# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/11/25

# Obedience to the “Heavenly Vision”



I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. —[Acts 26:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+26%3A19)

If we lose “the heavenly vision” God has given us, we alone are responsible— not God. We lose the vision because of our own lack of spiritual growth. If we do not apply our beliefs about God to the issues of everyday life, the vision God has given us will never be fulfilled. The only way to be obedient to “the heavenly vision” is to give our utmost for His highest— our best for His glory. This can be accomplished only when we make a determination to continually remember God’s vision. But the acid test is obedience to the vision in the details of our everyday life— sixty seconds out of every minute, and sixty minutes out of every hour, not just during times of personal prayer or public meetings.

“Though it tarries, wait for it…” ([Habakkuk 2:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+2:3)). We cannot bring the vision to fulfillment through our own efforts, but must live under its inspiration until it fulfills itself. We try to be so practical that we forget the vision. At the very beginning we saw the vision but did not wait for it. We rushed off to do our practical work, and once the vision was fulfilled we could no longer even see it. Waiting for a vision that “tarries” is the true test of our faithfulness to God. It is at the risk of our own soul’s welfare that we get caught up in practical busy-work, only to miss the fulfillment of the vision.

Watch for the storms of God. The only way God plants His saints is through the whirlwind of His storms. Will you be proven to be an empty pod with no seed inside? That will depend on whether or not you are actually living in the light of the vision you have seen. Let God send you out through His storm, and don’t go until He does. If you select your own spot to be planted, you will prove yourself to be an unproductive, empty pod. However, if you allow God to plant you, you will “bear much fruit” ([John 15:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:8)).

It is essential that we live and “walk in the light” of God’s vision for us ([1 John 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1:7)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The truth is we have nothing to fear and nothing to overcome because He is all in all and we are more than conquerors through Him. The recognition of this truth is not flattering to the worker’s sense of heroics, but it is amazingly glorifying to the work of Christ. Approved Unto God, 4 R

# CCEL – 3/11/25

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.—[NUM. 6:24.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.6.html" \l "Num.6.24)

The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.—Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.—I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept.

The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[Prov. 10:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.10.html" \l "Prov.10.22). -[Psa. 5:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.5.html" \l "Ps.5.12).[Psa. 121:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.121.html" \l "Ps.121.3),[5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.121.html" \l "Ps.121.5),[7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.121.html" \l "Ps.121.7). -[Isa. 27:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.27.html" \l "Isa.27.3).[John 17:11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.11).[II Tim. 4:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.4.html" \l "iiTim.4.18).

“Sin ... exceeding sinful.” [Romans 7:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html" \l "Rom.7.13)

Beware of light thoughts of sin. At the time of conversion, the conscience is so tender, that we are afraid of the slightest sin. Young converts have a holy timidity, a godly fear lest they should offend against God. But alas! very soon the fine bloom upon these first ripe fruits is removed by the rough handling of the surrounding world: the sensitive plant of young piety turns into a willow in after life, too pliant, too easily yielding. It is sadly true, that even a Christian may grow by degrees so callous, that the sin which once startled him does not alarm him in the least. By degrees men get familiar with sin. The ear in which the cannon has been booming will not notice slight sounds. At first a little sin startles us; but soon we say, “Is it not a little one?” Then there comes another, larger, and then another, until by degrees we begin to regard sin as but a little ill; and then follows an unholy presumption: “We have not fallen into open sin. True, we tripped a little, but we stood upright in the main. We may have uttered one unholy word, but as for the most of our conversation, it has been consistent.” So we palliate sin; we throw a cloak over it; we call it by dainty names. Christian, beware how thou thinkest lightly of sin. Take heed lest thou fall by little and little. Sin, a little thing? Is it not a poison? Who knows its deadliness? Sin, a little thing? Do not the little foxes spoil the grapes? Doth not the tiny coral insect build a rock which wrecks a navy? Do not little strokes fell lofty oaks? Will not continual droppings wear away stones? Sin, a little thing? It girded the Redeemer’s head with thorns, and pierced his heart! It made him suffer anguish, bitterness, and woe. Could you weigh the least sin in the scales of eternity, you would fly from it as from a serpent, and abhor the least appearance of evil. Look upon all sin as that which crucified the Saviour, and you will see it to be “exceeding sinful.”

# Word Live – 3/11/25

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# Scripture Union – 3/11/25

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# Today in the Word – 3/11/25

# Teach Your Children Well

# A person and child walking on a path AI-generated content may be incorrect.

# [Read Deuteronomy 11:1–32](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+11:1%e2%80%9332)

**Love and Obey the Lord**

**11**Love the Lord your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. **2**Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the Lord your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; **3**the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country; **4**what he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2011%3A1%E2%80%9332&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5213a)] as they were pursuing you, and how the Lord brought lasting ruin on them. **5**It was not your children who saw what he did for you in the wilderness until you arrived at this place, **6**and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab the Reubenite, when the earth opened its mouth right in the middle of all Israel and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that belonged to them. **7**But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the Lord has done.

**8**Observe therefore all the commands I am giving you today, so that you may have the strength to go in and take over the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, **9**and so that you may live long in the land the Lord swore to your ancestors to give to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. **10**The land you are entering to take over is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you planted your seed and irrigated it by foot as in a vegetable garden. **11**But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. **12**It is a land the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end.

**13**So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul— **14**then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil. **15**I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

**16**Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. **17**Then the Lord’s anger will burn against you, and he will shut up the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the Lord is giving you. **18**Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. **19**Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. **20**Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, **21**so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

**22**If you carefully observe all these commands I am giving you to follow—to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him and to hold fast to him— **23**then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and stronger than you. **24**Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea. **25**No one will be able to stand against you. The Lord your God, as he promised you, will put the terror and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go.

**26**See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse— **27**the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; **28**the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known. **29**When the Lord your God has brought you into the land you are entering to possess, you are to proclaim on Mount Gerizim the blessings, and on Mount Ebal the curses. **30**As you know, these mountains are across the Jordan, westward, toward the setting sun, near the great trees of Moreh, in the territory of those Canaanites living in the Arabah in the vicinity of Gilgal. **31**You are about to cross the Jordan to enter and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you. When you have taken it over and are living there, **32**be sure that you obey all the decrees and laws I am setting before you today.

**Footnotes**

1. [Deuteronomy 11:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2011%3A1%E2%80%9332&version=NIV#en-NIV-5213) Or *the Sea of Reeds*

# Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road. [Deuteronomy 11:19](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Deut.11.19)

# When my children were newborns, one of my favorite things to do was place my finger in their palm causing them to wrap their fingers around it. This is a natural reflex that most babies are born with, it is not something they learned. However, almost everything else a child needs to know in life they must learn. We invest billions of dollars in school systems to help our children become functioning adults.

# Moses understood the importance of education. He knew the next generation would not remember how God had delivered them from Egypt, provided for them in the wilderness, and judged the disobedient (vv. 1–7). Yet the ability of Israel to stay in the Promised Land would require their faithful obedience (v. 13). These children would need to be taught.

# Moses entrusted this responsibility primarily to the parents. He instructed Israel: “Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds…teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (vv. 18–19). Talking about what the Lord had done and what He required should be a part of normal life. When sitting at a meal or working on a project around the house or putting them to bed, parents should take every opportunity to point their children to the Lord.

# We also are called to make our faith a part of our everyday life. We don’t just think about what Christ has done when we are at church; it should be on our minds throughout the day. It is important to help instill faith in our children and in us. Even if we do not have children, regularly talking about what God has done is an important part of the life of faith (Ps. 1:2).

# Go Deeper

# Do you reserve your talking and thinking about God to Sunday? How can you weave these discussions into the everyday parts of your life?

# Pray with Us

# Jesus, we confess our wandering hearts and our devotion to our own wisdom. Lord, guide us along Your ways and teach us Your paths. You are God our Savior, and our hope is in You all the days of our lives.

# Our Daily Bread – 3/11/25

# HEIRS OF GOD'S SALVATION

Diagram of a house with blue cylinders and white text

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**Read: GALATIANS 4:1-7**

**4**What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. **2**The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. **3**So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=GALATIANS%204%3A1-7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29135a)] of the world. **4**But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, **5**to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=GALATIANS%204%3A1-7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29137b)] **6**Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, *“Abba*,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=GALATIANS%204%3A1-7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29138c)] Father.” **7**So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

**Footnotes**

1. [Galatians 4:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=GALATIANS%204%3A1-7&version=NIV#en-NIV-29135) Or *under the basic principles*
2. [Galatians 4:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=GALATIANS%204%3A1-7&version=NIV#en-NIV-29137) 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.
3. [Galatians 4:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=GALATIANS%204%3A1-7&version=NIV#en-NIV-29138) Aramaic for *Father*

As long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. GALATIANS 4:1

When Abigail's parents died tragically in a car accident, she inherited a large real estate portfolio. She also learned that her parents had arranged to place the portfolio in a trust. For the time being, she could access only enough money for her college tuition. The rest would come when she was older. Abigail was frustrated, but she later realized her parents' wisdom in planning a measured delivery of the inheritance. •

In Galatians 4, Paul uses a similar example to illustrate Israel's situation as promised heirs of God's covenant with Abraham. God had made a covenant with Abraham to bless him, and circumcision was a sign of that promise (SEE GENESIS 17:1-14). However, the sign wasn't the promise. Abraham's descendants would await a future descendant who would fulfill it. Isaac was born and pointed to the future birth of a Son who would redeem God's people GALATIANS 4:4-5). Israel, like Abigail, had to wait until the "time set by his father" (V. 2). Only then could Israel take full possession of the inheritance. What they wanted immediately would arrive in due time with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. All who put their faith in Christ were no longer slaves to sin, "but God's child" (v. 7). A new covenant has been established. We have access to God! We can call him "Abba, Father" (v. 6).

**MATT LUCAS**

**Reflect and Pray**

If you profess Jesus as Savior, how are you no longer a slave to sin but a child of God? What does it mean to know Him as Father?

Loving Father, thank You for sending Your Son to address the sin problem of the world.

**INSIGHT**

*Huiothesio* is used only five times in the New Testament (and only by Paul). This word, translated as "adoption to sonship" in Galatians 4:5, is packed with meaning. *Huiothesia* is a compound Greek word from *huios* ("son") and *thesia* ("placing"). Adoption took place when a child (almost exclusively males in the ancient world) was placed in a family that lacked a suitable heir. With adoption came privileges, rights, and responsibilities of family membership. Paul used the term adoption, but the concept of family membership is also present in John's writing: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called

children of God! ... Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 JOHN 3:1-2).

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

# God Calling – 3/11/25

# Seek Beauty

Draw Beauty from every flower and Joy from the song of the birds, and the color of the flowers.

Drink in the beauty of air and color.  I am with you. When I wanted to express a beautiful thought, I made a lovely flower. I have told you. Reflect.

When I want to express to man what I am - what my Father is - I strive to make a very beautiful character.

Think of yourselves as My expression of attributes, as a lovely flower is My expression of thought, and you will strive in all, in Spiritual beauty, in Thought - power, in Health, in clothing, to be as fit an expression for Me as you can.

Absorb Beauty. As soon as the beauty of a flower or a tree is impressed upon your soul it leaves an image there which reflects through your actions. Remember that no thought of sin and suffering, of the approaching scorn and Crucifixion, ever prevented My seeing the beauty of the flowers.

Look for beauty and joy in the world around. Look at a flower until its beauty becomes part of your very soul. It will be given back to the world again by you in the form of a smile or a loving word or a kind thought or a prayer.

Listen to a bird. Take the song as a message from My Father. Let it sink into your soul. That too will be given back to the world in ways I have said. Laugh more, laugh often. Love more. I am with you. I am your Lord.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." - Psalm 19:1

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/12/25

# Total Surrender



Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You." —[Mark 10:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Mark+10%3A28)

Our Lord replies to this statement of Peter by saying that this surrender is “for My sake and the gospel’s” (10:29). It was not for the purpose of what the disciples themselves would get out of it. Beware of surrender that is motivated by personal benefits that may result. For example, “I’m going to give myself to God because I want to be delivered from sin, because I want to be made holy.” Being delivered from sin and being made holy are the result of being right with God, but surrender resulting from this kind of thinking is certainly not the true nature of Christianity. Our motive for surrender should not be for any personal gain at all. We have become so self-centered that we go to God only for something from Him, and not for God Himself. It is like saying, “No, Lord, I don’t want you; I want myself. But I do want You to clean me and fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I want to be on display in Your showcase so I can say, ‘This is what God has done for me.’ ” Gaining heaven, being delivered from sin, and being made useful to God are things that should never even be a consideration in real surrender. Genuine total surrender is a personal sovereign preference for Jesus Christ Himself.

Where does Jesus Christ figure in when we have a concern about our natural relationships? Most of us will desert Him with this excuse— “Yes, Lord, I heard you call me, but my family needs me and I have my own interests. I just can’t go any further” (see [Luke 9:57-62](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+9:57-62)). “Then,” Jesus says, “you ‘cannot be My disciple’ ” (see [Luke 14:26-33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14:26-33)).

True surrender will always go beyond natural devotion. If we will only give up, God will surrender Himself to embrace all those around us and will meet their needs, which were created by our surrender. Beware of stopping anywhere short of total surrender to God. Most of us have only a vision of what this really means, but have never truly experienced it.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Beware of isolation; beware of the idea that you have to develop a holy life alone. It is impossible to develop a holy life alone; you will develop into an oddity and a peculiarism, into something utterly unlike what God wants you to be. The only way to develop spiritually is to go into the society of God’s own children, and you will soon find how God alters your set. God does not contradict our social instincts; He alters them.  Biblical Psychology, 189 L

# CCEL – 3/12/25

The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.—[NUM. 6:25,26.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.6.html" \l "Num.6.25)

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.—The brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.—The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies sake. Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee.—Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.—Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.

The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

[John 1:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.18). -[Heb. 1:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.1.html" \l "Heb.1.3)-[II Cor. 4:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html" \l "iiCor.4.4).[Psa. 31:16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.31.html" \l "Ps.31.16). -[Psa. 30:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.30.html" \l "Ps.30.7). -[Psa. 89:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.89.html" \l "Ps.89.15).[Psa. 29:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.29.html" \l "Ps.29.11).[Matt. 14:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.14.html" \l "Matt.14.27).

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour.” [Matthew 5:43](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.43)

“Love thy neighbour.” Perhaps he rolls in riches, and thou art poor, and living in thy little cot side-by-side with his lordly mansion; thou seest every day his estates, his fine linen, and his sumptuous banquets; God has given him these gifts, covet not his wealth, and think no hard thoughts concerning him. Be content with thine own lot, if thou canst not better it, but do not look upon thy neighbour, and wish that he were as thyself. Love him, and then thou wilt not envy him.

Perhaps, on the other hand, thou art rich, and near thee reside the poor. Do not scorn to call them neighbour. Own that thou art bound to love them. The world calls them thy inferiors. In what are they inferior? They are far more thine equals than thine inferiors, for “God hath made of one blood all people that dwell upon the face of the earth.” It is thy coat which is better than theirs, but thou art by no means better than they. They are men, and what art thou more than that? Take heed that thou love thy neighbour even though he be in rags, or sunken in the depths of poverty.

But, perhaps, you say, “I cannot love my neighbours, because for all I do they return ingratitude and contempt.” So much the more room for the heroism of love. Wouldst thou be a feather-bed warrior, instead of bearing the rough fight of love? He who dares the most, shall win the most; and if rough be thy path of love, tread it boldly, still loving thy neighbours through thick and thin. Heap coals of fire on their heads, and if they be hard to please, seek not to please them, but to please thy Master; and remember if they spurn thy love, thy Master hath not spurned it, and thy deed is as acceptable to him as if it had been acceptable to them. Love thy neighbour, for in so doing thou art following the footsteps of Christ.

# Word Live – 3/12/25

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# Scripture Union – 3/12/25

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# Today in the Word – 3/12/25

# Right Worship

# A green plant growing out of rocks AI-generated content may be incorrect.

# [Read Deuteronomy 12:1–14](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+12:1%e2%80%9314)

# The One Place of Worship

# 12 These are the decrees and laws you must be careful to follow in the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has given you to possess—as long as you live in the land. 2Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains, on the hills and under every spreading tree, where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. 3Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places.

# 4You must not worship the Lord your God in their way. 5But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; 6there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. 7There, in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the Lord your God has blessed you.

# 8You are not to do as we do here today, everyone doing as they see fit, 9since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the Lord your God is giving you. 10But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety. 11Then to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name—there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the Lord. 12And there rejoice before the Lord your God—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites from your towns who have no allotment or inheritance of their own. 13Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please. 14Offer them only at the place the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, and there observe everything I command you.

# Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. [Romans 12:2](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Rom.12.2)

# “It’s not about you.” This is the opening line to the best-selling book *The Purpose Driven Life*. It is a helpful reminder for a culture that is steeped in concern for the self. Often the best thing we can do is realize that life is not about us. This is especially true in how we approach worship.

# In Deuteronomy 12, Moses gave clear instructions to Israel for when they would enter they land. They were to “destroy completely all the places on the high mountains…where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods” (v. 2). In the ancient world, most people believed gods were local. So, when you moved into a new area, you would want to worship the gods of that region. Not so for Israel. They were to destroy the Canaanite worship sites. Canaanite worship involved idolatry, cultist prostitution, and even child sacrifice (v. 31).

# Instead, Moses outlined a profound theology of worship for Israel. Israel needed to realize that worship was not about them. God is the object of worship. We are not to worship Him any way we want but need to follow His direction (v. 8). This is a good reminder for us today. At times, we think of worship as a tool to attract people to church. But as one theologian reminds us, “To use Christian worship for any purpose other than the glorification of God is to abuse it.” Worship of God is an end in itself, not a means to some other goal we might have.

# Just as Israel’s worship was counter-cultural, the same is true for us today. Paul called the church to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:1–2).

# Go Deeper

# Why did God command Israel to destroy altars and idols? In what ways are we sometimes tempted to conform to the world in our church practice?

# Pray with Us

# Put Your love in our hearts, God, and illumine the darkness of our minds that we may see Your light and glorify You forever. Make us the people who “do not conform to the pattern of this world” (Rom. 12:2).

# Our Daily Bread – 3/12/25

**Elephant Helpers**

A baby elephant in a hole in mud

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:21-26**

**21**The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” **22**On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, **23**and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, **24**while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, **25**so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. **26**If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

There should be no division in the body but ... its parts should have equal concern for each other. 1 CORINTHIANS 12:25

Late one night, a Kenyan elephant sanctuary received a call that an elephant calf had fallen into a well. The rescue team arrived to cries of despair flooding the darkness and discovered that two-thirds of the baby's trunk had been lost to hyenas. Transporting the calf to their safe haven, they named him Long'uro, which means “something that has been cut.” Though he possessed only one· third of his trunk, Long'uro healed and was embraced by the rest of the herd at the sanctuary. Elephants innately know they need each other, so they help each other.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul underscores our need to help each other within the body of Christ. He uses the metaphor of the human body and its individual parts to describe how God intends His people to welcome all gifts in all people because all are needed for His body to function (vv. 12-26). Then Paul explains how unity in diversity is accomplished. “God has put the body together," he wrote, "giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other" (vv. 24-25).

Whether weak or strong, fancy or common, let's help each other. Like the elephants, people need each other too.

**ELlSA MORGAN**

**Reflect and Pray**

When have you received help from the family of God? What will you do to help other believers today?

Dear God, please help me to understand the vital value of each member in the body of Christ and show me how to both receive and give help so that together we're stronger.

**INSIGHT**

The concept of unity that Paul highlights in 1 Corinthians 12 depends on two things. The first is its diversity. Each part of the body has a different function, yet every part is vital. Paul wrote to a society steeped in slavery, and the church brought together groups of people unaccustomed to equality with each other-slave and free, Jew and Gentile (v. 13). How could such a diverse body experience unity? Because of God's Holy Spirit, who unites us in one purpose. This kind of unity was unique in the world. Paul tells us, "We were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body .and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (V. 13). Whether great or small, each member is important for the body to perform properly. As Paul said, "God has put the body together" (v. 24). Many members. One body. One Spirit.

**TIM GUSTAFSON**

# God Calling – 3/12/25

# Simplicity

Simplicity is the keynote of My Kingdom. Choose simple things always.

Love and reverence the humble and the simple.

Have only simple things here. Your standard must never be the world's standard.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." - Matthew 6:33

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/13/25

# God’s Total Surrender to Us



For God so loved the world that He gave… —[John 3:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+3%3A16)

Salvation does not mean merely deliverance from sin or the experience of personal holiness. The salvation which comes from God means being completely delivered from myself, and being placed into perfect union with Him. When I think of my salvation experience, I think of being delivered from sin and gaining personal holiness. But salvation is so much more! It means that the Spirit of God has brought me into intimate contact with the true Person of God Himself. And as I am caught up into total surrender to God, I become thrilled with something infinitely greater than myself.

To say that we are called to preach holiness or sanctification is to miss the main point. We are called to proclaim Jesus Christ (see [1 Corinthians 2:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+2:2)). The fact that He saves from sin and makes us holy is actually part of the effect of His wonderful and total surrender to us.

If we are truly surrendered, we will never be aware of our own efforts to remain surrendered. Our entire life will be consumed with the One to whom we surrender. Beware of talking about surrender if you know nothing about it. In fact, you will never know anything about it until you understand that [John 3:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3:16) means that God completely and absolutely gave Himself to us. In our surrender, we must give ourselves to God in the same way He gave Himself for us— totally, unconditionally, and without reservation. The consequences and circumstances resulting from our surrender will never even enter our mind, because our life will be totally consumed with Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Crises reveal character. When we are put to the test the hidden resources of our character are revealed exactly.  Disciples Indeed, 393 R

# CCEL – 3/13/25

There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.—[I TIM. 2:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.2.html" \l "iTim.2.5)

Forasmuch . . . as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.—In Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace.—By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.—He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

[Heb. 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.14).[Isa. 45:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.45.html" \l "Isa.45.22).[I John 2:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.1). -[Eph. 2:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.13). -[Heb. 9:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.9.html" \l "Heb.9.12),[15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.9.html" \l "Heb.9.15). -[Heb. 7:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.7.html" \l "Heb.7.25).

“Why sit we here until we die?” [2 Kings 7:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiKgs.7.html" \l "iiKgs.7.3)

Dear reader, this little book was mainly intended for the edification of believers, but if you are yet unsaved, our heart yearns over you: and we would fain say a word which may be blessed to you. Open your Bible, and read the story of the lepers, and mark their position, which was much the same as yours. If you remain where you are you must perish; if you go to Jesus you can but die. “Nothing venture, nothing win,” is the old proverb, and in your case the venture is no great one. If you sit still in sullen despair, no one can pity you when your ruin comes; but if you die with mercy sought, if such a thing were possible, you would be the object of universal sympathy. None escape who refuse to look to Jesus; but you know that, at any rate, some are saved who believe in him, for certain of your own acquaintances have received mercy: then why not you? The Ninevites said, “Who can tell?” Act upon the same hope, and try the Lord’s mercy. To perish is so awful, that if there were but a straw to catch at, the instinct of self-preservation should lead you to stretch out your hand. We have thus been talking to you on your own unbelieving ground, we would now assure you, as from the Lord, that if you seek him he will be found of you. Jesus casts out none who come unto him. You shall not perish if you trust him; on the contrary, you shall find treasure far richer than the poor lepers gathered in Syria’s deserted camp. May the Holy Spirit embolden you to go at once, and you shall not believe in vain. When you are saved yourself, publish the good news to others. Hold not your peace; tell the King’s household first, and unite with them in fellowship; let the porter of the city, the minister, be informed of your discovery, and then proclaim the good news in every place. The Lord save thee ere the sun goes down this day.

# Word Live – 3/13/25

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

# Scripture Union – 3/13/25

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

# Today in the Word – 3/13/25

# Keeping First Things First

# A road leading to a sunset AI-generated content may be incorrect.

# [Read Deuteronomy 13:1–18](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+13:1%e2%80%9318)

**Worshiping Other Gods**

**13**[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2013%3A1%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5274a)]If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a sign or wonder, **2**and if the sign or wonder spoken of takes place, and the prophet says, “Let us follow other gods” (gods you have not known) “and let us worship them,” **3**you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. **4**It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. **5**That prophet or dreamer must be put to death for inciting rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. That prophet or dreamer tried to turn you from the way the Lord your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.

**6**If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, “Let us go and worship other gods” (gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known, **7**gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), **8**do not yield to them or listen to them. Show them no pity. Do not spare them or shield them. **9**You must certainly put them to death. Your hand must be the first in putting them to death, and then the hands of all the people. **10**Stone them to death, because they tried to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. **11**Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.

**12**If you hear it said about one of the towns the Lord your God is giving you to live in **13**that troublemakers have arisen among you and have led the people of their town astray, saying, “Let us go and worship other gods” (gods you have not known), **14**then you must inquire, probe and investigate it thoroughly. And if it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done among you, **15**you must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. You must destroy it completely,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2013%3A1%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5288b)] both its people and its livestock. 16You are to gather all the plunder of the town into the middle of the public square and completely burn the town and all its plunder as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God. That town is to remain a ruin forever, never to be rebuilt, 17and none of the condemned things[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2013%3A1%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5290c)] are to be found in your hands. Then the Lord will turn from his fierce anger, will show you mercy, and will have compassion on you. He will increase your numbers, as he promised on oath to your ancestors— 18because you obey the Lord your God by keeping all his commands that I am giving you today and doing what is right in his eyes.

Footnotes

1. [Deuteronomy 13:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2013%3A1%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-5274) In Hebrew texts 13:1-18 is numbered 13:2-19.
2. [Deuteronomy 13:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2013%3A1%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-5288) The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them.
3. [Deuteronomy 13:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2013%3A1%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-5290) The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them.

# It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. [Deuteronomy 13:4](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Deut.13.4)

# I often leave home early to commute to work. It’s part of the reality of living in the metro-Chicago region. Sometimes I dress in the dark so as not to wake up my wife. Occasionally when I put a shirt on, I’ll get the top button wrong and later discover that my shirt is on cockeyed. If you get the first button wrong, the rest just doesn’t work.

# The very first command God gave Israel at Sinai was of ultimate importance, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Deut. 5:7). If Israel got this “button” wrong, it would be impossible to follow the Lord faithfully in any other area of their lives.

# Deuteronomy chapter 13 highlights the importance of the first commandment. Moses warned Israel that if anyone—a religious leader, family member, or town government—tried to lead people astray and worship other gods, they were to be harshly judged. Moses starkly commanded, “You must purge the evil from among you” (v. 5). There was too much at stake.

# Imagine this in the context of a marriage relationship. No matter who might tell you not to be faithful to your spouse—whether co-worker, best friend, or parent—you should not listen to them because it would destroy your marriage covenant. In the same way, Israel’s primary calling was to their relationship with the Lord.

# We also have been called into this exclusive relationship with God, made possible through the work of the Lord Jesus. We need to protect that relationship from false teaching and the idols that compete for our loyalty. As Paul reminded the church in Galatia, “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse!” (Gal. 1:8).

# Go Deeper

# What might be coming between you and your relationship with the Lord? How can you protect your love and obedience to God as the most important thing?

# Pray with Us

# Thank You, Father, that we can know You, the only true God. Thank You, gracious God, for Jesus Christ, the true Vine. We rejoice that by grace we have been grafted into Him to bear good fruit.

# Our Daily Bread – 3/13/25

# A NEW HEART IN CHRIST

# A broken heart with a red heart inside AI-generated content may be incorrect.

# Read: EZEKIEL 11:14-21

**The Promise of Israel’s Return**

**14**The word of the Lord came to me: **15**“Son of man, the people of Jerusalem have said of your fellow exiles and all the other Israelites, ‘They are far away from the Lord; this land was given to us as our possession.’

**16**“Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.’

**17**“Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.’

**18**“They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. **19**I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. **20**Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. **21**But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

I will remove from them their heart of.stone and give them a heart of flesh. EZEKIEL 11:19

Brack and Dennis were childhood friends, but as they grew up, Brock showed little interest in Dennis' faith in Jesus. Dennis loved his friend and prayed for him because he knew the path he was going down was dark and depressing. In praying for Brock, Dennis adapted the words of the prophet Ezekiel: "Please God, remove from Brock a heart of stone and give him a heart of flesh" (SEE EZEKIEL 11:19). He longed that Brock would walk in God's way so he would flourish.

Ten years later, Dennis was still praying faithfully. Then he received a call from Brock: "I just gave my life to Jesus!" Dennis rejoiced, tears brimming, to hear his friend exclaim that he'd finally come to the end of himself and trusted God with his life.

In his prayers, Dennis focused on God's promises to His people through Ezekiel. Although they'd turned from God with detestable practices, He said He would change their hearts: "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh" (V. 19). With changed hearts, they would follow their God faithfully (V. 20.

No matter how far we've turned from God, He delights to give us warm and loving hearts. We need only to turn to Him with faith and repentance as we trust in Jesus to save us from our sins.

**AMY BOUCHER PYE**

**Reflect and Pray**

How have you experienced God melting any stubbornness or coldness within? How can you pray for a friend today?

Loving God, thank You for releasing me from my sin and shame.

Learn more here: ODB.org/personal-relationship-with-god.

**INSIGHT**

Just prior to today's reading from Ezekiel 11, the prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of God's glory. He looked on the throne of God in the holy of holies (10:1) and saw "the glory of the LORD" rise and move (V.4). We see the movement of God's glory from His inner sanctuary in the temple to its threshold and then from the threshold out into the city (VV. 4, 18). Finally, the glory of God left the city by the eastern gate (V. 19). Ezekiel's vision shows something the exiled Israelites may not have at first realized: their God went with them. He followed on the

same road they traveled, which is why Ezekiel says, "I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone" (11 :16).

**JED OSTOICH**

# God Calling – 3/13/25

# Spiritualism

Wait before Me, gently breathing in My Spirit.

That Spirit which, if given a free entrance, and not barred out by self, will enable you to do the same works as I did, which being interpreted is, will enable Me to do the same works, and even greater than I did when on earth - through you.

Spiritualism is wrong. No man should ever be a medium for any spirit, other than Mine.

All you should know, all it is well for you to know of My Spirit-Kingdom, I will tell you when and how I see best. The limit is set by your own spiritual development.

Follow My injunctions in all things.

Peace - Peace - Peace.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." - Galatians 5:16

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/14/25

# Yielding



…you are that one’s slaves whom you obey… —[Romans 6:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+6%3A16)

The first thing I must be willing to admit when I begin to examine what controls and dominates me is that I am the one responsible for having yielded myself to whatever it may be. If I am a slave to myself, I am to blame because somewhere in the past I yielded to myself. Likewise, if I obey God I do so because at some point in my life I yielded myself to Him.

If a child gives in to selfishness, he will find it to be the most enslaving tyranny on earth. There is no power within the human soul itself that is capable of breaking the bondage of the nature created by yielding. For example, yield for one second to anything in the nature of lust, and although you may hate yourself for having yielded, you become enslaved to that thing. (Remember what lust is— “I must have it now,” whether it is the lust of the flesh or the lust of the mind.) No release or escape from it will ever come from any human power, but only through the power of redemption. You must yield yourself in utter humiliation to the only One who can break the dominating power in your life, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. “…He has anointed Me…to proclaim liberty to the captives…” ([Luke 4:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+4:18) and [Isaiah 61:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+61:1)).

When you yield to something, you will soon realize the tremendous control it has over you. Even though you say, “Oh, I can give up that habit whenever I like,” you will know you can’t. You will find that the habit absolutely dominates you because you willingly yielded to it. It is easy to sing, “He will break every fetter,” while at the same time living a life of obvious slavery to yourself. But yielding to Jesus will break every kind of slavery in any person’s life.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The great thing about faith in God is that it keeps a man undisturbed in the midst of disturbance. Notes on Isaiah, 1376 R

# CCEL – 3/14/25

Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.—[TIT. 2:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.2.html" \l "Titus.2.10)

Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.—Abstain from all appearance of evil.—If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.—Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.—Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart; so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.—Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

[Phi. 1:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.1.html" \l "Phil.1.27). -[I Thes. 5:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.5.html" \l "iThess.5.22). -[I Pet. 4:14,15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.14). -[Phi. 2:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.15). -[Matt. 5:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.16).[Prov. 3:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.3.html" \l "Prov.3.3). -[Phi. 4:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.8).

“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” [1 Corinthians 10:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.10.html" \l "iCor.10.12)

It is a curious fact, that there is such a thing as being proud of grace. A man says, “I have great faith, I shall not fall; poor little faith may, but I never shall.” “I have fervent love,” says another, “I can stand, there is no danger of my going astray.” He who boasts of grace has little grace to boast of. Some who do this imagine that their graces can keep them, knowing not that the stream must flow constantly from the fountain head, or else the brook will soon be dry. If a continuous stream of oil comes not to the lamp, though it burn brightly today, it will smoke to-morrow, and noxious will be its scent. Take heed that thou gloriest not in thy graces, but let all thy glorying and confidence be in Christ and his strength, for only so canst thou be kept from falling. Be much more in prayer. Spend longer time in holy adoration. Read the Scriptures more earnestly and constantly. Watch your lives more carefully. Live nearer to God. Take the best examples for your pattern. Let your conversation be redolent of heaven. Let your hearts be perfumed with affection for men’s souls. So live that men may take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus, and have learned of him; and when that happy day shall come, when he whom you love shall say, “Come up higher,” may it be your happiness to hear him say, “Thou hast fought a good fight, thou hast finished thy course, and henceforth there is laid up for thee a crown of righteousness which fadeth not away.” On, Christian, with care and caution! On, with holy fear and trembling! On, with faith and confidence in Jesus alone, and let your constant petition be, “Uphold me according to thy word.” He is able, and he alone, “To keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”

# Word Live – 3/14/25

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

# Scripture Union – 3/14/25

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

# Today in the Word – 3/14/25

# The Economics of Worship



[**Read Deuteronomy 14:22–15:11**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+14:22%e2%80%9315:11)

**Tithes**

22Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. 23Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always. 24But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the Lord your God and cannot carry your tithe (because the place where the Lord will choose to put his Name is so far away), 25then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the Lord your God will choose. 26Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice. 27And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns, for they have no allotment or inheritance of their own.

28At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year’s produce and store it in your towns, 29so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

**The Year for Canceling Debts**

15 At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts. 2This is how it is to be done: Every creditor shall cancel any loan they have made to a fellow Israelite. They shall not require payment from anyone among their own people, because the Lord’s time for canceling debts has been proclaimed. 3You may require payment from a foreigner, but you must cancel any debt your fellow Israelite owes you. 4However, there need be no poor people among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you, 5if only you fully obey the Lord your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today. 6For the Lord your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you.

7If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. 8Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need. 9Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: “The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,” so that you do not show ill will toward the needy among your fellow Israelites and give them nothing. They may then appeal to the Lord against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. 10Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. 11There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.

Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart.[Deuteronomy 15:10](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Deut.15.10)

When I started seminary as a poor graduate student, my wife and I visited several churches. At one church, the parking lot was filled with high- end luxury cars. Our decades-old sedan looked markedly out of place. Although the people were welcoming, we wondered if we would fit in.

In today’s reading, two themes are carefully woven together—worship and care for the poor. In the first section, Moses reminded Israel that they were to be faithful in tithing from their grain and livestock (vv. 22–27). A portion of this tithe was used to support the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows (vv. 28–29). The rest of it was to be enjoyed by the worshiper and their family in a celebratory meal (vv. 25–27). At a time when eating meat was a rare luxury, this would have been a celebration that the whole family eagerly looked forward to.

In the second section, Moses outlined the laws for debt cancellation on the seventh year—the Sabbatical Year (15:1–11). This was not just an economic policy to help the poor, it was also a part of Israel’s corporate worship. It was to be a key value of that community. In showing compassion to the poor, Israel would model God’s heart toward the vulnerable: “There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open-handed toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land” (15:11).

The worship of God’s people should be full of joy, celebration, care, and compassion. When hearts have been transformed by God’s grace, it is natural for that generosity to overflow to the needy. As James reminds us, “religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress” (James 1:27).

**Go Deeper**

How can your heart overflow with compassion to those in need? What are some ways you can extend Christ’s love to others?

**Pray with Us**

Loving Father, Your Word is more precious than fine gold. Increase our love for You and Your Word. We ask for Your wisdom to walk worthy before You and to love You with all our hearts, mind, and strength.

# Our Daily Bread – 3/14/25

# MADE TO DO GOOD FOR GOD



**Read: EPHESIANS 2:6-10**

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.

We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works. EPHESIANS 2:10

At first, I ignored the card fluttering to the ground. The father and his little girl who dropped it were just twenty feet away, and I was late for work. Surely they would have realized it, I told myself. But they kept walking. My conscience got the better of me, and I went over to pick it up. It was a prepaid bus ride pass. W hen I gave it to them, their effusive thanks left me feeling unexpectedly satisfied. Why do I feel so good about doing such a small thing? I wondered.

It turns out that the human body produces chemicals that improve our mood when we're kind to others. We're made to feel good when we do good! That's not surprising, because we were created by a good God who made us to be like Him.

Ephesians 2:10 shows us that blessing others is a part of our very purpose: "We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." This verse doesn't simply give an instruction to do good; in a way, it also reflects a part of our God·made nature. We don't have to be doing great things all the time. If we do something small to help others in our daily lives, we not only get the reward of satisfaction, but we also know that we're pleasing God-doing exactly what He made us to do.

**LESLIE KOH**

**Reflect and Pray**

Who needs a helping hand or an encouraging word? What kind word or simple gesture can you extend to a friend, colleague, or neighbor?

Dear Father, please open my eyes to see how I can be kind to someone today.

**INSIGHT**

The creation account in Genesis says that "God created mankind in his own image" (1:27), Ephesians 2:10 also declares that "we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Jesus set the example for us during His earthly ministry by doing "many good works from the Father" (JOHN 10:32). Peter elaborates and says: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, ... he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him" (ACTS 10:38). As believers in Christ, the Spirit will provide the opportunities and empowerment to follow in Jesus' footsteps and do good works. The fruit of the Spirit's work in us is "Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self·control" (GALATIANS 5:22·23).

**ALYSON KIEDA**

# God Calling – 3/14/25

# God's Touch

Near, all broodingly near, as some tender motherbird anxious over its young, I am here.  I am your Lord, Life of your body and mind and soul - renewer of your youth.

You do not know all that this time of converse with Me will mean to you.  Did not My servant Isaiah say, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.  They shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Persevere in all I tell you to do.  The persistent carrying out of My commands, My desires, will unfailingly bring you, as far as spiritual, mental, and temporal things are concerned, to that place where you would be.

If you look back over My Words to you, you will see that My leading has been very gradual, and that only as you have carried out My wishes, have I been able to give you more clear and definite teaching and guidance.

Man's ecstasy is God's touch on quickened, responsive, spirit-nerves.  Joy - Joy - Joy

Forget not all his benefits ... who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is   
renewed like the eagle's.  Psalm 103:2,5

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/15/25

# The Discipline of Dismay



As they followed they were afraid. —[Mark 10:32](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Mark+10%3A32)

At the beginning of our life with Jesus Christ, we were sure we knew all there was to know about following Him. It was a delight to forsake everything else and to throw ourselves before Him in a fearless statement of love. But now we are not quite so sure. Jesus is far ahead of us and is beginning to seem different and unfamiliar— “Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed” ([Mark 10:32](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10:32)).

There is an aspect of Jesus that chills even a disciple’s heart to its depth and makes his entire spiritual life gasp for air. This unusual Person with His face set “like a flint” ([Isaiah 50:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+50:7)) is walking with great determination ahead of me, and He strikes terror right through me. He no longer seems to be my Counselor and Friend and has a point of view about which I know nothing. All I can do is stand and stare at Him in amazement. At first I was confident that I understood Him, but now I am not so sure. I begin to realize that there is a distance between Jesus and me and I can no longer be intimate with Him. I have no idea where He is going, and the goal has become strangely distant.

Jesus Christ had to understand fully every sin and sorrow that human beings could experience, and that is what makes Him seem unfamiliar. When we see this aspect of Him, we realize we really don’t know Him. We don’t recognize even one characteristic of His life, and we don’t know how to begin to follow Him. He is far ahead of us, a Leader who seems totally unfamiliar, and we have no friendship with Him.

The discipline of dismay is an essential lesson which a disciple must learn. The danger is that we tend to look back on our times of obedience and on our past sacrifices to God in an effort to keep our enthusiasm for Him strong (see [Isaiah 50:10-11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+50:10-11)). But when the darkness of dismay comes, endure until it is over, because out of it will come the ability to follow Jesus truly, which brings inexpressibly wonderful joy.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We are not fundamentally free; external circumstances are not in our hands, they are in God’s hands, the one thing in which we are free is in our personal relationship to God. We are not responsible for the circumstances we are in, but we are responsible for the way we allow those circumstances to affect us; we can either allow them to get on top of us, or we can allow them to transform us into what God wants us to be.  Conformed to His Image, 354 L

# CCEL – 3/15/25

Perfect through sufferings.—[HEB. 2:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.10)

My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.—And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.—Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.—I looked on my right hand, and behold, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

[Matt. 26:38,39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.26.html" \l "Matt.26.38). -[Luke 22:44](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.22.html" \l "Luke.22.44).[Psa. 116:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.116.html" \l "Ps.116.3). -[Psa. 69:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.69.html" \l "Ps.69.20). -[Psa. 142:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.142.html" \l "Ps.142.4).[Isa. 53:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.3).

“Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” [2 Timothy 2:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.2.html" \l "iiTim.2.1)

Christ has grace without measure in himself, but he hath not retained it for himself. As the reservoir empties itself into the pipes, so hath Christ emptied out his grace for his people. “Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” He seems only to have in order to dispense to us. He stands like the fountain, always flowing, but only running in order to supply the empty pitchers and the thirsty lips which draw nigh unto it. Like a tree, he bears sweet fruit, not to hang on boughs, but to be gathered by those who need. Grace, whether its work be to pardon, to cleanse, to preserve, to strengthen, to enlighten, to quicken, or to restore, is ever to be had from him freely and without price; nor is there one form of the work of grace which he has not bestowed upon his people. As the blood of the body, though flowing from the heart, belongs equally to every member, so the influences of grace are the inheritance of every saint united to the Lamb; and herein there is a sweet communion between Christ and his Church, inasmuch as they both receive the same grace. Christ is the head upon which the oil is first poured; but the same oil runs to the very skirts of the garments, so that the meanest saint has an unction of the same costly moisture as that which fell upon the head. This is true communion when the sap of grace flows from the stem to the branch, and when it is perceived that the stem itself is sustained by the very nourishment which feeds the branch. As we day by day receive grace from Jesus, and more constantly recognize it as coming from him, we shall behold him in communion with us, and enjoy the felicity of communion with him. Let us make daily use of our riches, and ever repair to him as to our own Lord in covenant, taking from him the supply of all we need with as much boldness as men take money from their own purse.

# Word Live – 3/15/25

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

# Scripture Union – 3/15/25

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

# Today in the Word – 3/15/25

# Rhythms of Worship

[**Read Deuteronomy 16:1–20**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+16:1%e2%80%9320)

**The Passover**

16 Observe the month of Aviv and celebrate the Passover of the Lord your God, because in the month of Aviv he brought you out of Egypt by night. 2Sacrifice as the Passover to the Lord your God an animal from your flock or herd at the place the Lord will choose as a dwelling for his Name. 3Do not eat it with bread made with yeast, but for seven days eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, because you left Egypt in haste—so that all the days of your life you may remember the time of your departure from Egypt. 4Let no yeast be found in your possession in all your land for seven days. Do not let any of the meat you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain until morning.

5You must not sacrifice the Passover in any town the Lord your God gives you 6except in the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name. There you must sacrifice the Passover in the evening, when the sun goes down, on the anniversary[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2016%3A1%E2%80%9320&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5349a)] of your departure from Egypt. 7Roast it and eat it at the place the Lord your God will choose. Then in the morning return to your tents. 8For six days eat unleavened bread and on the seventh day hold an assembly to the Lord your God and do no work.

**The Festival of Weeks**

9Count off seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. 10Then celebrate the Festival of Weeks to the Lord your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you. 11And rejoice before the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, the Levites in your towns, and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows living among you. 12Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and follow carefully these decrees.

**The Festival of Tabernacles**

13Celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress. 14Be joyful at your festival—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites, the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns. 15For seven days celebrate the festival to the Lord your God at the place the Lord will choose. For the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.

16Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Tabernacles. No one should appear before the Lord empty-handed: 17Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.

**Judges**

18Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. 19Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the innocent. 20Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you.

**Footnotes**

1. [Deuteronomy 16:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2016%3A1%E2%80%9320&version=NIV#en-NIV-5349) Or *down, at the time of day*

They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. [Psalm 145:7](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Ps.145.7)

On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress voted to break free from Great Britain’s rule. But it was two days later before they issued their justly famous proclamation: the Declaration of Independence. Ever since that day, American’s have commemorated the birth of their nation on the Fourth of July with picnics, fireworks, and parades.

In Deuteronomy 16, Moses outlines a series of festivals that would punctuate Israel’s year: Passover, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Tabernacles. These feasts would be a way for Israel to remember and celebrate God’s mighty acts that led to the birth of the nation. At Passover, they would remember how the Lord led them out of slavery (v. 1). To remind them of the haste of their departure, they would eat unleavened bread and consume all the meat of the sacrificed lamb that night (vv. 3–4). At the Festival of Weeks, Israel would celebrate God’s continual provision for them (v. 9). It reminded them that the land they inherited was a gift from God (v. 12). At the Festival of Tabernacles, they would remember how God provided them with food and water in the wilderness.

As followers of Christ, we are not under the obligation to celebrate these feasts. Jesus is our once-for-all Passover lamb. Paul teaches, “Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Cor. 5:7). Yet, there is wisdom in creating space in our calendar to celebrate what God has done. The church has historically done this through Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. Some of these—Easter and Pentecost—are directly related to the annual feasts of Israel (Passover and Weeks). Reflecting on what God has done should lead us to joyful, communal worship.

**Go Deeper**

What special celebrations shape your family life? Your church life? What traditions keep us mindful of all that God has done?

**Pray with Us**

Lord Jesus Christ, by Your Spirit, soften our hearts that we may hear Your voice, turn to You, and worship You alone. Today we “celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness” (Ps. 145:7).

# Our Daily Bread – 3/15/25

# REVERED AND READ

A shelf full of books

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: PSALM 119:17-31**

**ג Gimel**

17Be good to your servant while I live,  
    that I may obey your word.  
18Open my eyes that I may see  
    wonderful things in your law.  
19I am a stranger on earth;  
    do not hide your commands from me.  
20My soul is consumed with longing  
    for your laws at all times.  
21You rebuke the arrogant, who are accursed,  
    those who stray from your commands.  
22Remove from me their scorn and contempt,  
    for I keep your statutes.  
23Though rulers sit together and slander me,  
    your servant will meditate on your decrees.  
24Your statutes are my delight;  
    they are my counselors.

**ד Daleth**

25I am laid low in the dust;  
    preserve my life according to your word.  
26I gave an account of my ways and you answered me;  
    teach me your decrees.  
27Cause me to understand the way of your precepts,  
    that I may meditate on your wonderful deeds.  
28My soul is weary with sorrow;  
    strengthen me according to your word.  
29Keep me from deceitful ways;  
    be gracious to me and teach me your law.  
30I have chosen the way of faithfulness;  
    I have set my heart on your laws.  
31I hold fast to your statutes, Lord;  
    do not let me be put to shame.

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. PSALM 119:18

Our home has a well-stocked, overflowing bookshelf. I have a weakness for beautiful books, especially nice hardcovers, and over the years more and more have been added to the collection. Unfortunately, I haven't had the time and energy to actually read nearly as many of the volumes as I've collected. They remain pristine, beautiful, and-sadly-unread.

There's a danger that our Bibles can become a bit like that. Essayist John Updike, speaking of the American classic Wolden, commented that it risked being as "revered and unread as the Bible." The difficulty of understanding ancient Scriptures written in different cultures than our own can tempt us to leave our Bibles on the shelf-beautiful, beloved, but unread.

It doesn't have to be that way. As the psalmist does in Psalm 119, we can turn to God, asking Him to "open [our] eyes" to see Scripture's riches (v. 18). We can find trustworthy teachers to help us "understand what [we're] reading" (ACTS 8:30). And believers have Christ's Spirit to guide our hearts to see how it all points to Him (LUKE 24:21; JOHN 14:26).

Through Scripture, God can give us strength in times of sorrow (PSALM 119:28), protect us from deception (v. 29), and broaden our understanding of how to joyfully live (vv. 32, 35). The Bible is a priceless gift. May it be both revered and read.

**MONICA. LA ROSE**

**Reflect and Pray**

What resources help you understand the Bible? How has God used Scripture to shape your life?

Gracious God, please open my eyes to Your goodness as I read the gift of Scripture,

**INSIGHT**

The main theme of Psalm 119 is celebration of the law-the instruction of God-called the Torah. The longest psalm, it's developed as an acrostic with twenty-two sections-each beginning with succeeding letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This structure was no doubt intended in part as a memory device to aid in the memorization of these important ideas. Each of those sections contains eight verses. It could be said that Psalm 119 is part of a trilogy of psalms that celebrate Torah (SEE ALSO PSALMS 1 AND 19). The psalm is anonymous and lacks a superscription, but verse 1 gives a clear idea of the point of the song: "Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD."

**BILL CROWDER**

# God Calling – 3/15/25

# Your Cross is You

Remember, you are only an instrument. Not yours to decide how or when or where you act. I plan all that. Make yourself very fit to do My work. All that hinders your activity must be cured.

Mine is the Cross on which the burdens of the world are laid.  How foolish is any one of My disciples who seeks to bear his own burdens, when there is only one place for them - My Cross.

It is like a weary man on a hot and dusty road, bearing a heavy load, when all plans have been made for its carriage.  The road, the scenery, flowers, beauty around - all are lost.

But, My children, you may think I did say, "Take up your cross daily, and follow Me."

Yes, but the cross given to each one of you is only a cross provided on which you can crucify the self of yours that hinders progress and Joy, and prevents the flow through your being of My invigorating Life and Spirit.

Listen to Me, love Me, joy in Me. Rejoice.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/16/25

# The Master Will Judge



We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ… —[2 Corinthians 5:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+5%3A10)

Paul says that we must all, preachers and other people alike, “appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” But if you will learn here and now to live under the scrutiny of Christ’s pure light, your final judgment will bring you only delight in seeing the work God has done in you. Live constantly reminding yourself of the judgment seat of Christ, and walk in the knowledge of the holiness He has given you. Tolerating a wrong attitude toward another person causes you to follow the spirit of the devil, no matter how saintly you are. One carnal judgment of another person only serves the purposes of hell in you. Bring it immediately into the light and confess, “Oh, Lord, I have been guilty there.” If you don’t, your heart will become hardened through and through. One of the penalties of sin is our acceptance of it. It is not only God who punishes for sin, but sin establishes itself in the sinner and takes its toll. No struggling or praying will enable you to stop doing certain things, and the penalty of sin is that you gradually get used to it, until you finally come to the place where you no longer even realize that it is sin. No power, except the power that comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit, can change or prevent the inherent consequences of sin.

“If we walk in the light as He is in the light…” ([1 John 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1:7)). For many of us, walking in the light means walking according to the standard we have set up for another person. The deadliest attitude of the Pharisees that we exhibit today is not hypocrisy but that which comes from unconsciously living a lie.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

God does not further our spiritual life in spite of our circumstances, but in and by our circumstances.  Not Knowing Whither, 900 L

# CCEL – 3/16/25

What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.—[JAS. 4:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.4.html" \l "Jas.4.14)

My days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.—Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep . . . in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up: in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.—Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down.

The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.—They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

[Job 9:25,26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.9.html" \l "Job.9.25). -[Psa. 90:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.90.html" \l "Ps.90.5). -[Job 14:1-2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.14.html" \l "Job.14.2).[I John 2:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.17). -[Psa. 102:26,27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.102.html" \l "Ps.102.26). -[Heb. 13:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.8).

“I am a stranger with thee.” [Psalm 39:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.39.html" \l "Ps.39.12)

Yes, O Lord, with thee, but not to thee. All my natural alienation from thee, thy grace has effectually removed; and now, in fellowship with thyself, I walk through this sinful world as a pilgrim in a foreign country. Thou art a stranger in thine own world. Man forgets thee, dishonours thee, sets up new laws and alien customs, and knows thee not. When thy dear Son came unto his own, his own received him not. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. Never was foreigner so speckled a bird among the denizens of any land as thy beloved Son among his mother’s brethren. It is no marvel, then, if I who live the life of Jesus, should be unknown and a stranger here below. Lord, I would not be a citizen where Jesus was an alien. His pierced hand has loosened the cords which once bound my soul to earth, and now I find myself a stranger in the land. My speech seems to these Babylonians among whom I dwell an outlandish tongue, my manners are singular, and my actions are strange. A Tartar would be more at home in Cheapside than I could ever be in the haunts of sinners. But here is the sweetness of my lot: I am a stranger with thee. Thou art my fellow-sufferer, my fellow-pilgrim. Oh, what joy to wander in such blessed society! My heart burns within me by the way when thou dost speak to me, and though I be a sojourner, I am far more blest than those who sit on thrones, and far more at home than those who dwell in their ceiled houses.

“To me remains nor place, nor time:

My country is in every clime;

I can be calm and free from care

On any shore, since God is there.

While place we seek, or place we shun,

The soul finds happiness in none:

But with a God to guide our way,

’Tis equal joy to go or stay.

# Word Live – 3/16/25

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

# Scripture Union – 3/16/25

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

# Today in the Word – 3/16/25

# Picture of Success

A yellow flower on a rock

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[**Read Deuteronomy 17:14–18:22**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+17:14%e2%80%9318:22)

**The King**

14When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,” 15be sure to appoint over you a king the Lord your God chooses. He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not an Israelite. 16The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” 17He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

18When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. 19It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees 20and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

**Offerings for Priests and Levites**

18 The Levitical priests—indeed, the whole tribe of Levi—are to have no allotment or inheritance with Israel. They shall live on the food offerings presented to the Lord, for that is their inheritance. 2They shall have no inheritance among their fellow Israelites; the Lord is their inheritance, as he promised them.

3This is the share due the priests from the people who sacrifice a bull or a sheep: the shoulder, the internal organs and the meat from the head. 4You are to give them the firstfruits of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep, 5for the Lord your God has chosen them and their descendants out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the Lord’s name always.

6If a Levite moves from one of your towns anywhere in Israel where he is living, and comes in all earnestness to the place the Lord will choose, 7he may minister in the name of the Lord his God like all his fellow Levites who serve there in the presence of the Lord. 8He is to share equally in their benefits, even though he has received money from the sale of family possessions.

**Occult Practices**

9When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. 10Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, 11or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. 12Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord; because of these same detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. 13You must be blameless before the Lord your God.

**The Prophet**

14The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so. 15The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. 16For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, “Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.”

17The Lord said to me: “What they say is good. 18I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. 19I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. 20But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.”

21You may say to yourselves, “How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?” 22If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.[Matthew 20:26](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Matt.20.26)

What does it look like to be successful? What images come to mind? You might picture someone who has reached the pinnacle of their profession or who is well respected in the community. Maybe someone with a large and loving family or who has achieved financial security. Our culture often shapes how we envision success.

In today’s reading, Moses outlines the roles of king and prophet for Israel. The role of a king was well defined in the surrounding culture. Kings led their nations in battle, unified their people, and determined religious worship. Moses’ instructions for Israel’s king would have been baffling to his readers. Their king was not supposed to accumulate a lot of wealth and prestige (17:16–17). His most important job would be to uphold God’s Law as revealed by Moses (17:18). The king was called to keep Israel faithful to their covenant with the Lord. He was not to “consider himself better than his fellow Israelites” (17:20). His most important role was to model obedience to the Lord. The nations around Israel also had prophets who would interpret omens and practice divination. In Israel, the prophet’s role was to speak the word of the Lord to the people (18:17–18). They were to be the Lord’s mouthpiece.

Both roles pointed to one who would perfectly embody the rule of God and revelation from God—Jesus, the Messiah. He is the “King of kings” (Rev. 17:14), the ultimate Prophet who revealed to us the Word of the Lord. At the Transfiguration, God commanded the disciples: “Listen to him!” (Matt. 17:5). Jesus models how we are to live—humbly and with self- sacrificial love for others (Phil. 2:5–11). Indeed, He taught us that “whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant” (Matt. 20:26).

**Go Deeper**

Contrast our culture’s views of success with the characteristics modeled for us by Jesus. What stands out to you as the key difference?

**Pray with Us**

Merciful God, give us wisdom to live humbly before You, selflessly serving others. Help us to live in the power of the Spirit of the risen Christ—King of kings and the ultimate Prophet of Israel.

# Our Daily Bread – 3/16/25

# INTERVALS OF REST

A book cover of a running method

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**Read: EXODUS 20:8-11**

8“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth ... but he rested on the seventh day. EXODUS 20:11

Running coach Jeff Galloway, a former Olympian, teaches a marathon training protocol that has a counterintuitive component to it. New and experienced marathoners are often surprised to learn that he advocates a "run/walk" strategy~ alternating running for a set number of minutes with short periods of walking. The premise behind his approach is that the brief interludes of walking enable the body to recuperate briefly, equipping runners to finish their races faster than if they had run all 26.2 miles straight through.

The importance of Intervals of rest isn't limited to running. Rest helps us sustain the lengthy effort life requires. It's something God addresses throughout the Bible, starting in the book of Exodus. In the Old Testament, the rhythms of rest were modeled after God's work at the time of creation: to labor for six days and then keep "the seventh day (as) a sabbath to the LORD your God" (EXODUS 20:10) because God "made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day" (V.ll).

As believers in Jesus, there's no definitive prescription for how often we're to rest (ROMANS 14:5-6; COLOSSIANS 2:16-17). Rest-whenever .and however we enjoy it-is meant to be restorative. Choosing to rest is also an expression of trust in God, who's faithful to supply our needs; we needn't (and can't) run forever.

**KIRSTEN HOLMBERG**

**Reflect and Pray**

How and when do you rest? How has God supplied your needs when you've rested as an expression of faith?

Father. thank You jor giving me opportunities to trust You through rest.

**INSIGHT**

Mount Sinai was the site of at least two great encounters with God in the Old Testament. In today's reading (EXODUS 20), we see Moses and the children of Israel encountering God and His mighty power. They'd spend about a year there before resuming their journey from slavery in Egypt to the freedom of the promised land. The other great encounter was when Elijah fled Jezebel and ended up at Mount Horeb, which many scholars are convinced was the same place as Sinai. There, God renewed Elijah's mission and encouraged him with HIS own presence and care (1 KINGS 19:8-13). Interestingly, these two leaders (Moses and Elijah) would meet with Jesus on another mountain in the New Testament (LUKE 9:28·36) at Christ's transfiguration, a part of His preparation for His coming suffering. The timing of that preparation is significant because in Luke 9:51 “Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem," where those sufferings awaited Him.

By: [**Bill Crowder**](https://odb.org/author/billcrowder/)

# God Calling – 3/16/25

# Reflect Me

My children, I am here beside you. Draw near in spirit to Me. Shut out the distractions of the world. I am your Life, the very breath of your soul. Learn what it is to shut yourself in the secret place of your being, which is My secret place too.

True it is, I wait in many a heart, but so few retire into that inner place of the being to commune with Me. Wherever the soul is, I am. Man has rarely understood this. I am actually at the center of every man's being, but, distracted with the things of the sense-life, he finds Me not.

Do you realize that I am telling you truths, revealing them, not repeating oft-told facts. Meditate on all I say. Ponder it. Not to draw your own conclusions, but to absorb Mine.

All down the ages, men have been too eager to say what they thought about My truth, and so doing, they have grievously erred. Hear Me. Talk to Me. Reflect Me. Do not say what you think about me. My words need none of man's explanation. I can explain to each heart.

Make Me real, and leave Me to do My own work. To lead a soul to Me is one thing, to seek to stay with it to interpret mars the first great act. So would it be with human intercourse. How much more then, when it is a question of the soul, and Me, its Maker, and only real Spirit that understands it.

"In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." - Isaiah 30:15

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/17/25

# The Servant’s Primary Goal



We make it our aim…to be well pleasing to Him. —[2 Corinthians 5:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+5%3A9)

“We make it our aim….” It requires a conscious decision and effort to keep our primary goal constantly in front of us. It means holding ourselves to the highest priority year in and year out; not making our first priority to win souls, or to establish churches, or to have revivals, but seeking only “to be well pleasing to Him.” It is not a lack of spiritual experience that leads to failure, but a lack of working to keep our eyes focused and on the right goal. At least once a week examine yourself before God to see if your life is measuring up to the standard He has for you. Paul was like a musician who gives no thought to audience approval, if he can only catch a look of approval from his Conductor.

Any goal we have that diverts us even to the slightest degree from the central goal of being “approved to God” ([2 Timothy 2:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+2:15)) may result in our rejection from further service for Him. When you discern where the goal leads, you will understand why it is so necessary to keep “looking unto Jesus” ([Hebrews 12:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+12:2)). Paul spoke of the importance of controlling his own body so that it would not take him in the wrong direction. He said, “I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest…I myself should become disqualified” ([1 Corinthians 9:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+9:27)).

I must learn to relate everything to the primary goal, maintaining it without interruption. My worth to God publicly is measured by what I really am in my private life. Is my primary goal in life to please Him and to be acceptable to Him, or is it something less, no matter how lofty it may sound?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Our danger is to water down God’s word to suit ourselves. God never fits His word to suit me; He fits me to suit His word. Not Knowing Whither, 901 R

# CCEL – 3/17/25

He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.—[LEV. 1:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lev.1.html" \l "Lev.1.4)

Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.—Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.

He hath made us accepted in the beloved. As lively stones, . . . built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.—I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

[I Pet. 1:18,19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.18). -[I Pet. 2:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.24).[Eph. 1:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.6).[I Pet. 2:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.5). -[Rom. 12:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.1).[Jude 24,25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jude.1.html" \l "Jude.1.24).

“Remember the poor.” [Galatians 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.2.html" \l "Gal.2.10)

Why does God allow so many of his children to be poor? He could make them all rich if he pleased; he could lay bags of gold at their doors; he could send them a large annual income; or he could scatter round their houses abundance of provisions, as once he made the quails lie in heaps round the camp of Israel, and rained bread out of heaven to feed them. There is no necessity that they should be poor, except that he sees it to be best. “The cattle upon a thousand hills are his”—he could supply them; he could make the richest, the greatest, and the mightiest bring all their power and riches to the feet of his children, for the hearts of all men are in his control. But he does not choose to do so; he allows them to suffer want, he allows them to pine in penury and obscurity. Why is this? There are many reasons: one is, to give us, who are favoured with enough, an opportunity of showing our love to Jesus. We show our love to Christ when we sing of him and when we pray to him; but if there were no sons of need in the world we should lose the sweet privilege of evidencing our love, by ministering in alms-giving to his poorer brethren; he has ordained that thus we should prove that our love standeth not in word only, but in deed and in truth. If we truly love Christ, we shall care for those who are loved by him. Those who are dear to him will be dear to us. Let us then look upon it not as a duty but as a privilege to relieve the poor of the Lord’s flock—remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Surely this assurance is sweet enough, and this motive strong enough to lead us to help others with a willing hand and a loving heart—recollecting that all we do for his people is graciously accepted by Christ as done to himself.

# Word Live – 3/17/25

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

# Scripture Union – 3/17/25

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

# Today in the Word – 3/17/25

# Violence and Justice

A person holding her head

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[Read Deuteronomy 19:1–21](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+19:1%e2%80%9321)

**Cities of Refuge**

19 When the Lord your God has destroyed the nations whose land he is giving you, and when you have driven them out and settled in their towns and houses, 2then set aside for yourselves three cities in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess. 3Determine the distances involved and divide into three parts the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, so that a person who kills someone may flee for refuge to one of these cities.

4This is the rule concerning anyone who kills a person and flees there for safety—anyone who kills a neighbor unintentionally, without malice aforethought. 5For instance, a man may go into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and as he swings his ax to fell a tree, the head may fly off and hit his neighbor and kill him. That man may flee to one of these cities and save his life. 6Otherwise, the avenger of blood might pursue him in a rage, overtake him if the distance is too great, and kill him even though he is not deserving of death, since he did it to his neighbor without malice aforethought. 7This is why I command you to set aside for yourselves three cities.

8If the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as he promised on oath to your ancestors, and gives you the whole land he promised them, 9because you carefully follow all these laws I command you today—to love the Lord your God and to walk always in obedience to him—then you are to set aside three more cities. 10Do this so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which the Lord your God is giving you as your inheritance, and so that you will not be guilty of bloodshed.

11But if out of hate someone lies in wait, assaults and kills a neighbor, and then flees to one of these cities, 12the killer shall be sent for by the town elders, be brought back from the city, and be handed over to the avenger of blood to die. 13Show no pity. You must purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent blood, so that it may go well with you.

14Do not move your neighbor’s boundary stone set up by your predecessors in the inheritance you receive in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess.

**Witnesses**

15One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

16If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse someone of a crime, 17the two people involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the Lord before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time. 18The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against a fellow Israelite, 19then do to the false witness as that witness intended to do to the other party. You must purge the evil from among you. 20The rest of the people will hear of this and be afraid, and never again will such an evil thing be done among you. 21Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. [Revelation 21:4](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Rev.21.4)

Recently, my wife learned that one of her high school classmates was murdered by the classmate’s husband. Even though she had not seen her classmate for years, the news was jarring. In our world, violence and disregard for human life is rampant. But it has been that way since the day Cain killed his brother. History is filled with a trail of blood (Genesis 4).

That is not the way it was meant to be. God places a high value on human life. Because humans embody the image of God, murder is an attack on God Himself. For the crime of murder, God instituted capital punishment (Gen. 9:6). Since there was no police force in Israel if a crime was committed, it was the job of the kinsman-redeemer—called here an “avenger of blood” (v. 6)—to investigate the crime and hold the guilty person accountable.

But what if a killing was accidental and the kinsman-redeemer was bent on revenge? (vv. 4–5). In this situation, God provided cities of refuge (vv. 2, 9). The elders of the cities would add a layer of protection to ensure justice. They could investigate to discern if the person committed intentional murder or unintentional manslaughter.

Passages like these remind us of two key truths. First, God places high value on human life. We are to treat others with dignity and respect and work to protect all life, especially those most vulnerable—the unborn, those suffering from mental or physical impairments, or the elderly. Second, God is deeply concerned for justice. The Law recognizes both the reality of human sin and the fact that a longing for justice can be warped into a thirst for revenge.

These realities should make us long for the return of the Lord Jesus and the coming of His kingdom when there will be no more “death or mourning or crying or pain” (Rev. 21:4).

**Go Deeper**

What two key truths can we take away from these readings about the punishment for murder?

**Pray with Us**

Lord, today’s Scripture encourages us that, in view of all the sin and violence in ancient Israel, You established protection and justice. Thank You for watching over us and our world, too, and keeping us safe.

# Our Daily Bread – 3/17/25

# MAKING PEACE IN JESUS

A person holding a stick

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: Colossians 1:15-20**

**The Supremacy of the Son of God**

15The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

God was pleased ... to reconcile to himself all things ... by making peace through (Christ 's] blood, shed on the cross. COLOSSIANS 1:19-20

High-wire artist Philippe Petit became famous in 1971 when he walked a tightrope between the towers of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. Three years later, he got arrested for an unauthorized walk between the Twin Towers that once distinguished New York's skyline. But in 1987, Petit's walk looked different. At the invitation of Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek, Petit walked across the Hinnom Valley on a high wire as a part of that year's Israel Festival. At the midway point, Petit released a pigeon (he'd hoped for a dove) to symbolize the beauty of peace. A strange and dangerous stunt, but all for the cause of peace. Petit later said, "For a moment, the entire crowd had forgotten their differences."

Petit’s high-wire walk reminds me of another breathtaking moment-the one that occurred when Jesus' body hung between heaven and earth. The apostle Paul tells us, "God was pleased ...to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through (Christ's] blood, shed on the cross" (COLOSSIANS 1:19-20). Paul writes that "once [we] were alienated from God" (V. 21), but no longer. Far from a spectacle to promote peace, Jesus the Messiah actually made peace by shedding His blood on the cross. His was a feat never to be surpassed, as there is no need. His peace is everlasting.

**JOHN BLASÉ**

**Reflect and Pray**

What does the word peace mean to you? How would you say you're experiencing the peace of Jesus?

Praise to You, dear Jesus, for Your everlasting gift of peace.

**INSIGHT**

Colossians 1:15-20 has been abused by false teachers who attempt to claim that the Son of God is a created being. So, what does Paul mean when he says, ''The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation" (v. l5)? Did Jesus have a beginning? The immediate context provides the answer. "In him [the Son] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth ... all things have been created through him and for him" (v. 16). The next verse says, "He is before all things" (V. 17). This makes it clear that the Son (Jesus the Messiah) wasn't the first to be born among all created things, as some false teachers say. Rather, He is preexistent with the Father and hence was present at the creation of all things. The Creator isn't a created being.

**TIM GUSTAFSON**

# God Calling – 3/17/25

# "No Greater Joy"

Withdraw into the calm of communion with Me. Rest - rest, rest in that calm and Peace. Life knows no greater joy than you will find in converse and companionship with Me.

You are Mine. When the soul finds its home of rest in Me, then it is, that its real Life begins. Not in years, as man counts it, do we measure in My Kingdom.

We count only from his second birth, that new birth of which I spoke to Nicodemus when I said, "Ye must be born again." We know no life but Eternal Life and when a man enters into that, then he lives.

And this is Life Eternal, to know God, My Father and Me, the Son sent by Him. So immature, so childish, so empty is all so-called living before that. I shower Love on you. Pass Love on.

Do not fear. To fear is as foolish as if a small child with a small coin, but a rich father, fretted about how rent and rates should be paid, and what he or she would do about it. Is this work Mine or not? You need to trust Me for everything.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.  For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." - Hebrews 4:9,10