-31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.10.html" \l "Matt.10.29). -[Mark 4:40](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.4.html" \l "Mark.4.40). -[Mark 11:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.11.html" \l "Mark.11.22)

“I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” [2 Corinthians 6:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.16)

What a sweet title: “My people!” What a cheering revelation: “Their God!” How much of meaning is couched in those two words, “My people!” Here is speciality. The whole world is God's; the heaven, even the heaven of heavens is the Lord's, and he reigneth among the children of men; but of those whom he hath chosen, whom he hath purchased to himself, he saith what he saith not of others—“My people.” In this word there is the idea of proprietorship. In a special manner the “Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.” All the nations upon earth are his; the whole world is in his power; yet are his people, his chosen, more especially his possession; for he has done more for them than others; he has bought them with his blood; he has brought them nigh to himself; he has set his great heart upon them; he has loved them with an everlasting love, a love which many waters cannot quench, and which the revolutions of time shall never suffice in the least degree to diminish. Dear friends, can you, by faith, see yourselves in that number? Can you look up to heaven and say, “My Lord and my God: mine by that sweet relationship which entitles me to call thee Father; mine by that hallowed fellowship which I delight to hold with thee when thou art pleased to manifest thyself unto me as thou dost not unto the world?” Canst thou read the Book of Inspiration, and find there the indentures of thy salvation? Canst thou read thy title writ in precious blood? Canst thou, by humble faith, lay hold of Jesus’ garments, and say, “My Christ”? If thou canst, then God saith of thee, and of others like thee, “My people;” for, if God be your God, and Christ your Christ, the Lord has a special, peculiar favour to you; you are the object of his choice, accepted in his beloved Son.

# Word Live – 5/5/25

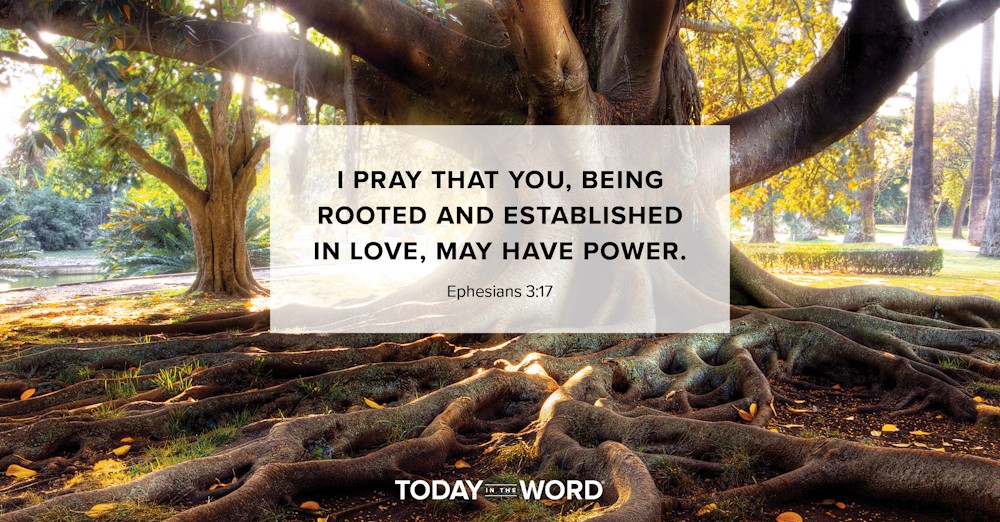
# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 5/5/25

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

# Today in the Word – 5/5/25

# Blockage Removed



[**Read Ephesians 3:14–19**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Ephesians+3:14%e2%80%9319)

**A Prayer for the Ephesians**

14For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15from whom every family[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203%3A14%E2%80%9319&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29267a)] in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

**Footnotes**

1. [Ephesians 3:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203%3A14%E2%80%9319&version=NIV#en-NIV-29267) The Greek for *family* (*patria*) is derived from the Greek for *father* (*pater*).

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power. [Ephesians 3:17](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Eph.3.17)

If you have coronary artery disease, it means that the arteries in your heart are narrowed or blocked by a sticky material called plaque. A doctor may recommend a procedure called an angioplasty, where a tube with a tiny balloon on the end is inserted into an artery leading to the heart. The procedure opens the blockage and restores normal blood flow to your heart muscle.

In Ephesians 3, Paul is probing the heart of the church in Ephesus with the goal of dislodging any blockage that might be hindering the work of Christ in the lives of God’s people. The blockage referred to here and in chapter 2 is division within the church. In Ephesians 2, Paul reminded the church of the past divisions that had existed between the Jewish people and the Gentiles. He gave them good news, that “now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (v. 13).

Paul prays for all of God’s people to be strengthened (v. 16) and “for God to dwell in their hearts” (v. 17). He prays that through God’s love they will be rooted (like a plant) and established (like a building). The participles “being rooted and established” are in the perfect tense, indicating a past action with continuing results. You could translate this as “having been and continuing to be rooted and established.”

The result is that through faith Christ may “dwell” (*katoikēsai*) in believers’ hearts. This does not refer to the beginning of Christ’s indwelling at salvation. Instead, it is the desire that Christ may, literally, “be at home in” or at the very center of our life. We can ask ourselves: Can Christ make Himself at home in a heart full of blockages?

**Go Deeper**

What blockage needs to be rooted out of your heart today? Ephesians 4:31 gives us a few examples: “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”

**Pray with Us**

Lord Jesus, may we learn from the Ephesian church and strive to overcome division in our churches and ministries. Lord, our desire is that You would dwell in our midst. Help us to be Your peacemakers.

# Our Daily Bread – 5/5/25

# GOD OF THE FRESH START

A newspaper with a person in a suit

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**Read: 2 CHRONICLES 33:10-17**

**10**The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. **11**So the Lord brought against them the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. **12**In his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. **13**And when he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God.

**14**Afterward he rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, west of the Gihon spring in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate and encircling the hill of Ophel; he also made it much higher. He stationed military commanders in all the fortified cities in Judah.

**15**He got rid of the foreign gods and removed the image from the temple of the Lord, as well as all the altars he had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the city. **16**Then he restored the altar of the Lord and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the Lord, the God of Israel. **17**The people, however, continued to sacrifice at the high places, but only to the Lord their God.

When he prayed to him, the LORD was moved. 2 CHRONICLES 11:13

"The Merchant of Death is Dead!" That was the headline for an obituary that may have caused Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, to make a course correction in his life. But the newspaper made a mistake-Alfred was very much alive. It was his brother Ludvig who had died. When Alfred realized he'd be remembered for a dangerous invention that claimed many lives, he decided to donate most of his significant wealth to establishing an award for those who had benefited humanity. It became known as the Nobel Prize.

More than two thousand years earlier, another powerful man had a change of heart. Manasseh, king of Judah, rebelled against God. As a result, he was taken captive to Babylon. But "in his distress he sought the favor of the LORD," and "when he prayed," God "brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom" (2 CHRONICLES 33:12-13). Manasseh spent the rest of his rule in peace, serving God and doing his best to undo the wrongs he'd done before.

“The LORD was moved" by Manasseh's prayer (V. 13). God responds to humility. When we realize we need to make a change in the way we're living and turn to Him, He never turns us away. He meets us with grace we don't deserve and renews us with the self-giving love He poured out at the cross. New beginnings begin with Him.

**JAMES BANKS**

**Reflect and Pray**

Where in your life do you need to have a change of heart? How will you turn to God today?

Forgiving Father. thank You that You'll never turn me away. Please help me to turn to You with all my heart in all I do today.

**INSIGHT**

The fifty-five-year reign of Manasseh, king of Judah is summarized in 2 Kings 21:2: "He did evil in the eyes of the LORD." Manasseh "rebuilt the high places" and set up "an Asherah pole" (21:3), a sacred pole that honored the pagan goddess Asherah. In addition, he shed "much innocent blood” and led his people to follow his wrongdoing (v. 16). His life is further described in 2 Chronicles 33. He defiled the temple by setting up "altars to the Baals" and "bowed down to all the starry hosts" (V. 3). He even sacrificed his own children (v. 6). But after being taken captive to Babylon, Manasseh humbly prayed to God, was returned to his throne in Jerusalem, and ended his reign seeking to right his many wrongs (vv. 10-17), Likewise, we can humbly turn to Him for a fresh start.

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

# God Calling – 5/5/25

# Let Me Choose

My loved ones. Yes, with the heart, not the head, men should think of Me, and then worship would be instinctive.

Breathe in My very Spirit in pure air and fervent desire.

Keep the eye of your spirit ever upon Me, the window of your soul open towards Me. You have ever to know that all things are yours - that what is lovely I delight to give you.

Empty your mind of all that limits. Whatever is beautiful you can have. Leave more and more the choice to Me. You will have no regrets.

Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God.  Psalm 123:2