# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/24/21

# The Spiritual Search



What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? —[Matthew 7:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+7%3A9)

The illustration of prayer that our Lord used here is one of a good child who is asking for something good. We talk about prayer as if God hears us regardless of what our relationship is to Him (see [Matthew 5:45](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:45)). Never say that it is not God’s will to give you what you ask. Don’t faint and give up, but find out the reason you have not received; increase the intensity of your search and examine the evidence. Is your relationship right with your spouse, your children, and your fellow students? Are you a “good child” in those relationships? Do you have to say to the Lord, “I have been irritable and cross, but I still want spiritual blessings”? You cannot receive and will have to do without them until you have the attitude of a “good child.”

We mistake defiance for devotion, arguing with God instead of surrendering. We refuse to look at the evidence that clearly indicates where we are wrong. Have I been asking God to give me money for something I want, while refusing to pay someone what I owe him? Have I been asking God for liberty while I am withholding it from someone who belongs to me? Have I refused to forgive someone, and have I been unkind to that person? Have I been living as God’s child among my relatives and friends? (see [Matthew 7:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+7:12)).

I am a child of God only by being born again, and as His child I am good only as I “walk in the light” ([1 John 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1:7)). For most of us, prayer simply becomes some trivial religious expression, a matter of mystical and emotional fellowship with God. We are all good at producing spiritual fog that blinds our sight. But if we will search out and examine the evidence, we will see very clearly what is wrong— a friendship, an unpaid debt, or an improper attitude. There is no use praying unless we are living as children of God. Then Jesus says, regarding His children, “Everyone who asks receives…” ([Matthew 7:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+7:8)).

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

We should always choose our books as God chooses our friends, just a bit beyond us, so that we have to do our level best to keep up with them. Shade of His Hand, 1216 L

# CCEL – 8/24/21

I know their sorrows.—[EXO. 3:7.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.3.html" \l "Exod.3.7)

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.—Touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.—Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.

When Jesus . . . saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. Jesus wept.—For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

He hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.—He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.—When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.

He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.—In all their affliction he was afflicted; and the angel of his presence saved them.

[Isa. 53:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.3). -[Heb. 4:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.15).[Matt. 8:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.8.html" \l "Matt.8.17). -[John 4:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.4.html" \l "John.4.6).[John 11:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.11.html" \l "John.11.33),[35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.11.html" \l "John.11.35). -[Heb. 2:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.18).[Psa. 102:19,20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.102.html" \l "Ps.102.19). -[Job 23:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.23.html" \l "Job.23.10). -[Psa. 142:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.142.html" \l "Ps.142.3).[Zech. 2:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.2.html" \l "Zech.2.8). -[Isa. 63:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.9).

“The breaker is come up before them.” **[Micah 2:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mic.2.html" \l "Mic.2.13)**

Inasmuch as Jesus has gone before us, things remain not as they would have been had he never passed that way. He has conquered every foe that obstructed the way. Cheer up now thou faint-hearted warrior. Not only has Christ travelled the road, but he has slain thine enemies. Dost thou dread sin? He has nailed it to his cross. Dost thou fear death? He has been the death of Death. Art thou afraid of hell? He has barred it against the advent of any of his children; they shall never see the gulf of perdition. Whatever foes may be before the Christian, they are all overcome. There are lions, but their teeth are broken; there are serpents, but their fangs are extracted; there are rivers, but they are bridged or fordable; there are flames, but we wear that matchless garment which renders us invulnerable to fire. The sword that has been forged against us is already blunted; the instruments of war which the enemy is preparing have already lost their point. God has taken away in the person of Christ all the power that anything can have to hurt us. Well then, the army may safely march on, and you may go joyously along your journey, for all your enemies are conquered beforehand. What shall you do but march on to take the prey? They are beaten, they are vanquished; all you have to do is to divide the spoil. You shall, it is true, often engage in combat; but your fight shall be with a vanquished foe. His head is broken; he may attempt to injure you, but his strength shall not be sufficient for his malicious design. Your victory shall be easy, and your treasure shall be beyond all count.

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“Proclaim aloud the Saviour’s fame,

Who bears the Breaker's wond'rous name;

Sweet name; and it becomes him well,

Who breaks down earth, sin, death, and hell.”

# Word Live – 8/24/21

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

# Scripture Union – 8/24/21

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/24/21

# A Refusal to Repent

**Read:** [Hosea 11:5–7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+11%3a5%e2%80%937)

**5**“Will they not return to Egypt

    and will not Assyria rule over them

    because they refuse to repent?

**6**A sword will flash in their cities;

    it will devour their false prophets

    and put an end to their plans.

**7**My people are determined to turn from me.

    Even though they call me God Most High,

    I will by no means exalt them.

One comedian described life with young children who are determined not to follow directions. “People without children have NO IDEA what it’s like,” he jokes. “Things that you do not even consider to be things will become nearly impossible (like leaving the house).” Every day, he says his older son won’t put on shoes while his younger son refuses to even come down the stairs. “Every day!” he laments. “Every single day!”

**Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. JAMES 4:8**

Having read about God’s love for His chosen people (His “son”), we might hope to hear from today’s passage about their ongoing relationship of obedience and care. Instead, Hosea 11:5–7 describes Israel’s return to captivity in Egypt and Assyria (v. 5). God lamented that they would lose their land to the sword. The gates of their cities would be destroyed. And their prideful plans would come to an end (v. 6). Why? Because they determined to turn from God (v. 7). They refused to repent (v. 5). Both verbs indicate a stubborn rebellion. Israel had not simply slipped into bad habits. They had dug in their heels in defiance.

Today’s passage provides an opportunity to talk about biblical repentance. What should it look like? David provides a good example. After his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11), David was confronted by a prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 12). But rather than reacting in defiance, David owned his sin and penned Psalm 51—a model for the repentant heart.

In Psalm 51 we find David’s heart-rending confession. First, he acknowledged his wrongdoing (v. 3). Second, David understood how his actions separated him from God (v. 4). Third, he asked for accountability and wisdom in order to move forward in righteousness (v. 6). And fourth, he asked God to cleanse his heart, return his joy, and restore their intimacy.

**Apply the Word**

What repentance is required in your life right now? Spend some time examining your heart. Is there a need to repent? Read Psalm 51 before you pray today.

**PRAY WITH US**

Today we grieve the sins that cool our love for You, Lord. “My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise” (Ps. 51:17). Forgive us.

**BY Kelli Worrall**

# Our Daily Bread – 8/24/21

# God’s Provision

A picture containing fruit

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**Read:** [Genesis 1:11–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%201.11%E2%80%9313)

**11** Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. **12** The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

**Read:** [Genesis 1:](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%201.11%E2%80%9313)[29–30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Genesis%201.29%E2%80%9330)

**29** Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. **30** And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

See how the flowers of the field grow. . . . Will he not much more clothe you? [Matthew 6:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%206.28), [30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matthew%206.30)

We trekked deeper and deeper into the forest, venturing farther and farther away from the village at Yunnan Province, China. After an hour or so, we heard the deafening roar of the water. Quickening our steps, we soon reached a clearing and were greeted by a beautiful view of a curtain of white water cascading over the gray rocks. Spectacular!

Our hiking companions, who lived in the village we had left an hour earlier, decided that we should have a picnic. Great idea, but where was the food? We hadn’t brought any. My friends disappeared into the surrounding forest and returned with an assortment of fruits and vegetables and even some fish. The shuixiangcai looked strange with its small purple flowers, but tasted heavenly!

I was reminded that creation declares God’s extravagant provision. We can see proof of His generosity in “all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit” ([Genesis 1:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%201.12) nlt). God has made and given us for food “every seed-bearing plant . . . and every tree that has fruit with seed in it” (v. 29).

Do you sometimes find it hard to trust God to meet your needs? Why not take a walk in nature? Let what you see remind you of Jesus’ assuring words: “Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ . . . Your heavenly Father knows that you need [all these things]” ([Matthew 6:31–32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%206.31%E2%80%9332)).

By: **[Poh Fang Chia](https://odb.org/author/pohfangchia/)**

**Reflect & Pray**

**How has God provided for you in the past? How can you continue to lean on His provision in the present?**

Loving Father, You’re a generous provider. Help me to trust You to meet my needs.

**Insight**

In addition to the creation accounts in [Genesis 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%201) and [2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Genesis%202), we find several passages in Scripture that portray God as Creator and Provider. [Psalm 8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%208) points to God’s hand in creation and His care for humanity: “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” (vv. 3–4). In [Job 38–39](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%2038%E2%80%9339), God names many of the creatures and other wonders He’s created and His provision for them. [Psalm 104](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20104) pictures God stretching “out the heavens like a tent” (v. 2) and declares, “All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time” (v. 27). The New Testament describes Jesus as the Creator ([John 1:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201.1%E2%80%933); [1 Corinthians 8:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%208.6); [Colossians 1:15–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%201.15%E2%80%9317)).

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

# God Calling – 8/24/21

# Sublime Heights

Our Lord, we know that Thou art great and able to deliver us.

I am your deliverer. Trust in Me absolutely. Know that I will do the very best for you. Be ready and willing for My Will to be done.

Know that with Me all things are possible. Cling joyfully to that truth.

Say many times, "All things are possible with My Master, My Lord, My Friend."

This truth, accepted and firmly believed in, is the ladder up which a soul can climb from the lowest of pits to the sublimest of heights.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.  Daniel 3:17

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/25/21

# Sacrifice and Friendship



I have called you friends… —[John 15:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+15%3A15)

We will never know the joy of self-sacrifice until we surrender in every detail of our lives. Yet self-surrender is the most difficult thing for us to do. We make it conditional by saying, “I’ll surrender if…!” Or we approach it by saying, “I suppose I have to devote my life to God.” We will never find the joy of self-sacrifice in either of these ways.

But as soon as we do totally surrender, abandoning ourselves to Jesus, the Holy Spirit gives us a taste of His joy. The ultimate goal of self-sacrifice is to lay down our lives for our Friend (see [John 15:13-14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:13-14)). When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, our greatest desire is to lay down our lives for Jesus. Yet the thought of self-sacrifice never even crosses our minds, because sacrifice is the Holy Spirit’s ultimate expression of love.

Our Lord is our example of a life of self-sacrifice, and He perfectly exemplified Psalm 40:8, “I delight to do Your will, O my God….” He endured tremendous personal sacrifice, yet with overflowing joy. Have I ever yielded myself in absolute submission to Jesus Christ? If He is not the One to whom I am looking for direction and guidance, then there is no benefit in my sacrifice. But when my sacrifice is made with my eyes focused on Him, slowly but surely His molding influence becomes evident in my life (see [Hebrews 12:1-2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+12:1-2)).

Beware of letting your natural desires hinder your walk in love before God. One of the cruelest ways to kill natural love is through the rejection that results from having built the love on natural desires. But the one true desire of a saint is the Lord Jesus. Love for God is not something sentimental or emotional— for a saint to love as God loves is the most practical thing imaginable.

“I have called you friends….” Our friendship with Jesus is based on the new life He created in us, which has no resemblance or attraction to our old life but only to the life of God. It is a life that is completely humble, pure, and devoted to God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Am I learning how to use my Bible? The way to become complete for the Master’s service is to be well soaked in the Bible; some of us only exploit certain passages. Our Lord wants to give us continuous instruction out of His word; continuous instruction turns hearers into disciples.  Approved Unto God, 11 L

# CCEL – 8/25/21

**Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.**—[ISA 51:1.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.51.html" \l "Isa.51.1)

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity.—None eye pitied thee but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, Live.

He brought me up . . . out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.

When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.

[Psa. 51:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.51.html" \l "Ps.51.5). -[Ezek. 16:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.16.html" \l "Ezek.16.5).[Psa. 40:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.40.html" \l "Ps.40.2).[Rom. 5:6-8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.6). -[Eph. 2:4,5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.4).

“His fruit was sweet to my taste.” [Song of Solomon 2:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.2.html" \l "Song.2.3)

Faith, in the Scripture, is spoken of under the emblem of all the senses. It is sight: “Look unto me and be ye saved.” It is hearing: “Hear, and your soul shall live.” Faith is smelling: “All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia”; “thy name is as ointment poured forth.” Faith is spiritual touch. By this faith the woman came behind and touched the hem of Christ’s garment, and by this we handle the things of the good word of life. Faith is equally the spirit’s taste. “How sweet are thy words to my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my lips.” “Except a man eat my flesh,” saith Christ, “and drink my blood, there is no life in him.”

This “taste” is faith in one of its highest operations. One of the first performances of faith is hearing. We hear the voice of God, not with the outward ear alone, but with the inward ear; we hear it as God’s Word, and we believe it to be so; that is the “hearing” of faith. Then our mind looketh upon the truth as it is presented to us; that is to say, we understand it, we perceive its meaning; that is the “seeing” of faith. Next we discover its preciousness; we begin to admire it, and find how fragrant it is; that is faith in its “smell.” Then we appropriate the mercies which are prepared for us in Christ; that is faith in its “touch.” Hence follow the enjoyments, peace, delight, communion; which are faith in its “taste.” Any one of these acts of faith is saving. To hear Christ’s voice as the sure voice of God in the soul will save us; but that which gives true enjoyment is the aspect of faith wherein Christ, by holy taste, is received into us, and made, by inward and spiritual apprehension of his sweetness and preciousness, to be the food of our souls. It is then we sit “under his shadow with great delight,” and find his fruit sweet to our taste.

# Word Live – 8/25/21

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

# Scripture Union – 8/25/21

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/25/21

# When He Roars

**Read:** [Hosea 11:8–11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+11%3a8%e2%80%9311)

**8**“How can I give you up, Ephraim?

    How can I hand you over, Israel?

How can I treat you like Admah?

    How can I make you like Zeboyim?

My heart is changed within me;

    all my compassion is aroused.

**9**I will not carry out my fierce anger,

    nor will I devastate Ephraim again.

For I am God, and not a man—

    the Holy One among you.

    I will not come against their cities.

**10**They will follow the Lord;

    he will roar like a lion.

When he roars,

    his children will come trembling from the west.

**11**They will come from Egypt,

    trembling like sparrows,

    from Assyria, fluttering like doves.

I will settle them in their homes,”

    declares the Lord.

This week our son made a willful choice to do something wrong—a choice he had already made a few times before. I wasn’t home, so my husband Peter called me to explain the situation and the resulting, more- severe sentence. “How is he?” I asked. “He accepted it,” Peter told me. “He knows it’s what he deserved.”

They will follow the LORD; he will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west.', 'Hosea 11:10

I knew that too, but my mother-heart also broke on his behalf. Meting out punishment is not a pleasant side of parenting, but it is an act of love. In Hosea 11:8–9, God calls Israel “my child” and “my son” (v. 1). He is pictured as a father who had tried everything to discipline His son—to no good effect. A severe consequence was deserved, but He lamented the necessity of delivering it. The reader can hear His anguished love in the series of rhetorical questions (v. 8). He asks, in essence, “How can I do this to you?”

God isn’t confused. He isn’t wishy-washy or wavering. Rather, Hosea uses these human terms to express the intensity of God’s love and the complex nature of His grace. He doesn’t discipline from a distance. While His righteousness demands a punishment for sin, His mercy allows Him to limit His wrath.

Verses 10–11 remind us of God’s future plan for His people—a future time when God will roar like a lion, calling His people to return from captivity. And they will come! Today’s passage displays the multi-faceted character of God. We resonate with His compassionate father-heart. We respond with appropriate awe to His holiness that demands obedience and delivers discipline. Yet we marvel at His mercy that holds back His hand of punishment. We give praise for His persistent and loving pursuit of His people. And we put our hope in His power to accomplish His redemptive plan.

**Apply the Word**

List the different aspects of God’s character that you have seen in the book of Hosea. What have you learned about the character of God through this study?

**PRAY WITH US**

We honor what we have learned of You: that You are just and righteous; You cannot be deceived by false worship; You love Your people tenderly and grieve the consequences of their sin. We worship You, the grieved Judge.

**BY Kelli Worrall**

# Our Daily Bread – 8/25/21

# A Good Reason

A picture containing clothing, person, indoor

Description automatically generated**1 Timothy 5:1–8**

**Widows, Elders and Slaves**

**5** Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, **2** older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

**3** Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. **4** But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. **5** The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. **6** But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. **7** Give the people these instructions, so that no one may be open to blame. **8** Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Put [your] religion into practice by caring for [your] own family. [1 Timothy 5:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Tim%205.4)

The two women occupied the aisle seats across from each other. The flight was two hours, so I couldn’t help but see some of their interactions. It was clear they knew each other, might even be related. The younger of the two (probably in her sixties) kept reaching in her bag to hand the older (I’d guess in her nineties) fresh apple slices, then homemade finger sandwiches, then a towelette for clean up, and finally a crisp copy of the New York Times. Each hand-off was done with such tenderness, such dignity. As we stood to exit the plane, I told the younger woman, “I noticed the way you cared for her. It was beautiful.” She replied, “She’s my best friend. She’s my mother.”

Wouldn’t it be great if we could all say something like that? Some parents are like best friends. Some parents are nothing like that. The truth is those relationships are always complicated at best. While Paul’s letter to Timothy doesn’t ignore that complexity, it still calls us to put our “religion into practice” by taking care of parents and grandparents—our “relatives,” our “own household” ([1 Timothy 5:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Tim%205.4), [8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Timothy%205.8)).

We all too often practice such care only if family members were or are good to us. In other words, if they deserve it. But Paul offers up a more beautiful reason to repay them. Take care of them because “this is pleasing to God” (v. 4).

By: [**John Blase**](https://odb.org/author/johnblase/)

**Reflect & Pray**

**If your parents are still living, how would you describe your relationship with them? Regardless of what kind of job they did as parents, what are some ways you can take care of them right now?**

Father, give me grace and mercy as I seek to care for those who cared for me. And help me to remember the reason I’m doing it.

**Insight**

Some cultures give appropriate honor to the elderly; other cultures seem to despise old age. God cares deeply about the marginalized, and the concept of respect for the aged was written into ancient Jewish law. [Leviticus 19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2019), which repeats the Ten Commandments including the one to honor parents (v. 3), also says, “Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God” (v. 32). Paul upholds this notion of respect for the elderly in his letter to Timothy in two different yet related ways: Timothy was to show utmost respect for an “older man” he may need to correct (this was due to Timothy’s leadership position, see [1 Timothy 5:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Tim%205.1)), and he was to see that the church cared for widows in genuine need—those without family to provide for them (vv. 3–8). Children and grandchildren of widows were to show respect for their elders by caring for them.

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

# God Calling – 8/25/21

# Exhaustion

We seek Thee as Thou hast told us.

And seeking you shall find. None ever sought My Presence in vain. None ever sought My Help in vain.

A breath of desire and My Spirit is there -- to replenish and renew. Sometimes weariness and exhaustion are not signs of lack of spirit but of the guiding of the Spirit.

Many wonderful things would not have happened but for the physical weariness, the mind-weariness of My servants, which made the resting apart, the giving up of work, a necessity...

Though My Way may seem a narrow way it yet leads to Life, abundant Life. Follow it. It is not so narrow but that I can tread it beside you.

Never too lonely with such companionship. A comrade infinitely tender, infinitely strong, will tread the way with you.

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.  Matthew 7:14

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/26/21

# Are You Ever Troubled?



Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you… —[John 14:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+14%3A27)

There are times in our lives when our peace is based simply on our own ignorance. But when we are awakened to the realities of life, true inner peace is impossible unless it is received from Jesus. When our Lord speaks peace, He creates peace, because the words that He speaks are always “spirit, and they are life” ([John 6:63](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+6:63)). Have I ever received what Jesus speaks? “…My peace I give to you…”— a peace that comes from looking into His face and fully understanding and receiving His quiet contentment.

Are you severely troubled right now? Are you afraid and confused by the waves and the turbulence God sovereignly allows to enter your life? Have you left no stone of your faith unturned, yet still not found any well of peace, joy, or comfort? Does your life seem completely barren to you? Then look up and receive the quiet contentment of the Lord Jesus. Reflecting His peace is proof that you are right with God, because you are exhibiting the freedom to turn your mind to Him. If you are not right with God, you can never turn your mind anywhere but on yourself. Allowing anything to hide the face of Jesus Christ from you either causes you to become troubled or gives you a false sense of security.

With regard to the problem that is pressing in on you right now, are you “looking unto Jesus” ([Hebrews 12:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+12:2)) and receiving peace from Him? If so, He will be a gracious blessing of peace exhibited in and through you. But if you only try to worry your way out of the problem, you destroy His effectiveness in you, and you deserve whatever you get. We become troubled because we have not been taking Him into account. When a person confers with Jesus Christ, the confusion stops, because there is no confusion in Him. Lay everything out before Him, and when you are faced with difficulty, bereavement, and sorrow, listen to Him say, “Let not your heart be troubled…” ([John 14:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14:27)).

**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 – 8/26/21

**Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD.**—[EXO. 28:36.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.28.html" \l "Exod.28.36)

Holiness, without which no man can see the Lord.—God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.—But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.—I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.

This is the law of the house: Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy.—Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.

For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.—Seeing . . . that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us . . . come boldly unto the throne of grace. that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

[Heb. 12:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.14). -[John. 4:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.4.html" \l "John.4.24). -[Isa. 64:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.64.html" \l "Isa.64.6). -[Lev. 10:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lev.10.html" \l "Lev.10.3).[Ezek. 43:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.43.html" \l "Ezek.43.12). -[Psa. 93:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.93.html" \l "Ps.93.5).[John 17:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.19). -[Heb. 4:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.14),[16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.16).

“He hath commanded his covenant forever.” [Psalms 111:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.111.html" \l "Ps.111.9)

The Lord’s people delight in the covenant itself. It is an unfailing source of consolation to them so often as the Holy Spirit leads them into its banqueting house and waves its banner of love. They delight to contemplate the antiquity of that covenant, remembering that before the day-star knew its place, or planets ran their round, the interests of the saints were made secure in Christ Jesus. It is peculiarly pleasing to them to remember the sureness of the covenant, while meditating upon “the sure mercies of David.” They delight to celebrate it as “signed, and sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well.” It often makes their hearts dilate with joy to think of its immutability, as a covenant which neither time nor eternity, life nor death, shall ever be able to violate—a covenant as old as eternity and as everlasting as the Rock of ages. They rejoice also to feast upon the fulness of this covenant, for they see in it all things provided for them. God is their portion, Christ their companion, the Spirit their Comforter, earth their lodge, and heaven their home. They see in it an inheritance reserved and entailed to every soul possessing an interest in its ancient and eternal deed of gift. Their eyes sparkled when they saw it as a treasure-trove in the Bible; but oh! how their souls were gladdened when they saw in the last will and testament of their divine kinsman, that it was bequeathed to them! More especially it is the pleasure of God’s people to contemplate the graciousness of this covenant. They see that the law was made void because it was a covenant of works and depended upon merit, but this they perceive to be enduring because grace is the basis, grace the condition, grace the strain, grace the bulwark, grace the foundation, grace the topstone. The covenant is a treasury of wealth, a granary of food, a fountain of life, a store-house of salvation, a charter of peace, and a haven of joy.

# Word Live – 8/26/21

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# Scripture Union – 8/26/21

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# Today in the Word – 8/26/21

# Lies and Deceit

**Read;** [**Hosea 11:12-12:6**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+11%3a12-12%3a6)

**Israel’s Sin**

**12**Ephraim has surrounded me with lies,

    Israel with deceit.

And Judah is unruly against God,

    even against the faithful Holy One.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+11%3a12-12%3a6" \l "fen-NIV-22253a)]

**12**

[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+11%3a12-12%3a6#fen-NIV-22254b)]**1**Ephraim feeds on the wind;

    he pursues the east wind all day

    and multiplies lies and violence.

He makes a treaty with Assyria

    and sends olive oil to Egypt.

**2**The Lord has a charge to bring against Judah;

    he will punish Jacob[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+11%3a12-12%3a6#fen-NIV-22255c)] according to his ways

    and repay him according to his deeds.

**3**In the womb he grasped his brother’s heel;

    as a man he struggled with God.

**4**He struggled with the angel and overcame him;

    he wept and begged for his favor.

He found him at Bethel

    and talked with him there—

**5**the Lord God Almighty,

    the Lord is his name!

**6**But you must return to your God;

    maintain love and justice,

    and wait for your God always.

**Footnotes**

1. [Hosea 11:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+11%3a12-12%3a6#en-NIV-22253) In Hebrew texts this verse (11:12) is numbered 12:1.
2. [Hosea 12:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+11%3a12-12%3a6#en-NIV-22254) In Hebrew texts 12:1-14 is numbered 12:2-15.
3. [Hosea 12:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+11%3a12-12%3a6#en-NIV-22255) Jacob means he grasps the heel, a Hebrew idiom for he takes advantage of or he deceives.

Literature is full of liars. Some, like Edmund Pevensie in C. S. Lewis’s The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, lie by omission. Edmund decided not to tell his siblings about certain parts of his time in the magical kingdom of Narnia. When he accidentally meets the White Witch, he is so charmed by her false promises (and Turkish Delight), that he agrees to keep their meeting a secret and, even worse, to deceive his sisters and brother. His lie came with a steep cost.

But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always. Hosea 12:6

In today’s passage, we read about Israel’s propensity for deceit. Their deception was not a singular event, but a pattern of behavior, a character issue, and an inherited trait. This time both Israel (Ephraim) and Judah were at fault. God supported this claim by highlighting the futility of their farce. They had foolishly pursued treaties with their enemies, while turning their back on their only true source of protection. This was as wise as chasing the wind (v. 1). Then, God pointed to the history of their ancestor Jacob, who grabbed his brother’s heel at birth and wrestled with the angel as a man (vv. 2–3). “Grasp his heel” is a Hebrew idiom meaning “he takes advantage or he deceives” (see Genesis 27 for Jacob’s deception). Jacob used lies and deceit to protect himself and to get ahead. God’s people had not learned from these mistakes. In Hosea’s time, Israel was doing the same thing.

The passage doesn’t end there though. God’s judgment once again is balanced by an invitation, an application, an altar call of sorts. “But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always” (v. 6).

**Apply the Word**

Redemption is possible—even for the deceiver. Just as Jacob reconciled with God and was blessed by Him (Gen. 35:6–15), it gives us hope too. Turn to God and confess your own deceit to Him. Ask Him to keep your heart true.

**PRAY WITH US**

Hold us to Your standard of honesty, God of Truth. Expose our lies to You, ourselves, and others, that we may be restored to open fellowship with You and Your children.

**BY Kelli Worrall**

# Our Daily Bread – 8/26/21

# Heeding the Warnings

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**Read: Matthew 10:1–7**

**Jesus Sends Out the Twelve**

**10** Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

**2** These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; **3** Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; **4** Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

**5** These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. **6** Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. **7** As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’

**Read: Matthew 10:32–33**

**32** “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. **33** But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

Whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven. [Matthew 10:33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2010.33)

When a pickpocket tried to pilfer my property while I was on vacation in another country, it wasn’t a surprise. I’d read warnings about the danger of subway thieves, so I knew what to do to protect my wallet. But I never expected it to happen.

Fortunately, the young man who grabbed my wallet had slippery fingers, so it fell to the floor where I could retrieve it. But the incident reminded me that I should have heeded the warnings.

We don’t like to dwell on warnings because we think they’ll get in the way of enjoying life, but it’s imperative to pay attention to them. For instance, Jesus gave us a clear warning while sending out His disciples to proclaim God’s coming kingdom ([Matthew 10:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2010.7)). He said, “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven” (vv. 32–33).

We have a choice. In love, God provided a Savior and a plan for us to be in His presence for eternity. But if we turn away from God and choose to reject His message of salvation and the real life He offers for both now and forever, we lose out on the opportunity to be with Him.

May we trust in Jesus, the One who chose to save us from being eternally separated from the One who loves and made us.

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

**Reflect & Pray**

**Why is rejecting Jesus such a serious thing? How have you chosen to respond to His call?**

Heavenly Father, thank You for providing salvation through Jesus. And thank You for sending warnings to remind me of the importance of putting my faith in Him.

**Insight**

As with other lists of Jesus’ disciples in the Gospels ([Mark 3:16–19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%203.16%E2%80%9319); [Luke 6:14–16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%206.14%E2%80%9316)), in Matthew’s account ([Matthew 10:1–4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2010.1%E2%80%934)), Simon Peter appears first and Judas Iscariot (the betrayer) last. Among these special agents who became the foundation stones for the church ([Ephesians 2:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%202.20)) were Matthew the tax collector ([Matthew 10:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2010.3)) and Simon the Zealot (v. 4). Under normal circumstances, these two wouldn’t likely be part of the same group. The tax collectors were Israelites who were employed by the Roman government to collect taxes from their own countrymen. They had a reputation for extortion and because of their constant contact with gentiles were considered ceremonially unclean. On the other hand, before being called by Jesus, Simon the Zealot (as the term Zealot indicates), was in some way associated with a group of devoted Jewish patriots who were resistant to Roman rule and even resorted to violence. Both were on Jesus’ core team.

To learn more about Matthew’s gospel, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/NT218](https://christianuniversity.org/NT218).

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

# God Calling – 8/26/21

# Accept Trials

Trials and troubles may seem to overwhelm you. They cannot do more than work My Will, and that Will you have said is your Will.

Do you not see that you cannot be destroyed?  From now a new Life is opening out before you. Yours to enter into the Kingdom I have prepared for you.

The sunlight of My Presence is on your paths. Trust and go forward unafraid. My Grace is sufficient for all your needs.

In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.  Psalm 56:11

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/27/21

# Living Your Theology



Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you… —[John 12:35](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+12%3A35)

Beware of not acting upon what you see in your moments on the mountaintop with God. If you do not obey the light, it will turn into darkness. “If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” ([Matthew 6:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6:23)). The moment you forsake the matter of sanctification or neglect anything else on which God has given you His light, your spiritual life begins to disintegrate within you. Continually bring the truth out into your real life, working it out into every area, or else even the light that you possess will itself prove to be a curse.

The most difficult person to deal with is the one who has the prideful self-satisfaction of a past experience, but is not working that experience out in his everyday life. If you say you are sanctified, show it. The experience must be so genuine that it shows in your life. Beware of any belief that makes you self-indulgent or self-gratifying; that belief came from the pit of hell itself, regardless of how beautiful it may sound.

Your theology must work itself out, exhibiting itself in your most common everyday relationships. Our Lord said, “…unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” ([Matthew 5:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:20)). In other words, you must be more moral than the most moral person you know. You may know all about the doctrine of sanctification, but are you working it out in the everyday issues of your life? Every detail of your life, whether physical, moral, or spiritual, is to be judged and measured by the standard of the atonement by the Cross of Christ.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The Bible does not thrill; the Bible nourishes. Give time to the reading of the Bible and the recreating effect is as real as that of fresh air physically.  Disciples Indeed, 387 R

# CCEL – 8/27/21

**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.**—[PSA. 119:105.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.105)

By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.—When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light.—Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.—We have also a sure … word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.—Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.—They need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

[Psa. 17:4,5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.17.html" \l "Ps.17.4). -[Prov. 6:22,23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.6.html" \l "Prov.6.22). -[Isa. 30:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.30.html" \l "Isa.30.21).[John 8:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.8.html" \l "John.8.12). –[II Pet. 1:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.1.html" \l "iiPet.1.19). -[I Cor. 13:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.13.html" \l "iCor.13.12). -[Rev. 22:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.22.html" \l "Rev.22.5).

“How long will it be ere they believe me?” [Numbers 14:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.14.html" \l "Num.14.11)

Strive with all diligence to keep out that monster unbelief. It so dishonours Christ, that he will withdraw his visible presence if we insult him by indulging it. It is true it is a weed, the seeds of which we can never entirely extract from the soil, but we must aim at its root with zeal and perseverance. Among hateful things it is the most to be abhorred. Its injurious nature is so venomous that he that exerciseth it and he upon whom it is exercised are both hurt thereby. In thy case, O believer! it is most wicked, for the mercies of thy Lord in the past, increase thy guilt in doubting him now. When thou dost distrust the Lord Jesus, he may well cry out, “Behold I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.” This is crowning his head with thorns of the sharpest kind. It is very cruel for a well-beloved wife to mistrust a kind and faithful husband. The sin is needless, foolish, and unwarranted. Jesus has never given the slightest ground for suspicion, and it is hard to be doubted by those to whom our conduct is uniformly affectionate and true. Jesus is the Son of the Highest, and has unbounded wealth; it is shameful to doubt Omnipotence and distrust all-sufficiency. The cattle on a thousand hills will suffice for our most hungry feeding, and the granaries of heaven are not likely to be emptied by our eating. If Christ were only a cistern, we might soon exhaust his fulness, but who can drain a fountain? Myriads of spirits have drawn their supplies from him, and not one of them has murmured at the scantiness of his resources. Away, then, with this lying traitor unbelief, for his only errand is to cut the bonds of communion and make us mourn an absent Saviour. Bunyan tells us that unbelief has “as many lives as a cat:” if so, let us kill one life now, and continue the work till the whole nine are gone. Down with thee, thou traitor, my heart abhors thee.

# Word Live – 8/27/21

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# Scripture Union – 8/27/21

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# Today in the Word – 8/27/21

# The Futility of Wealth

**Read:** [**Hosea 12:7–10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+12%3a7%e2%80%9310)

**7**

**The merchant uses dishonest scales**

**and loves to defraud.**

**8**

**Ephraim boasts,**

**“I am very rich; I have become wealthy.**

**With all my wealth they will not find in me**

**any iniquity or sin.”**

**9**

**“I have been the Lord your God**

**ever since you came out of Egypt;**

**I will make you live in tents again,**

**as in the days of your appointed festivals.**

**10**

**I spoke to the prophets,**

**gave them many visions**

**and told parables through them.”**

In 1954, a college drop-out took a mail-room job at Philipp Brothers trading firm. For the next 19 years, Marc Rich climbed the ranks, eventually launching his own very successful firm. By 1982 he was worth $200 million. But his dishonest practices caught up with him, and a series of criminal charges landed Rich on the FBI’s Most Wanted List.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. 1 Timothy 6:10

Clearly, acquiring great wealth doesn’t guarantee a happy life. In today’s passage, the theme of deceit continued, but with a more particular audience. Hosea called out the wealthy Israelite merchants, who would rig their weights in order to cheat their customers. Not only did they work dishonestly, but they loved doing so (v. 7). The act of stealing brought them pleasure. It was comfortable and familiar. But even worse, these immoral merchants boasted that they were above the law. They saw nothing wrong with their actions, and they trusted their fortune to protect them.

Notice the prideful boasting of Ephraim: “With all my wealth, they will not find in me any iniquity or sin” (v. 8). This feels like a throw-down to God. But certainly, deception is no match for a God who sees what is done in secret. In the psalms, God says, “No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence” (Ps. 101:7). There is a strong contrast between the merchants’ braggadocio (“I am very rich”) and God’s definitive response (“I am the Lord your God”). God knocked them down a peg or two by reminding them from whence they came—out of Egypt, under His direction. His promised punishment, “I will make you live in tents again” (vv. 8–9), feels like an ancient version of “go to your room.” God had been warning them for a very long time.

**Apply the Word**

Deceit can even creep into how we use our money. Consider what changes God might want to see in your relationship to money and wealth.

**PRAY WITH US**

Our culture commends the pursuit of wealth, but this quickly leads to greed and deception. Lord, convict us whether rich or poor—of any greed or materialism that we harbor. Set our minds on things above (Col. 3:2).

**BY Kelli Worrall**

# Our Daily Bread – 8/27/21

# The Ultimate Healer

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**Read: Numbers 21:4–9**

**4** They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+21%3A4%E2%80%939+%3B+2+Kings+18%3A4%E2%80%937&version=NIV#fen-NIV-4345a)] to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; **5** they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!”

**6** Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. **7** The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

**8** The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” **9** So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

Footnotes

1. [Numbers 21:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+21%3A4%E2%80%939+%3B+2+Kings+18%3A4%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-4345) Or the Sea of Reeds

**Read: 2 Kings 18:4–7**

**4** He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+21%3A4%E2%80%939+%3B+2+Kings+18%3A4%E2%80%937&version=NIV#fen-NIV-10029a)])

**5** Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. **6** He held fast to the Lord and did not stop following him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. **7** And the Lord was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.

**Footnotes**

1. [2 Kings 18:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+21%3A4%E2%80%939+%3B+2+Kings+18%3A4%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-10029) Nehushtan sounds like the Hebrew for both bronze and snake.

[Hezekiah] broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made. [2 Kings 18:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%2018.4)

When a medical treatment began to provide relief for a family member’s severe food allergies, I became so excited that I talked about it all the time. I described the intense process and extolled the doctor who had created the program. Finally, some friends commented, “We think God should always get the credit for healing.” Their statement made me pause. Had I taken my eyes off the Ultimate Healer and made the healing into an idol?

The nation of Israel fell into a similar trap when they began to burn incense to a bronze snake which God had used to heal them. They’d been performing this act of worship until Hezekiah identified it as idolatry and “broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made” ([2 Kings 18:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%2018.4)).

Several centuries earlier, a group of venomous snakes had invaded the Israelite camp. The snakes bit the people and many died ([Numbers 21:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2021.6)). Although spiritual rebellion had caused the problem, the people cried out to God for help. Showing mercy, He directed Moses to sculpt a bronze snake, fasten it to a pole, and hold it up for everyone to see. When the people looked at it, they were healed (vv. 4–9).

Think of God’s gifts to you. Have any of them become objects of praise instead of evidence of His mercy and grace? Only our holy God—the source of every good gift ([James 1:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%201.17))—is worthy of worship.

By: [**Jennifer Benson Schuldt**](https://odb.org/author/jenniferbschuldt/)

**Reflect & Pray**

**How has God shown you His goodness through other people? Why is it so easy to give people credit for what God has done in your life?**

Dear God, I worship You as the all-powerful God who hears my prayers. Thank You for sustaining my life and caring for me.

**Insight**

[Second Kings 18:3–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%2018.3%E2%80%937) describes how Hezekiah “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” by destroying idols. The Israelites had transferred worship from the Creator to something created by worshiping the bronze snake, the symbol of miraculous healing at God’s hand (v. 4). The episode of the golden calf is another blatant example of idolatry ([Exodus 32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2032)). [Romans 1:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%201.25) spells it out for us: “They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.”

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

# God Calling – 8/27/21

# Tangled Skeins

In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. -- Isaiah 30:15

Feel that . . . trust Me. Am I not leading you safely, faithfully? Will you believe Me, your Master, that all this is really to bring the answer to your prayers?

Remember that I am the Supreme Being who knows all and can control all.

Directly you put your affairs, their confusion, their difficulties, into My Hands I began to effect a cure of all the disharmony and disorder.

You must know that I shall cause you no more pain in the doing of it than a physician, who plans and knows he can effect a cure, would cause his patient. I will do all as tenderly as possible.

Tell Me that you trust Me in this.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters ... he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  Psalm 23:2, 3

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/28/21

# The Purpose of Prayer



…one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray…" —[Luke 11:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+11%3A1)

Prayer is not a normal part of the life of the natural man. We hear it said that a person’s life will suffer if he doesn’t pray, but I question that. What will suffer is the life of the Son of God in him, which is nourished not by food, but by prayer. When a person is born again from above, the life of the Son of God is born in him, and he can either starve or nourish that life. Prayer is the way that the life of God in us is nourished. Our common ideas regarding prayer are not found in the New Testament. We look upon prayer simply as a means of getting things for ourselves, but the biblical purpose of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself.

“Ask, and you will receive…” ([John 16:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:24)). We complain before God, and sometimes we are apologetic or indifferent to Him, but we actually ask Him for very few things. Yet a child exhibits a magnificent boldness to ask! Our Lord said, “…unless you…become as little children…” ([Matthew 18:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18:3)). Ask and God will do. Give Jesus Christ the opportunity and the room to work. The problem is that no one will ever do this until he is at his wits’ end. When a person is at his wits’ end, it no longer seems to be a cowardly thing to pray; in fact, it is the only way he can get in touch with the truth and the reality of God Himself. Be yourself before God and present Him with your problems— the very things that have brought you to your wits’ end. But as long as you think you are self-sufficient, you do not need to ask God for anything.

To say that “prayer changes things” is not as close to the truth as saying, “Prayer changes me and then I change things.” God has established things so that prayer, on the basis of redemption, changes the way a person looks at things. Prayer is not a matter of changing things externally, but one of working miracles in a person’s inner nature.

**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 – 8/28/21

**The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.**—[REV. 12:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.12.html" \l "Rev.12.10)

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.—Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly.—That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.—In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.—Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.—Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Rev. 12:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.12.html" \l "Rev.12.11). -[Rom. 8:33,34](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.33).[Col. 2:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.15). -[Heb. 2:14,15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.14). -[Rom. 8:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.37). -[Eph. 6:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.11),[17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.17). -[I Cor. 15:57](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.57).

“Oil for the light.” [Exodus 25:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.25.html" \l "Exod.25.6)

My soul, how much thou needest this, for thy lamp will not long continue to burn without it. Thy snuff will smoke and become an offence if light be gone, and gone it will be if oil be absent. Thou hast no oil well springing up in thy human nature, and therefore thou must go to them that sell and buy for thyself, or like the foolish virgins, thou wilt have to cry, “My lamp is gone out.” Even the consecrated lamps could not give light without oil; though they shone in the tabernacle they needed to be fed, though no rough winds blew upon them they required to be trimmed, and thy need is equally as great. Under the most happy circumstances thou canst not give light for another hour unless fresh oil of grace be given thee.

It was not every oil that might be used in the Lord’s service; neither the petroleum which exudes so plentifully from the earth, nor the produce of fishes, nor that extracted from nuts would be accepted; one oil only was selected, and that the best olive oil. Pretended grace from natural goodness, fancied grace from priestly hands, or imaginary grace from outward ceremonies will never serve the true saint of God; he knows that the Lord would not be pleased with rivers of such oil. He goes to the olive-press of Gethsemane, and draws his supplies from him who was crushed therein. The oil of gospel grace is pure and free from lees and dregs, and hence the light which is fed thereon is clear and bright. Our churches are the Saviour’s golden candelabra, and if they are to be lights in this dark world, they must have much holy oil. Let us pray for ourselves, our ministers, and our churches, that they may never lack oil for the light. Truth, holiness, joy, knowledge, love, these are all beams of the sacred light, but we cannot give them forth unless in private we receive oil from God the Holy Ghost.

# Word Live – 8/28/21

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

# Scripture Union – 8/28/21

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/28/21

# Fallen from Grace

**Read ;** [**Hosea 12:11-13:3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+12%3a11-13%3a3)

**11**Is Gilead wicked?

    Its people are worthless!

Do they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal?

    Their altars will be like piles of stones

    on a plowed field.

**12**Jacob fled to the country of Aram[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+12%3a11-13%3a3#fen-NIV-22265a)];

    Israel served to get a wife,

    and to pay for her he tended sheep.

**13**The Lord used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt,

    by a prophet he cared for him.

**14**But Ephraim has aroused his bitter anger;

    his Lord will leave on him the guilt of his bloodshed

    and will repay him for his contempt.

**The Lord’s Anger Against Israel**

**13**

When Ephraim spoke, people trembled;

    he was exalted in Israel.

    But he became guilty of Baal worship and died.

**2**Now they sin more and more;

    they make idols for themselves from their silver,

cleverly fashioned images,

    all of them the work of craftsmen.

It is said of these people,

    “They offer human sacrifices!

    They kiss[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+12%3a11-13%3a3#fen-NIV-22269b)] calf-idols!”

**3**Therefore they will be like the morning mist,

    like the early dew that disappears,

    like chaff swirling from a threshing floor,

    like smoke escaping through a window.

**Footnotes**

1. [Hosea 12:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+12%3a11-13%3a3#en-NIV-22265) That is, Northwest Mesopotamia
2. [Hosea 13:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+12%3a11-13%3a3#en-NIV-22269) Or “Men who sacrifice / kiss

The narrative is far too familiar. A preacher grows a church and gains a following. He writes books, hosts a radio show, and accepts speaking engagements followed by large crowds. The global Church adores him, and he starts to believe his own press. He is blessed with money and fame and begins to build an idol of his own image. Unfortunately, it is often only a matter of time before that pride leads to a fall. Character cracks? Financial mismanagement? An extramarital affair? People weren’t created to be venerated. The human heart can’t handle it.

Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16

In today’s passage, Hosea told the narrative of Israel’s fall from grace. He started by remembering their past. They were once a powerful and prosperous nation, feared and revered by their neighbors (13:1). Commentators believe this refers to the time of Jeroboam II when Israel had a large army and enjoyed a comfortable existence—but in spite of this, or perhaps in part because of it, Israel turned away from God.

They combined Baal worship with their worship of God, taking from each tradition what they found attractive. Ironically, this led to the death of the nation rather than to the fertility that the priests of Baal had promised. Verse 2 describes the present, how Israel sinned more and more. They kept building idols—some by hand with their own silver, others by skilled craftsmen. All of them, of course, were in direct disobedience to God’s command. All of them evoked the anger of the Lord (12:14).

Finally, Hosea prophesied regarding Israel’s future. No specific historical details were given here, but through a series of natural metaphors (mist, chaff, and smoke), the message was crystal clear. Israel would disappear (13:3).

**Apply the Word**

We, too, are vulnerable to the insidious sin of pride. Consider how you can safeguard your heart against this infectious sin. Having a believing and honest friend as an accountability partner is one

**PRAY WITH US**

Even though we recognize the foolishness of human pride—what have we to be proud of?—it seems impossible to eradicate. Overwhelm our pride with awe of Your majesty, Lord!

**BY Kelli Worrall**

# Our Daily Bread – 8/28/21

# A Great Ending

A close up of a snake

Description automatically generated with low confidence**Read: Revelation 22:12–21**

**Epilogue: Invitation and Warning**

**12** “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. **13** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

**14** “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. **15** Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

**16** “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+22%3A12%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#fen-NIV-31097a)] this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

**17** The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

**18** I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. **19** And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.

**20** He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

**21** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

**Footnotes**

1. [Revelation 22:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+22%3A12%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-31097) The Greek is plural.

Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.  [Revelation 22:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2022.12)

My husband and son surfed television channels looking for a movie to watch and discovered that their favorite movies were already in progress. As they enjoyed watching the final scenes, the search became a game. They managed to find eight of their favorite flicks. Frustrated, I asked why they wouldn’t just choose a movie to watch from the beginning. My husband laughed. “Who doesn’t love a great ending?”

I had to admit I too look forward to the endings of my favorite books or movies. I’ve even skimmed through my Bible and focused on my favorite parts or the stories that seem more palatable and easier to understand. But the Holy Spirit uses all of God’s reliable and life-applicable words to transform us and affirm that His story will end well for believers in Jesus.

Christ declares Himself to be “the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” ([Revelation 22:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2022.13)). He proclaims that His people will inherit eternal life (v. 14) and warns those who dare to add or subtract from “the words of the prophecy of this scroll” (vv. 18–19).

We may not know or understand everything in the Bible, but we do know Jesus is coming again. He’ll keep His word. He’ll demolish sin, right every wrong, make all things new, and reign as our loving King forever. Now, that’s a great ending that leads to our new beginning!

By: [**Xochitl Dixon**](https://odb.org/author/xochitldixon/)

**Reflect & Pray**

**How does the certainty of knowing Jesus is coming again help you live for Him today? What excites you the most about Christ’s promised return?**

Come, Lord Jesus! Come!

**Insight**

[Revelation 21–22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021%E2%80%9322) speaks of the beginning of our life with Christ in the eternal state. As Jesus ushers in the new heavens and earth, He reminds us that He’s “the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (22:13; see also 21:6). This was the same proclamation John heard at the beginning of his vision (1:8, 17). In revealing Himself as “the First and the Last,” Jesus is saying that He’s God. For God Himself has declared, “I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God” ([Isaiah 44:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2044.6); see also 41:4; 48:12).

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

# God Calling – 8/28/21

# Continuous Service

Service is the Law of Heaven. My angels do always obey. "They serve Him continually" can be said of all who love Me.

With Love there is continuous service in every action, and also even in rest.

Take this not as the end but as the beginning of a New Life consecrated to My Service.

A Life of Power and Joy.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.  John 12:26

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/29/21

# The Unsurpassed Intimacy of Tested Faith



Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" —[John 11:40](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+11%3A40)

Every time you venture out in your life of faith, you will find something in your circumstances that, from a commonsense standpoint, will flatly contradict your faith. But common sense is not faith, and faith is not common sense. In fact, they are as different as the natural life and the spiritual. Can you trust Jesus Christ where your common sense cannot trust Him? Can you venture out with courage on the words of Jesus Christ, while the realities of your commonsense life continue to shout, “It’s all a lie”? When you are on the mountaintop, it’s easy to say, “Oh yes, I believe God can do it,” but you have to come down from the mountain to the demon-possessed valley and face the realities that scoff at your Mount-of-Transfiguration belief (see [Luke 9:28-42](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+9:28-42)). Every time my theology becomes clear to my own mind, I encounter something that contradicts it. As soon as I say, “I believe ‘God shall supply all [my] need,’ ” the testing of my faith begins ([Philippians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+4:19)). When my strength runs dry and my vision is blinded, will I endure this trial of my faith victoriously or will I turn back in defeat?

Faith must be tested, because it can only become your intimate possession through conflict. What is challenging your faith right now? The test will either prove your faith right, or it will kill it. Jesus said, “Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me” [Matthew 11:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+11:6)). The ultimate thing is confidence in Jesus. “We have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end…” ([Hebrews 3:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+3:14)). Believe steadfastly on Him and everything that challenges you will strengthen your faith. There is continual testing in the life of faith up to the point of our physical death, which is the last great test. Faith is absolute trust in God— trust that could never imagine that He would forsake us (see [Hebrews 13:5-6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+13:5-6)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Sincerity means that the appearance and the reality are exactly the same.  
[Studies in the Sermon on the Mount](https://dhp.org/0098.html)

# CCEL – 8/29/21

**Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.**—[PROV. 16:20.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.16.html" \l "Prov.16.20)

[Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.—The children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.—It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.—The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.

[Rom. 4:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.4.html" \l "Rom.4.20). -[II Chr. 13:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiChr.13.html" \l "iiChr.13.18).[Psa. 46:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.46.html" \l "Ps.46.1). -[Psa. 118:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.118.html" \l "Ps.118.8). -[Psa. 37:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.23).[Psa. 34:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.34.html" \l "Ps.34.8).

“Have mercy upon me, O God.” [Psalm 51:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.51.html" \l "Ps.51.1)

When Dr. Carey was suffering from a dangerous illness, the enquiry was made, “If this sickness should prove fatal, what passage would you select as the text for your funeral sermon?” He replied, “Oh, I feel that such a poor sinful creature is unworthy to have anything said about him; but if a funeral sermon must be preached, let it be from the words, ‘Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.’” In the same spirit of humility he directed in his will that the following inscription and nothing more should be cut on his gravestone:—

William Carey, Born August 17th, 1761: Died - -

“A wretched, poor, and helpless worm

On thy kind arms I fall.”

Only on the footing of free grace can the most experienced and most honoured of the saints approach their God. The best of men are conscious above all others that they are men at the best. Empty boats float high, but heavily laden vessels are low in the water; mere professors can boast, but true children of God cry for mercy upon their unprofitableness. We have need that the Lord should have mercy upon our good works, our prayers, our preachings, our alms-givings, and our holiest things. The blood was not only sprinkled upon the doorposts of Israel’s dwelling houses, but upon the sanctuary, the mercy-seat, and the altar, because as sin intrudes into our holiest things, the blood of Jesus is needed to purify them from defilement. If mercy be needed to be exercised towards our duties, what shall be said of our sins? How sweet the remembrance that inexhaustible mercy is waiting to be gracious to us, to restore our backslidings, and make our broken bones rejoice!

# Word Live – 8/29/21

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

# Scripture Union – 8/29/21

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/29/21

# Do Not Forget

**Read:** [**Hosea 13:4–11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+13%3a4%e2%80%9311)

**4**“But I have been the Lord your God

    ever since you came out of Egypt.

You shall acknowledge no God but me,

    no Savior except me.

**5**I cared for you in the wilderness,

    in the land of burning heat.

**6**When I fed them, they were satisfied;

    when they were satisfied, they became proud;

    then they forgot me.

**7**So I will be like a lion to them,

    like a leopard I will lurk by the path.

**8**Like a bear robbed of her cubs,

    I will attack them and rip them open;

like a lion I will devour them—

    a wild animal will tear them apart.

**9**“You are destroyed, Israel,

    because you are against me, against your helper.

**10**Where is your king, that he may save you?

    Where are your rulers in all your towns,

of whom you said,

    ‘Give me a king and princes’?

**11**So in my anger I gave you a king,

    and in my wrath I took him away.

My pastor’s wife makes custom signs that I’ve placed in almost every room of our house. Over the piano, I have a large sign of Matthew 22:37. On the mantel is the word “hesed.” And over my kitchen sink is Philippians 4:4. I think it’s important to keep Scripture before our eyes and on our minds. These signs remind me, my husband, our children, and our guests of what God has done and that He is the one we serve.

Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands. Deuteronomy 8:11

When Joshua was a new leader, the Lord told him to take one man from each tribe into the Jordan River. Each man took a stone from the river, and Joshua used the stones to build a monument of remembrance. Joshua told the people, “In the future when your descendants ask their parents, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground’” (Josh. 4:21–22).

In today’s passage, God reminded the Israelites of what He had done for them. First, God had brought them out of Egypt (v. 4), and He alone was deserving of their devotion. Israel had only one God and Savior, and He was jealous of their love. Second, God had cared for them in the wilderness (v. 5). The conditions were harsh, the heat unbearable. Yet God led them—by fire and cloud. He gave them daily manna and water. Third, God had blessed them in the Promised Land (v. 6). There they had been satisfied with milk and honey, brooks and barley . . . and there they forgot God. He had warned them that this might happen. The final verses communicate a seemingly sudden and violent shift (vv. 7–11). The full anger of God is finally unleashed. But more on that tomorrow.

**Apply the Word**

Comfort can cause us to forget. What concrete act of remembering can you engage in today? Perhaps there is a Bible verse that you need to keep in a visible place to remind you of God’s promises.

**PRAY WITH US**

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father” (James 1:17). May we cling to You even in comfort, take refuge in You even in peace, and seek Your guidance even when things seem clear.

**BY Kelli Worrall**

# Our Daily Bread – 8/29/21

# The Power of the Gospel

**A close-up of a book

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceRead:** [**Romans 1:1–7**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%201.1%E2%80%937)

**1** Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— **2** the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures **3** regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+14%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27934a)] was a descendant of David, **4** and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+14%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27935b)] by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. **5** Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+14%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27936c)] faith for his name’s sake. **6** And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

**7** To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:

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

**Footnotes**

1. [Romans 1:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+14%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#en-NIV-27934) Or who according to the flesh
2. [Romans 1:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+14%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#en-NIV-27935) Or was declared with power to be the Son of God
3. [Romans 1:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+14%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#en-NIV-27936) Or that is

**Read:** [**Romans 1:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%201.1%E2%80%937)[**14–17**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Romans%201.14%E2%80%9317)

**14** I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. **15** That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

**16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. **17** For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+14%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27948a)] just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+14%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27948b)]

**Footnotes**

1. [Romans 1:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+14%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#en-NIV-27948) Or is from faith to faith
2. [Romans 1:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+14%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#en-NIV-27948) Hab. 2:4

I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.  [Romans 1:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%201.15)

Ancient Rome had its own version of “the gospel”—the good news. According to the poet Virgil, Zeus, king of the gods, had decreed for the Romans a kingdom without end or boundaries. The gods had chosen Augustus as divine son and savior of the world by ushering in a golden age of peace and prosperity.

This, however, wasn’t everyone’s idea of good news. For many it was an unwelcome reality enforced by the heavy hand of the emperor’s army and executioners. The glory of the empire was built on the backs of enslaved people who served without legal personhood or property at the pleasure of masters who ruled over them.

This was the world in which Paul introduced himself as a servant of Christ ([Romans 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%201.1)).

Jesus—how Paul had once hated that name. And how Jesus Himself had suffered for admitting to being the king of the Jews and Savior of the world.

This was the good news Paul would explain in the rest of his letter to the Romans. This gospel was “the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes” (v. 16). Oh, how it was needed by those who suffered under Caesar! Here was the news of a crucified and resurrected Savior—the liberator who conquered His enemies by showing how much He loved them.

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

**Reflect & Pray**

**As you read Paul’s opening words to the Romans, what phrases describe the good news to you? (1:1–7). Why would Paul, who had once hated Jesus so much, now want everyone to believe in Him? (see** [**Acts 26**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2026)**).**

Loving God, thank You for the good news. Give me the boldness to share the gospel with those around me.

**Insight**

The letter to the Romans opens with Paul identifying himself as “an apostle . . . set apart for the gospel of God” (1:1). His letter is written “to all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people” (v. 7). Yet Paul singles out the gentiles for special mention (vv. 5–6), perhaps because their inclusion in the family of faith was still a radical concept. Paul reiterates this cross-cultural unity later in the chapter: “The power of God . . . brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (v. 16).

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

# God Calling – 8/29/21

# Breathe My Name

Just breathe My Name.

It is like the pressure of a child's hand that calls forth an answering pressure, strengthens the child's confidence and banishes fear.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.  Proverbs 18:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/30/21

# Usefulness or Relationship?



Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven. —[Luke 10:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+10%3A20)

Jesus Christ is saying here, “Don’t rejoice in your successful service for Me, but rejoice because of your right relationship with Me.” The trap you may fall into in Christian work is to rejoice in successful service— rejoicing in the fact that God has used you. Yet you will never be able to measure fully what God will do through you if you do not have a right-standing relationship with Jesus Christ. If you keep your relationship right with Him, then regardless of your circumstances or whoever you encounter each day, He will continue to pour “rivers of living water” through you ([John 7:38](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+7:38)). And it is actually by His mercy that He does not let you know it. Once you have the right relationship with God through salvation and sanctification, remember that whatever your circumstances may be, you have been placed in them by God. And God uses the reaction of your life to your circumstances to fulfill His purpose, as long as you continue to “walk in the light as He is in the light” ([1 John 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1:7)).

Our tendency today is to put the emphasis on service. Beware of the people who make their request for help on the basis of someone’s usefulness. If you make usefulness the test, then Jesus Christ was the greatest failure who ever lived. For the saint, direction and guidance come from God Himself, not some measure of that saint’s usefulness. It is the work that God does through us that counts, not what we do for Him. All that our Lord gives His attention to in a person’s life is that person’s relationship with God— something of great value to His Father. Jesus is “bringing many sons to glory…” ([Hebrews 2:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2:10)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 8/30/21

**The king held out . . . the golden sceptre. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.**—[ESTH. 5:2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Esth.5.html" \l "Esth.5.2)

It shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.

We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us.

Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.—For through him we . . . have access by one Spirit unto the Father.—We have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.—Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

[Exo. 22:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.22.html" \l "Exod.22.27).[I John 4:16-19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.16).[Heb. 10:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.22). -[Eph. 2:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.18). -[Eph. 3:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.3.html" \l "Eph.3.12). -[Heb. 4:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html#Heb.4.16).

“Wait on the Lord.” [Psalm 27:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.27.html" \l "Ps.27.14)

It may seem an easy thing to wait, but it is one of the postures which a Christian soldier learns not without years of teaching. Marching and quick-marching are much easier to God’s warriors than standing still. There are hours of perplexity when the most willing spirit, anxiously desirous to serve the Lord, knows not what part to take. Then what shall it do? Vex itself by despair? Fly back in cowardice, turn to the right hand in fear, or rush forward in presumption? No, but simply wait. Wait in prayer, however. Call upon God, and spread the case before him; tell him your difficulty, and plead his promise of aid. In dilemmas between one duty and another, it is sweet to be humble as a child, and wait with simplicity of soul upon the Lord. It is sure to be well with us when we feel and know our own folly, and are heartily willing to be guided by the will of God. But wait in faith. Express your unstaggering confidence in him; for unfaithful, untrusting waiting, is but an insult to the Lord. Believe that if he keep you tarrying even till midnight, yet he will come at the right time; the vision shall come and shall not tarry. Wait in quiet patience, not rebelling because you are under the affliction, but blessing your God for it. Never murmur against the second cause, as the children of Israel did against Moses; never wish you could go back to the world again, but accept the case as it is, and put it as it stands, simply and with your whole heart, without any self-will, into the hand of your covenant God, saying, “Now, Lord, not my will, but thine be done. I know not what to do; I am brought to extremities, but I will wait until thou shalt cleave the floods, or drive back my foes. I will wait, if thou keep me many a day, for my heart is fixed upon thee alone, O God, and my spirit waiteth for thee in the full conviction that thou wilt yet be my joy and my salvation, my refuge and my strong tower.”

# Word Live – 8/30/21

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

# Scripture Union – 8/30/21

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/30/21

# I Will Redeem

**Read:** [**Hosea 13:12–16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+13%3a12%e2%80%9316)

Throughout the centuries, death has been described in many ways. William Shakespeare imagined death as a tree on which only a few yellow leaves still hang—until they fall. Emily Dickinson personified death as a man in a carriage that comes for her. Alfred Lord Tennyson described death as a ship putting out to sea.

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? 1 Corinthians 15:55

Yesterday we read about the violent attacks of the lion, the leopard, and the bear as God unleashed His wrath upon the people (13:7–11). In today’s passage, Hosea described Israel’s resulting death with three more metaphors. First, Israel is described as a baby in the middle of the birthing process (v. 13). When the contractions come, this foolish baby does not enter the birth canal. Like this child, Israel unwisely held onto their sin and refused to choose life.

In the second metaphor, Israel is described as a fertile land with wells of water and storehouses of food. Then, God sent a hot desert wind to dry everything up. The food was stolen, and the nation was left destitute. The third metaphor is the most graphic. [The Moody Bible Commentary](https://www.moodypublishers.com/the-moody-bible-commentary/) explains, “The east wind also represents the invasion of Assyria, which would plunder Israel’s treasury and violently murder its pregnant women and children (9:12). God’s people would fall to their enemies, dying by the sword.

But even this passage is not devoid of hope. Right in the middle, God paused to remind the people that He would ransom them. He could and would still redeem (v. 14). Even this slaughter would not be permanent since God’s love is everlasting and His dominion is even over death. The Apostle Paul quoted verse 14 in his Resurrection Chapter (1 Cor. 15:55), connecting this Old Testament prophesy to Christ’s resurrection. God will ultimately defeat both sin and death.

**Apply the Word**

Today’s Bible passage may feel discouraging, but it holds a promise that no matter what darkness we face, God holds power over death. He gives us hope for today and for eternity.

**PRAY WITH US**

This study of Hosea has been dark and heavy, yet it shows You to be a loving, merciful God. The Messiah has come, just as You promised, and He has defeated death and sin. We rejoice that You have the power to keep Your promises!

**BY Kelli Worrall**

# Our Daily Bread – 8/30/21

# Mercy and Grace

**A close up of a sunflower

Description automatically generatedRead:** [**2 Chronicles 34:1–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chron%2034.1%E2%80%938)

**Josiah’s Reforms**

**34** Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. **2** He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and followed the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.

**3** In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles and idols. **4** Under his direction the altars of the Baals were torn down; he cut to pieces the incense altars that were above them, and smashed the Asherah poles and the idols. These he broke to pieces and scattered over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. **5** He burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and so he purged Judah and Jerusalem. **6** In the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim and Simeon, as far as Naphtali, and in the ruins around them, **7** he tore down the altars and the Asherah poles and crushed the idols to powder and cut to pieces all the incense altars throughout Israel. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

**8** In the eighteenth year of Josiah’s reign, to purify the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah and Maaseiah the ruler of the city, with Joah son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the temple of the Lord his God.

[Josiah] began to seek the God of his father David.  [2 Chronicles 34:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chron%2034.3)

A stately sunflower stood on its own in the center of a lonely stretch of national highway, just a few feet from the fast lane. As I drove past, I wondered how it had grown there with no other sunflowers visible for miles. Only God could create a plant so hardy it could thrive so close to the roadway in the gray gravel lining the median. There it was, thriving, swaying gently in the breeze and cheerfully greeting travelers as they hurried by.

The Old Testament tells the story of a faithful king of Judah who also showed up unexpectedly. His father and grandfather had enthusiastically served other gods; but after Josiah had been in power for eight years, “while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David” ([2 Chronicles 34:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chron%2034.3)). He sent workmen to “repair the temple of the Lord” (v. 8), and as they did they discovered the Book of the Law (the first five books of the Old Testament; v. 14). God then inspired Josiah to lead the entire nation of Judah to return to the faith of their ancestors, and they served the Lord “as long as [Josiah] lived” (v. 33).

Our God is the master of unanticipated mercies. He’s able to cause great good to spring up unexpectedly out of the hard gravel of life’s most unfavorable circumstances. Watch Him closely. He may do it again today.

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

**Reflect & Pray**

**What mercies have you seen from God that you never anticipated? How does the thought that He’s able to bring about unexpected good give you hope today?**

Heavenly Father, I praise You for never changing. Your mercies are “new every morning!” ([Lamentations 3:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lam%203.23)). Help me to look forward to what You have for me today.

**Insight**

[Second Chronicles 34–35](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chron%2034%E2%80%9335) build on the account given in [2 Kings 22–23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%2022%E2%80%9323); however, additional details are included in 2 Chronicles. For example, [2 Kings 22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%2022) shows Josiah’s actions as primarily taking place during the eighteenth year of his reign, but [2 Chronicles 34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chron%2034) details the breakdown of events between the eighth, twelfth, and eighteenth years. The varying details don’t indicate inaccuracies; rather, they present a more complete picture of the Bible with each book including a different emphasis: 2 Kings focuses on Josiah as a king whereas 2 Chronicles uses his story to present the importance of the Passover.

By: [**Julie Schwab**](https://odb.org/author/jschwab95/)

# God Calling – 8/30/21

# Give, Give, Give

Give abundantly. Feel that you are rich. Have no mean thought in your heart.

Of Love, of thought, of all you have, give, give, give.

You are followers of the World's Greatest Giver. Give of time, of personal ease and comfort, of rest, of fame, of healing, of power, of sympathy, of all these and many more.

Learn this lesson, and you will become a great power to help others and to do mighty things.

Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall men give unto your bosom.  Luke 6:38