# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/30/24

# The Dilemma Of Obedience



And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. — [1 Samuel 3:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Samuel+3%3A15)

God never speaks to us in startling ways, but in ways that are easy to misunderstand, and we say, "I wonder if that is God’s voice?" Isaiah said that the Lord spake to him "with a strong hand," that is, by the pressure of circumstances. Nothing touches our lives but it is God Himself speaking. Do we discern His hand or only mere occurrence?

Get into the habit of saying, "Speak, Lord," and life will become a romance. Every time circumstances press, say, "Speak, Lord"; make time to listen. Chastening is more than a means of discipline, it is meant to get me to the place of saying, "Speak, Lord." Recall the time when God did speak to you. Have you forgotten what He said? Was it Luke 11:13, or was it 1 Thess. 5:23? As we listen, our ear gets acute, and, like Jesus, we shall hear God all the time.

Shall I tell my "Eli" what God has shown to me? That is where the dilemma of obedience comes in. We disobey God by becoming amateur providences – I must shield "Eli," the best people we know. God did not tell Samuel to tell Eli; he had to decide that for himself. God’s call to you may hurt your "Eli;" but if you try to prevent the suffering in another life, it will prove an obstruction between your soul and God. It is at your own peril that you prevent the cutting off of the right hand or the plucking out of the eye.

Never ask the advice of another about anything God makes you decide before Him. If you ask advice, you will nearly always side with Satan. "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." ([Galatians 1:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+1:16)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The Christian Church should not be a secret society of specialists, but a public manifestation of believers in Jesus.  Facing Reality, 34 R

# CCEL – 1/30/24

**Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.**—[HEB. 12:1,2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.1)

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.—Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.—Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness.

Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.—Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.

[Luke 9:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.9.html" \l "Luke.9.23). -[Luke 14:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.14.html" \l "Luke.14.33). -[Rom. 13:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.13.html" \l "Rom.13.12).[I Cor. 9:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.9.html" \l "iCor.9.25),[27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.9.html" \l "iCor.9.27). -[Phi. 3:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.13). -[Hos. 6:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.6.html" \l "Hos.6.3).

“When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, then thou shalt bestir thyself.” [2 Samuel 5:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiSam.5.html" \l "iiSam.5.24)

The members of Christ’s Church should be very prayerful, always seeking the unction of the Holy One to rest upon their hearts, that the kingdom of Christ may come, and that his “will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven;” but there are times when God seems especially to favour Zion, such seasons ought to be to them like “the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees.” We ought then to be doubly prayerful, doubly earnest, wrestling more at the throne than we have been wont to do. Action should then be prompt and vigorous. The tide is flowing—now let us pull manfully for the shore. O for Pentecostal outpourings and Pentecostal labours. Christian, in yourself there are times “when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees.” You have a peculiar power in prayer; the Spirit of God gives you joy and gladness; the Scripture is open to you; the promises are applied; you walk in the light of God’s countenance; you have peculiar freedom and liberty in devotion, and more closeness of communion with Christ than was your wont. Now, at such joyous periods when you hear the “sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,” is the time to bestir yourself; now is the time to get rid of any evil habit, while God the Spirit helpeth your infirmities. Spread your sail; but remember what you sometimes sing—

“I can only spread the sail;

Thou! Thou! must breathe the auspicious gale.”

Only be sure you have the sail up. Do not miss the gale for want of preparation for it. Seek help of God, that you may be more earnest in duty when made more strong in faith; that you may be more constant in prayer when you have more liberty at the throne; that you may be more holy in your conversation whilst you live more closely with Christ.

# Word Live – 1/30/24

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

# Scripture Union – 1/30/24

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

# Today in the Word – 1/30/24

# Answered Prayer

**Read:** [**Genesis 24:1–67**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3a1%e2%80%9367)

### **Isaac and Rebekah**

24 Abraham was now very old, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. 2He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh. 3I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, 4but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.”

5The servant asked him, “What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?”

6“Make sure that you do not take my son back there,” Abraham said. 7“The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father’s household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, ‘To your offspring[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-599a)] I will give this land’—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. 8If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there.” 9So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

10Then the servant left, taking with him ten of his master’s camels loaded with all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-602b)] and made his way to the town of Nahor. 11He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.

12Then he prayed, “Lord, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. 14May it be that when I say to a young woman, ‘Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too’—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.”

15Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor. 16The woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

17The servant hurried to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water from your jar.”

18“Drink, my lord,” she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

19After she had given him a drink, she said, “I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink.” 20So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels. 21Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful.

22When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-614c)] and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-614d)] 23Then he asked, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?”

24She answered him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milkah bore to Nahor.” 25And she added, “We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night.”

26Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord, 27saying, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.”

28The young woman ran and told her mother’s household about these things. 29Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring. 30As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring. 31“Come, you who are blessed by the Lord,” he said. “Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.”

32So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet. 33Then food was set before him, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.”

“Then tell us,” Laban said.

34So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. 35The Lord has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. 36My master’s wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. 37And my master made me swear an oath, and said, ‘You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, 38but go to my father’s family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.’

39“Then I asked my master, ‘What if the woman will not come back with me?’

40“He replied, ‘The Lord, before whom I have walked faithfully, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father’s family. 41You will be released from my oath if, when you go to my clan, they refuse to give her to you—then you will be released from my oath.’

42“When I came to the spring today, I said, ‘Lord, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. 43See, I am standing beside this spring. If a young woman comes out to draw water and I say to her, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar,” 44and if she says to me, “Drink, and I’ll draw water for your camels too,” let her be the one the Lord has chosen for my master’s son.’

45“Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’

46“She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too.’ So I drank, and she watered the camels also.

47“I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’

“She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milkah bore to him.’

“Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, 48and I bowed down and worshiped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master’s brother for his son. 49Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn.”

50Laban and Bethuel answered, “This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. 51Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master’s son, as the Lord has directed.”

52When Abraham’s servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the Lord. 53Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. 54Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.

When they got up the next morning, he said, “Send me on my way to my master.”

55But her brother and her mother replied, “Let the young woman remain with us ten days or so; then you[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-647e)] may go.”

56But he said to them, “Do not detain me, now that the Lord has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master.”

57Then they said, “Let’s call the young woman and ask her about it.” 58So they called Rebekah and asked her, “Will you go with this man?”

“I will go,” she said.

59So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham’s servant and his men. 60And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

“Our sister, may you increase  
    to thousands upon thousands;  
may your offspring possess  
    the cities of their enemies.”

61Then Rebekah and her attendants got ready and mounted the camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

62Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. 63He went out to the field one evening to meditate,[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-655f)] and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. 64Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel 65and asked the servant, “Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?”

“He is my master,” the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.

66Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. 67Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Genesis 24:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#en-NIV-599) Or seed
2. [Genesis 24:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#en-NIV-602) That is, Northwest Mesopotamia
3. [Genesis 24:22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#en-NIV-614) That is, about 1/5 ounce or about 5.7 grams
4. [Genesis 24:22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#en-NIV-614) That is, about 4 ounces or about 115 grams
5. [Genesis 24:55](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#en-NIV-647) Or she
6. [Genesis 24:63](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24%3A1%E2%80%9367+&version=NIV#en-NIV-655) The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

One historian estimated that there have been over 100 million love songs published since music began to be recorded. People are drawn to a good love story, especially one with ups and downs that ends with a “happily ever after.”

I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road. Genesis 24:48

Genesis 24 presents a dramatic love story. In Abraham’s world, marriages were arranged between families. What was unusual is that Abraham did not want his son to marry one of their neighbors. While Abraham had committed to living in the Land of Canaan, he did not want to become a Canaanite (v. 3). Believing in God’s promise, he charged his servant with finding a bride for Isaac from his own people in Mesopotamia (vv. 6–9). This would not be easy. The woman and her whole family would have to agree to allow her to leave her homeland.

The servant showed dependence upon the Lord. He prayed about the project. He also administered a kind of test. He was looking for a woman who would be hospitable and kind. When arriving at a watering hole with ten camels, he would ask a woman for a drink. If the woman provided a drink for him and offered to give water to the camels, he would know this was the woman the Lord had chosen (v. 14). Not only did Rebekah pass this test, it turned out she was also a relative of Abraham (v. 24). The servant burst out in praise at this answer to prayer. God had shown himself faithful to Abraham once again (v. 27).

Rebekah played an important role in the story. Like Abraham, she was willing to leave her homeland and go to a land she did not know (v. 58). God will provide a way for His will to be accomplished, but that does not mean we are passive in the process.

## **Go Deeper**

What did the servant do when given a task that was both difficult and extremely important? How can his example help us when we are faced with important decisions?

## **Pray with Us**

Father God, You have promised to provide, and we know that You are the promise-keeper. We ask that You make clear the steps You want us to take as we follow and trust You. Give us courage to obey You, even in the unknown.

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 1/30/24

# Jesus Our King



**Read:** [**Isaiah 32:1–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2032.1%E2%80%938)

### **The Kingdom of Righteousness**

32 See, a king will reign in righteousness  
    and rulers will rule with justice.  
2Each one will be like a shelter from the wind  
    and a refuge from the storm,  
like streams of water in the desert  
    and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.

3Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed,  
    and the ears of those who hear will listen.  
4The fearful heart will know and understand,  
    and the stammering tongue will be fluent and clear.  
5No longer will the fool be called noble  
    nor the scoundrel be highly respected.  
6For fools speak folly,  
    their hearts are bent on evil:  
They practice ungodliness  
    and spread error concerning the Lord;  
the hungry they leave empty  
    and from the thirsty they withhold water.  
7Scoundrels use wicked methods,  
    they make up evil schemes  
to destroy the poor with lies,  
    even when the plea of the needy is just.  
8But the noble make noble plans,  
    and by noble deeds they stand.

See, a king will reign in righteousness . . . like streams of water in the desert. [Isaiah 32:1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2032.1%E2%80%932)

While drilling for oil in one of the sunniest and driest countries in the world, teams were shocked to uncover a huge underground system of water. So, in 1983 the “great man-made river” project was begun, placing a system of pipes to carry the high-quality fresh water to cities where it was sorely needed. A plaque near the project’s inception states, “From here flows the artery of life.”

The prophet Isaiah used the image of water in a desert to describe a future righteous king ([Isaiah 32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2032)). As kings and rulers reigned with justice and righteousness, they would be like “streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land” (v. 2). Some rulers choose to take instead of give. The mark of a God-honoring leader, however, is someone who brings shelter, refuge, refreshment, and protection. Isaiah said that “the fruit of [God’s] righteousness will be peace” for His people, and “its effect will be quietness and confidence forever” (v. 17).

Isaiah’s words of hope would later find fullness of meaning in Jesus, who “himself will come down from heaven . . . . And so we will be with the Lord forever” ([1 Thessalonians 4:16–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thess%204.16%E2%80%9317)). “The great man-made river” is just that—made by human hands. Someday that water reservoir will be depleted. But our righteous King brings refreshment and water of life that will never run dry.

By:  [Karen Pimpo](https://odb.org/author/karenpimpo/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Where do you need Jesus to bring the water of life? How can you follow His example of bringing refreshment to others?

Dear Jesus, thank You for bringing peace through Your perfectly righteous rule.

#### **Insight**

Isaiah’s prophecies often condemn Israel as having “closed eyes and ears” (see 6:10; 29:10, 18; 35:5; 42:7; 43:8; 44:18). The prophet uses this phrase over and over to point out that God’s people refuse to look to or listen to Him. They’re interested only in their own agendas (31:1).

In the Gospels, Jesus’ disciples were waiting for Him to be Isaiah’s promised king ([Luke 24:13-35](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2024.13-35)). But, like the people in Isaiah’s day, their eyes and ears were closed to what God was really doing through His Son—overthrowing the reign of sin in the world.

But Christ’s resurrection after His “defeat” by the Romans finally opened the eyes of the disciples. They saw, perhaps for the first time, that Jesus was there to change the world not through military conquest but through forgiveness of sins. And it was a message they were to take to the rest of the world ([Matthew 28:18-20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.18-20)).

By: [**Jed Ostoich**](https://odb.org/author/jedostoich/)

# God Calling – 1/30/24

# The Soul At War

"I will never give you a load greater than you can bear."

No evil can befall you, if I am with you. "Ill that He blesses is our good." Every time of being laid aside is a time of retreat into the quiet place with Me. Never fear but in that place you shall find restoration and power and joy and healing.

Plan both of your retreat days now and then - days when you live apart with Me, and arise rested and refreshed - physically, mentally, and spiritually, to carry on the work I have given to you. I will never give you a load greater than you can bear.

Love, Joy, Peace, welcome these. Let no personal feelings, no thoughts of self banish these. Singly, they are miracle-producing in a life, but together, they can command all that is needed on the physical, mental, and spiritual planes.

It is in these wonder-realm attributes all success lies. You have to see your inner lives are all they should be, and then the work is accomplished. Not in rushing and striving on the material plane, but on the battlefield of the Soul are these things won.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." - 1 Corinthians 10:1

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/31/24

# Do You See Your Calling?



Separated unto the Gospel. — [Romans 1:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+1%3A1)

Our calling is not primarily to be holy men and women, but to be proclaimers of the Gospel of God. The one thing that is all important is that the Gospel of God should be realized as the abiding Reality. Reality is not human goodness, nor holiness, nor heaven, nor hell; but Redemption; and the need to perceive this is the most vital need of the Christian worker to-day. As workers we have to get used to the revelation that Redemption is the only Reality. Personal holiness is an effect, not a cause, and if we place our faith in human goodness, in the effect of Redemption, we shall go under when the test comes.

Paul did not say he separated himself, but – "when it pleased God who separated me. . ." Paul had not a hypersensitive interest in his own character. As long as our eyes are upon our own personal whiteness we shall never get near the reality of Redemption. Workers break down because their desire is for their own whiteness, and not for God. "Don’t ask me to come into contact with the rugged reality of Redemption on behalf of the filth of human life as it is; what I want is anything God can do for me to make me more desirable in my own eyes." To talk in that way is a sign that the reality of the Gospel of God has not begun to touch me; there is no reckless abandon to God. God cannot deliver me while my interest is merely in my own character. Paul is unconscious of himself, he is recklessly abandoned, separated by God for one purpose – to proclaim the Gospel of God (see [Romans 9:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+9:3)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We can understand the attributes of God in other ways, but we can only understand the Father’s heart in the Cross of Christ.  The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption, 558 L

# CCEL – 1/31/24

**If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; . . . those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.**—[NUM. 33:55.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.33.html" \l "Num.33.55)

Fight the good fight of faith.—The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, . . . and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.—I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.—We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

[I Tim. 6:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.6.html" \l "iTim.6.12). -[II Cor. 10:4,5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.10.html" \l "iiCor.10.4).[Rom. 8:12,13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.12).[Gal. 5:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.17). -[Rom. 7:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html" \l "Rom.7.23). -[Rom. 8:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.37).

“The Lord our Righteousness.” [Jeremiah 23:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.23.html" \l "Jer.23.6)

It will always give a Christian the greatest calm, quiet, ease, and peace, to think of the perfect righteousness of Christ. How often are the saints of God downcast and sad! I do not think they ought to be. I do not think they would if they could always see their perfection in Christ. There are some who are always talking about corruption, and the depravity of the heart, and the innate evil of the soul. This is quite true, but why not go a little further, and remember that we are “perfect in Christ Jesus.” It is no wonder that those who are dwelling upon their own corruption should wear such downcast looks; but surely if we call to mind that “Christ is made unto us righteousness,” we shall be of good cheer. What though distresses afflict me, though Satan assault me, though there may be many things to be experienced before I get to heaven, those are done for me in the covenant of divine grace; there is nothing wanting in my Lord, Christ hath done it all. On the cross he said, “It is finished!” and if it be finished, then am I complete in him, and can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, “Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” You will not find on this side heaven a holier people than those who receive into their hearts the doctrine of Christ’s righteousness. When the believer says, “I live on Christ alone; I rest on him solely for salvation; and I believe that, however unworthy, I am still saved in Jesus;” then there rises up as a motive of gratitude this thought—“Shall I not live to Christ? Shall I not love him and serve him, seeing that I am saved by his merits?” “The love of Christ constraineth us,” “that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them.” If saved by imputed righteousness, we shall greatly value imparted righteousness.

# Word Live – 1/31/24

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

# Scripture Union – 1/31/24

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

# Today in the Word – 1/31/24

# A Life of Faith

**Read:** [**Genesis 25:1–11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3a1%e2%80%9311)

### **The Death of Abraham**

25 Abraham had taken another wife, whose name was Keturah. 2She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. 3Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan; the descendants of Dedan were the Ashurites, the Letushites and the Leummites. 4The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanok, Abida and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah.

5Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. 6But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east.

7Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. 8Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people. 9His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, 10the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3A1%E2%80%9311+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-669a)] There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah. 11After Abraham’s death, God blessed his son Isaac, who then lived near Beer Lahai Roi.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Genesis 25:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3A1%E2%80%9311+&version=NIV#en-NIV-669) Or the descendants of Heth

As Abraham’s life comes to an end, we may feel disappointed...there is much we do not know and much left unfinished. When we meet Abraham in Genesis 12, he was already 75 years old. We learned about his life from ages 75 to 99. Then, four chapters are devoted to one year of his life: the year Isaac was born. The last three chapters cover an additional 75 years in which we are given minimal detail. What does all this tell us?

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:29

From a human perspective, Abraham was somewhat ordinary. He was the head of a small household that lived nomadically around Canaan. He was surely one of many who lived in a similar way. He did not become a king or major political figure. He did not create any monuments or build any large structures. Yet, he was devoted to the Lord. In turn, God made big promises to Abraham. God’s call of Abraham and the promise bestowed upon Isaac are key elements. Abraham’s pivotal years were spent living as if those promises would come true. Even by the end of his life, he saw just the beginnings of their fulfillment.

Genesis 25 describes Abraham’s death and burial. After the birth of Isaac, he had six more sons through his wife Keturah (vv. 1–2). He would send each son off with gifts, but he would not make them co-heirs with Isaac in accordance with God’s direction (vv. 5–6). At his death, Isaac and Ishmael came together to mourn their father (v. 9).

Today, we know that Abraham’s story played an important role in God’s redemptive plan. The promises God made to Abraham and his descendants would come true and ultimately be fulfilled in the coming of Jesus. As for us, we are only halfway through the book of Genesis. We’ll learn more when we study Part Two later this year.

## **Go Deeper**

What stories in Genesis have left the biggest impact on you? What are your key takeaways from this study?

## **Pray with Us**

Lord, You are the Almighty Master of the entire universe, and yet You see each one of us individually and care for us intimately. Thank You for Your amazing grace and unstoppable love! Amen.

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 1/31/24

# Fully Surrendered to Christ



**Read:** [**Mark 8:34–38**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%208.34%E2%80%9338)

### **The Way of the Cross**

34Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35For whoever wants to save their life[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+8%3A34%E2%80%9338&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24536a)] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? 37Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 38If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Mark 8:35](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+8%3A34%E2%80%9338&version=NIV#en-NIV-24536) The Greek word means either life or soul; also in verses 36 and 37.

What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? [Mark 8:36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%208.36)

In 1920, John Sung, the sixth child of a Chinese pastor, received a scholarship to study at a university in the United States. He graduated with the highest honors, completed a master’s program, and earned a PhD. But while pursuing his studies, he had walked away from God. Then, one night in 1927, he surrendered his life to Christ and felt called to be a preacher.

Many high-paying opportunities awaited him back in China, but on the ship home, he was convicted by the Holy Spirit to lay aside his ambitions. As a symbol of his commitment, he threw all his awards into the sea, keeping only his PhD certificate to give to his parents out of respect for them.

John Sung understood what Jesus said about becoming His disciple: “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” ([Mark 8:36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%208.36)). As we deny ourselves and leave our old life behind to follow Christ and His leading (vv. 34–35), it may mean sacrificing personal desires and material gain that distract us from following Him.

For the next twelve years, John carried out his God-given mission wholeheartedly, preaching the gospel to thousands throughout China and Southeast Asia. How about us? We may not be called to be preachers or missionaries, but wherever God calls us to serve, by His Spirit working in us, may we fully surrender to Him.

By:  [Jasmine Goh](https://odb.org/author/jasminegoh/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What do you need to surrender in order to truly follow Jesus? What are some personal ambitions you may be holding on to?

Father, help me to set aside whatever hinders me from fully surrendering to You.

#### **Insight**

In his commentary on Mark, William Hendriksen calls [Mark 8:34-38](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%208.34-38) a “brief but beautiful little paragraph.” How can words about following a “cross-carrying” Christ be described as “beautiful”? The brevity and simplicity of Jesus’ words, along with their clarity, contribute to their beauty. In [Mark 8:31-32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%208.31-32), Jesus spoke of His upcoming suffering, death, and resurrection (see also 9:30-32; 10:32-34). The invitation in 8:34 is to “whoever.” Verse 35 highlights that self-preservation is ultimately deceiving; self-surrender to Christ is lifesaving. In The Cost of Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer helps us see that communion with Jesus in the manner presented in these verses is what the life in Christ is all about: “The cross is laid on every Christian. . . . Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”

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

# God Calling – 1/31/24

# "No detail is forgotten in My Plans, already perfect."

All sacrifice and all suffering is redemptive: to teach the individual or to be used to raise and help others.

Nothing is by chance.

Divine Mind, and its wonder working, is beyond your finite mind to understand.

No detail is forgotten in My Plans, already perfect.

O let me hear Thee speaking In accents clear and still, Above the storms of passion, The murmurs of self-will.

O speak to reassure me, To hasten, or control; O speak, and make me listen, Thou guardian of my soul!

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." - Jeremiah 29:11

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/1/24

# The Call Of God



For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. — [1 Corinthians 1:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+1%3A17)

Paul states here that the call of God is to preach the gospel; but remember what Paul means by "the gospel," viz., the reality of Redemption in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are apt to make sanctification the end-all of our preaching. Paul alludes to personal experience by way of illustration, never as the end of the matter. We are nowhere commissioned to preach salvation or sanctification; we are commissioned to lift up Jesus Christ (John 12:32). It is a travesty to say that Jesus Christ travailed in Redemption to make me a saint. Jesus Christ travailed in Redemption to redeem the whole world, and place it unimpaired and rehabilitated before the throne of God. The fact that Redemption can be experienced by us is an illustration of the power of the reality of Redemption, but that is not the end of Redemption. If God were human, how sick to the heart and weary He would be of the constant requests we make for our salvation, for our sanctification. We tax His energies from morning till night for things for ourselves – some thing for me to be delivered from! When we touch the bedrock of the reality of the Gospel of God, we shall never bother God any further with little personal plaints.

The one passion of Paul’s life was to proclaim the Gospel of God. He welcomed heart-breaks, disillusionments, tribulation, for one reason only, because these things kept him in unmoved devotion to the Gospel of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 2/1/24

**Whom having not seen, ye love.**—[I PET. 1:8.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.8)

We walk by faith, not by sight.—We love him, because he first loved us.—And 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.—In whom ye trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.—God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.—Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

[II Cor. 5:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.7). -[I John 4:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.19). -[I John 4:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.16). -[Eph. l:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.13). -[Col. 1:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.27).[I John 4:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.20).[John 20:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.20.html" \l "John.20.29). -[Psa. 2:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.2.html" \l "Ps.2.12).

“They shall sing in the ways of the Lord.” [Psalm 138:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.138.html" \l "Ps.138.5)

The time when Christians begin to sing in the ways of the Lord is when they first lose their burden at the foot of the Cross. Not even the songs of the angels seem so sweet as the first song of rapture which gushes from the inmost soul of the forgiven child of God. You know how John Bunyan describes it. He says when poor Pilgrim lost his burden at the Cross, he gave three great leaps, and went on his way singing—

“Blest Cross! blest Sepulchre! blest rather be

The Man that there was put to shame for me!”

Believer, do you recollect the day when your fetters fell off? Do you remember the place when Jesus met you, and said, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; I have blotted out as a cloud thy transgressions, and as a thick cloud thy sins; they shall not be mentioned against thee any more forever.” Oh! what a sweet season is that when Jesus takes away the pain of sin. When the Lord first pardoned my sin, I was so joyous that I could scarce refrain from dancing. I thought on my road home from the house where I had been set at liberty, that I must tell the stones in the street the story of my deliverance. So full was my soul of joy, that I wanted to tell every snow-flake that was falling from heaven of the wondrous love of Jesus, who had blotted out the sins of one of the chief of rebels. But it is not only at the commencement of the Christian life that believers have reason for song; as long as they live they discover cause to sing in the ways of the Lord, and their experience of his constant lovingkindness leads them to say, “I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.” See to it, brother, that thou magnifiest the Lord this day.

“Long as we tread this desert land, New mercies shall new songs demand.”

# Word Live – 2/1/24

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

# Scripture Union –2/1/24

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# Today in the Word – 2/1/24

# Daily Devotional | With All Your HeartWith All Your Heart

**Read:** [**Deuteronomy 6:1–9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+6%3a1%e2%80%939)

### **Love the Lord Your God**

6 These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 2so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. 3Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

4Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+6%3A1%E2%80%939+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5091a)] 5Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Deuteronomy 6:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+6%3A1%E2%80%939+&version=NIV#en-NIV-5091) Or The Lord our God is one Lord; or The Lord is our God, the Lord is one; or The Lord is our God, the Lord alone

St. Augustine is often quoted as saying, “Love God and do whatever you please.” Taken at face value, it sounds like a license to carefree living. However, the second half of the full quote provides an important qualification: “[F]or the soul trained in love to God will do nothing to offend the One who is Beloved.”

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Deuteronomy 6:5

In Deuteronomy 6, we find the command to love God with “all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (v. 5). The Israelites were preparing to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land (v. 1). Just one chapter earlier, the Lord had given Moses the Ten Commandments, containing instructions for His people. They were to observe these commandments and teach them to their children. If they obeyed, God would give them prosperity and longevity (vv. 2–3).

In the center of today’s reading, verses 4–5, is what is known in Jewish tradition as the Shema. This prayer, one of the most important to Jewish people, begins with a call to “hear” (or “obey”). The supremacy of Israel’s God is proclaimed, as is the communal life of His people (v. 4). The Shema also asked people to listen and to respond with love. This love would be marked by their obedience to God’s commands. “Love” and “obey” are interchangeable in the Shema. To love is to obey. To obey is to love. Deuteronomy 5:10 made a similar equation.

Loving God means more than just a feeling. He requires our entire “heart” (intellect), entire “soul” (will), and entire “strength” (function). The people of Israel were commanded to love God not just in part, but with their whole being. And so are we. The passage finishes with further instruction to make these commands a permanent and present fixture in their lives and to pass this loving, obedient life on to the next generation.

## **Go Deeper**

What does it mean to love God with all your heart, soul, and strength? What connection is there between love and obedience?

**Pray with Us:**

Father God, how can we respond to Your everlasting, amazing love? As we study Your Word this month, teach us to love you with our whole being and to obey You not out of obligation, but out of love.

### BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 2/1/24

# All-Star Humility



**Read:** [**Philippians 2:1–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%202.1%E2%80%938)

### **Imitating Christ’s Humility**

2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in very nature[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A1%E2%80%938&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29398a)] God,  
    did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
7rather, he made himself nothing  
    by taking the very nature[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A1%E2%80%938&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29399b)] of a servant,  
    being made in human likeness.  
8And being found in appearance as a man,  
    he humbled himself  
    by becoming obedient to death—  
        even death on a cross!

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Philippians 2:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A1%E2%80%938&version=NIV#en-NIV-29398) Or in the form of
2. [Philippians 2:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A1%E2%80%938&version=NIV#en-NIV-29399) Or the form

[Jesus] made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant. [Philippians 2:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%202.7)

After a game, a college basketball star stayed behind to help workers throw out empty cups and food wrappers. When a fan posted a video of him in action, more than eighty thousand people viewed it. One person commented, “[The young man] is one of the most humble guys you will ever meet in your life.” It would’ve been easier for the basketball player to leave with his teammates and celebrate his role in the team’s victory. Instead, he volunteered for a thankless job.

The ultimate spirit of humility is seen in Jesus, who left His high position in heaven to take the role of a servant on earth ([Philippians 2:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%202.7)). He didn’t have to do it, but He willingly humbled Himself. His ministry on earth included teaching, healing, and loving all people—and dying and rising to save them.

Although Christ’s example can inspire us to sweep a floor, pick up a hammer, or dish up food, it may be most powerful when it finds its way into our attitude toward others. True humility is an inner quality that not only changes our actions but also changes what’s important to us. It motivates us to “value others above [ourselves]” (v. 3).

Author and preacher Andrew Murray said, “Humility is the bloom and the beauty of holiness.” May our lives reflect this beauty as, through the power of His Spirit, we reflect the heart of Christ (vv. 2–5).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How has Jesus’ humility affected you? In what areas are you tempted to be prideful?

Dear Jesus, thank You for humbling Yourself for me. Help me to follow Your example of valuing others’ needs above my own.

#### **Insight**

[Philippians 2:5-11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%202.5-11) describes what Jesus gave up by coming to earth and becoming a man, and it’s spawned much debate over the centuries. Verse 6 affirms that prior to His incarnation, Christ was equal to the Father in every way. But in coming to earth, He “made himself nothing” (v. 7) or “emptied Himself” (nasb) of something. The key issue is found in the word emptied (Greek kenoō). Some have said that He emptied Himself of His deity, but, if so, how could His sacrifice fully atone for our sins? The most satisfying view is that He retained His deity and all His attributes but set aside the right to use those powers for His own benefit. Instead, He chose to submit to the Father’s will and purpose.

Examine the evidence that [God became a man.](https://odbu.org/topic/ca202-01-lecture/?utm_source=2024+02+01+ODB+Link&utm_medium=Digital+ODB%E2%80%94email%2C+app%2C+website&utm_campaign=2024+02+01+ODB+Link%E2%80%94Ten+Reasons..God+Became+Man&utm_id=2024+02+01+ODB+Link%E2%80%94Ten+Reasons..God+Became+Man)

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

# God Calling – 2/1/24

# Another Start

Take courage. Do not fear. Start a new life tomorrow. Put the old mistakes away, and start anew. I give you a fresh start. Be not burdened. Be not anxious. If My forgiveness were for the righteous only, and those who had not sinned, where would be its need?

Remember as I said, "To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much."

Why do you fret and worry so? I wait to give you all that is lovely, but your lives are soiled with worry and fret. You would crush My treasures. I can only bless glad, thankful hearts.

You must be glad and joyful.

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." Philippians 3:13

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/2/24

# The Constraint Of The Call



Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! — [1 Corinthians 9:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+9%3A16)

Beware of stopping your ears to the call of God. Everyone who is saved is called to testify to the fact; but that is not the call to preach, it is merely an illustration in preaching. Paul is referring to the pangs produced in him by the constraint to preach the Gospel. Never apply what Paul says in this connection to souls coming in contact with God for salvation. There is nothing easier than getting saved because it is God’s sovereign work – Come unto Me and I will save you. Our Lord never lays down the conditions of discipleship as the conditions of salvation. We are condemned to salvation through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Discipleship has an option with it – “IF any man. . . “

Paul’s words have to do with being made a servant of Jesus Christ, and our permission is never asked as to what we will do or where we will go. God makes us broken bread and poured-out wine to please Himself. To be "separated unto the gospel" means to hear the call of God; and when a man begins to overhear that call, then begins agony that is worthy of the name. Every ambition is nipped in the bud, every desire of life quenched, every outlook completely extinguished and blotted out, saving one thing only – "separated unto the gospel." Woe be to the soul who tries to put his foot in any other direction when once that call has come to him. This College exists for you, and you – to see whether God has a man or woman here who cares about proclaiming His Gospel; to see whether God grips you. And beware of competitors when God does grip you.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 2/2/24

**Oh that thou wouldest keep me from evil.**—[I CHR. 4:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iChr.4.html" \l "iChr.4.10)

Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.—The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.—I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.—He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.—The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.

[Luke 22:46](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.22.html#Luke.22.46). -[Matt. 26:41](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.26.html#Matt.26.41).[Prov. 30:7-9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.30.html#Prov.30.7).[Psa. 121:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.121.html#Ps.121.7). -[Jer. 15:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.15.html#Jer.15.21). -[I John 5:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html#iJohn.5.18).[Rev. 3:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.3.html#Rev.3.10). -[II Pet. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.2.html#iiPet.2.9).

“Without the shedding of blood is no remission.” [Hebrews 9:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.9.html#Heb.9.22)

This is the voice of unalterable truth. In none of the Jewish ceremonies were sins, even typically, removed without blood-shedding. In no case, by no means can sin be pardoned without atonement. It is clear, then, that there is no hope for me out of Christ; for there is no other blood-shedding which is worth a thought as an atonement for sin. Am I, then, believing in him? Is the blood of his atonement truly applied to my soul? All men are on a level as to their need of him. If we be never so moral, generous, amiable, or patriotic, the rule will not be altered to make an exception for us. Sin will yield to nothing less potent than the blood of him whom God hath set forth as a propitiation. What a blessing that there is the one way of pardon! Why should we seek another?

Persons of merely formal religion cannot understand how we can rejoice that all our sins are forgiven us for Christ’s sake. Their works, and prayers, and ceremonies, give them very poor comfort; and well may they be uneasy, for they are neglecting the one great salvation, and endeavouring to get remission without blood. My soul, sit down, and behold the justice of God as bound to punish sin; see that punishment all executed upon thy Lord Jesus, and fall down in humble joy, and kiss the dear feet of him whose blood has made atonement for thee. It is in vain when conscience is aroused to fly to feelings and evidences for comfort: this is a habit which we learned in the Egypt of our legal bondage. The only restorative for a guilty conscience is a sight of Jesus suffering on the cross. “The blood is the life thereof,” says the Levitical law, and let us rest assured that it is the life of faith and joy and every other holy grace.

“Oh! how sweet to view the flowing

Of my Saviour’s precious blood;

With divine assurance knowing

He has made my peace with God.”

# Word Live – 2/2/24

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

# Scripture Union – 2/2/24

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# Today in the Word – 2/2/24

# The Greatest Commandment

**Read:** [**Matthew 22:23–40**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22%3a23%e2%80%9340)

### **Marriage at the Resurrection**

23That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. 24“Teacher,” they said, “Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. 25Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. 26The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. 27Finally, the woman died. 28Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?”

29Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. 30At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. 31But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, 32‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22%3A23%E2%80%9340+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23905a)]? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

33When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

### **The Greatest Commandment**

34Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22%3A23%E2%80%9340+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23910b)] 38This is the first and greatest commandment. 39And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22%3A23%E2%80%9340+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23912c)] 40All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Matthew 22:32](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22%3A23%E2%80%9340+&version=NIV#en-NIV-23905) Exodus 3:6
2. [Matthew 22:37](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22%3A23%E2%80%9340+&version=NIV#en-NIV-23910) Deut. 6:5
3. [Matthew 22:39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22%3A23%E2%80%9340+&version=NIV#en-NIV-23912) Lev. 19:18

When my college students often ask me to name my favorite author, story, or poem, I usually have trouble answering. My mind goes blank, and I can’t think of a single book I’ve ever read—let alone identify the very best one.

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.” Matthew 22:37–38

In Matthew 22, Jesus was asked a far more important, question. This conversation occurred not long after He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, drove the merchants out of the Temple, and healed several people who were blind and lame. “The chief priests and teachers of the law . . . were indignant” (Matt. 21:15), so they challenged Him repeatedly, looking for a reason to arrest Him.

Then the Sadducees took their turn. Although they didn’t believe in the resurrection, they quizzed Jesus on the concept. They created a hypothetical puzzle in which a widow married seven brothers one by one, and then asked Jesus to crack this code: “At the resurrection, whose wife will she be?” (v. 28). They expected Him to be theologically stumped.

Of course, He wasn’t. But rather than dignify their question with a response, He turned the tables back on them, pointing out errors in their understanding. The Sadducees retreated. Then one bold Pharisee stepped up with another test. “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (v. 36). In response, Jesus quoted the Shema: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’...And the second is like it, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (vv. 37–38).

These two commands encapsulate the entire covenant made between God and His people in Deuteronomy. “Heart,” “soul,” and “mind” aren’t meant as separate categories: We are to love and obey God with our entire being.

## **Go Deeper**

What does it mean to love God with your heart, soul, and mind? Why did Jesus say this was the greatest commandment?

**Pray with Us:**

Lord Jesus, thank you that, as Your followers, we “are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). You drew us to Yourself, You loved us first, and this love gives us strength to fulfill Your greatest commandment!

### BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 2/2/24

# Deep Friendship in Christ



**Read:** [**2 Samuel 1:23–27**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%201.23%E2%80%9327)

23Saul and Jonathan—  
    in life they were loved and admired,  
    and in death they were not parted.  
They were swifter than eagles,  
    they were stronger than lions.

24“Daughters of Israel,  
    weep for Saul,  
who clothed you in scarlet and finery,  
    who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.

25“How the mighty have fallen in battle!  
    Jonathan lies slain on your heights.  
26I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother;  
    you were very dear to me.  
Your love for me was wonderful,  
    more wonderful than that of women.

27“How the mighty have fallen!  
    The weapons of war have perished!”

Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord. [1 Samuel 20:42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2020.42)

There’s a monument in the chapel of Christ’s College, Cambridge, England, dedicated to two seventeenth-century physicians, John Finch and Thomas Baines. Known as the “inseparable friends,” Finch and Baines collaborated on medical research and traveled together on diplomatic trips. When Baines died in 1680, Finch lamented their “unbroken marriage of souls” that had lasted thirty-six years. Theirs had been a friendship of affection, loyalty, and commitment.

King David and Jonathan had a friendship equally as close. They shared deep mutual affection ([1 Samuel 20:41](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2020.41)), and even made vows of commitment to each other (vv. 8–17, 42). Their friendship was marked by radical loyalty (19:1–2; 20:13), Jonathan even sacrificing his right to the throne so David could become king (20:30–31; see 23:15–18). When Jonathan died, David lamented that Jonathan’s love to him had been “more wonderful than that of women” ([2 Samuel 1:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%201.26)).

We may feel uncomfortable today likening friendship to marriage, but maybe friendships like Finch and Baines’ and David and Jonathan’s can help our own friendships reach greater depth. Jesus welcomed His friends to lean against Him ([John 13:23–25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2013.23%E2%80%9325)), and the affection, loyalty, and commitment He shows us can be the basis of the deep friendships we build together.

By:  [Sheridan Voysey](https://odb.org/author/svoysey/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How do you think faith in Christ can deepen friendship? How could you show more affection, loyalty, or commitment to your friends?

Dear God, please help me to build deeper, more intimate friendships.

For further study, read [A Torrent of Justice: Building Relationships of Love and Kindness](https://discoverodb.org/articles/a-torrent-of-justice/).

#### **Insight**

In addition to the friendship between David and Jonathan ([1 Samuel 18:1-3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2018.1-3); [2 Samuel 1:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%201.26)), friendship is mentioned many other times in the Bible. Proverbs tells us that “a friend loves at all times” (17:17) but also warns that friendship can be based on wealth or gifts (14:20; 19:4 ,6) and advises that the righteous “choose their friends carefully” (12:26).

In [John 15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015), Jesus Himself speaks of friendship. He says: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. . . . I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (vv. 13-15). Christ’s statement that friends “lay down” their lives for each other would prove true in the coming hours and days. And the disciples themselves would demonstrate their love for Jesus as all but one (John) would die for their testimony about Him.

By: [**JR Hudberg**](https://odb.org/author/jrhudberg/)

# God Calling – 2/2/24

# Practice Love

Watch over and protect us.

Want of Love will block the way. You must love all. Those that fret you and those who do not.

Practice Love. It is a great lesson, and you have a great Teacher. You must love, how otherwise can you dwell in Me, when nothing unloving can come? Practice this and I will bless you exceedingly, above all you cannot only ask, but imagine.

No limit to My Power. Do all you can and leave to Me the rest. Peace will come, and Trust. Fear not, I am your Advocate, your Mediator.

"And this is his commandment... love one another, as he gave us commandment." 1 John 3:23

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/3/24

# Becoming the “Filth of the World”



We have been made as the filth of the world… —[1 Corinthians 4:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+4%3A13)

These words are not an exaggeration. The only reason they may not be true of us who call ourselves ministers of the gospel is not that Paul forgot or misunderstood the exact truth of them, but that we are too cautious and concerned about our own desires to allow ourselves to become the refuse or “filth of the world.” “Fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ…” ([Colossians 1:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1:24)) is not the result of the holiness of sanctification, but the evidence of consecration— being “separated to the gospel of God…” ([Romans 1:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1:1)).

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you…” (1 Peter 4:12). If we do think the things we encounter are strange, it is because we are fearful and cowardly. We pay such close attention to our own interests and desires that we stay out of the mire and say, “I won’t submit; I won’t bow or bend.” And you don’t have to— you can be saved by the “skin of your teeth” if you like. You can refuse to let God count you as one who is “separated to the gospel….” Or you can say, “I don’t care if I am treated like ‘the filth of the world’ as long as the gospel is proclaimed.” A true servant of Jesus Christ is one who is willing to experience martyrdom for the reality of the gospel of God. When a moral person is confronted with contempt, immorality, disloyalty, or dishonesty, he is so repulsed by the offense that he turns away and in despair closes his heart to the offender. But the miracle of the redemptive reality of God is that the worst and the vilest offender can never exhaust the depths of His love. Paul did not say that God separated him to show what a wonderful man He could make of him, but “to reveal His Son in me…” ([Galatians 1:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+1:16)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The main characteristic which is the proof of the indwelling Spirit is an amazing tenderness in personal dealing, and a blazing truthfulness with regard to God’s Word. Disciples Indeed, 386 R

# CCEL – 2/3/24

**Be strong, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.**—[HAG. 2:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hag.2.html" \l "Hag.2.4)

I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.—I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.—The joy of the Lord is your strength.

Thus said the Lord of hosts; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets.—Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.—The Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might.

If God be for us, who can be against us?—Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.

Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.—Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[John 15:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.5). -[Phi. 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.13). -[Eph. 6:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.10). -[Neh. 8:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Neh.8.html" \l "Neh.8.10).[Zech. 8:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.8.html" \l "Zech.8.9). -[Isa. 35:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.35.html" \l "Isa.35.3). -[Judg. 6:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Judg.6.html" \l "Judg.6.14).[Rom. 8:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.31). -[II Cor. 4:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html" \l "iiCor.4.1).[Gal. 6:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.9). -[I Cor. 15:57](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.57).

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors.” [Romans 8:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.12)

As God’s creatures, we are all debtors to him: to obey him with all our body, and soul, and strength. Having broken his commandments, as we all have, we are debtors to his justice, and we owe to him a vast amount which we are not able to pay. But of the Christian it can be said that he does not owe God’s justice anything, for Christ has paid the debt his people owed; for this reason the believer owes the more to love. I am a debtor to God’s grace and forgiving mercy; but I am no debtor to his justice, for he will never accuse me of a debt already paid. Christ said, “It is finished!” and by that he meant, that whatever his people owed was wiped away forever from the book of remembrance. Christ, to the uttermost, has satisfied divine justice; the account is settled; the handwriting is nailed to the cross; the receipt is given, and we are debtors to God’s justice no longer. But then, because we are not debtors to our Lord in that sense, we become ten times more debtors to God than we should have been otherwise. Christian, pause and ponder for a moment. What a debtor thou art to divine sovereignty! How much thou owest to his disinterested love, for he gave his own Son that he might die for thee. Consider how much you owe to his forgiving grace, that after ten thousand affronts he loves you as infinitely as ever. Consider what you owe to his power; how he has raised you from your death in sin; how he has preserved your spiritual life; how he has kept you from falling; and how, though a thousand enemies have beset your path, you have been able to hold on your way. Consider what you owe to his immutability. Though you have changed a thousand times, he has not changed once. Thou art as deep in debt as thou canst be to every attribute of God. To God thou owest thyself, and all thou hast—yield thyself as a living sacrifice, it is but thy reasonable service.

# Word Live – 2/3/24

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# Scripture Union – 2/3/24

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# Today in the Word – 2/3/24

# What Must I Do?

**Read:** [**Luke 10:25–37**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3a25%e2%80%9337)

### **The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

25On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

26“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

27He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A25%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25391a)]; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A25%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25391b)]”

28“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

29But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

30In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35The next day he took out two denarii[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A25%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25399c)] and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

36“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

37The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Luke 10:27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A25%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#en-NIV-25391) Deut. 6:5
2. [Luke 10:27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A25%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#en-NIV-25391) Lev. 19:18
3. [Luke 10:35](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A25%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#en-NIV-25399) A denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer (see Matt. 20:2).

In what ways have you been discipled? By your parents, teachers, or by a trusted mentor? Did they teach you overtly? Or did they just model the life of a Christ follower? In simple terms, “discipleship” is the process by which Christians learn more about Jesus and increasingly follow His example. It can happen in many ways.

He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Luke 10:27

When Jesus walked on earth, He attracted many followers, some became His disciples. In Luke 5–19, as Jesus journeys toward Jerusalem, He taught the people what it meant to follow Him. In today’s passage, an expert in the law approached Him. Recognizing His authority as a teacher, the lawyer asked, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Rather than answer directly, Jesus responds with a question: “What is written in the law?” Knowing the law well, the man quoted the Shema (see February 1): “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind,’ and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (v. 27). This is the second and only other citation of the Shema in the Gospels (for the first one, see February 2). Though the Shema is cited in the Gospels only on two occasions, it’s clear that this command is central to Jesus’ message of discipleship.

When Jesus affirmed the lawyer’s answer, the lawyer asked for clarification: “Who is my neighbor?” (v. 29). In response, Jesus paints a clear picture of neighborly love with the parable of the Good Samaritan. Loving one’s neighbor means sacrificially providing care for another, even to the despised by society.

The story of Mary and Martha follows, providing a concrete example of what it means to love God. Following Jesus and being His disciple means sitting at His feet, attending to His teaching, and prioritizing our relationship with Him above all else.

## **Go Deeper**

Describe a time when someone discipled you. How did that person teach and shape you? Have you had the opportunity to disciple others?

**Pray with Us:**

Your parable of the Good Samaritan still resonates in the hearts of Your followers, Lord! We are humbled by this example of loving your neighbor, and we ask You to lead us to the “neighbors” we can help and show Your love.

### BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 2/3/24

# Gifted with Love



**Read:** [**Proverbs 11:24–25**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2011.24%E2%80%9325)

24One person gives freely, yet gains even more;  
    another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.

25A generous person will prosper;  
    whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

One person gives freely, yet gains even more. [Proverbs 11:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2011.24)

On her wedding day, Gwendolyn Stulgis wore the wedding dress of her dreams. Then she gave it away—to a stranger. Stulgis believed a dress deserved more than sitting in a closet collecting dust. Other brides agreed. Now scores of women have bonded on her social media site to donate and receive wedding dresses. As one giver said, “I hope this dress gets passed from bride to bride to bride, and it just gets worn out and is in tatters at the end of its life because of all the celebrating that’s done in it.”

The spirit of giving can feel like a celebration, indeed. As it is written, “One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed” ([Proverbs 11:24–25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2011.24%E2%80%9325)).

The apostle Paul taught this principle in the New Testament. As he said his goodbyes to the believers in Ephesus, he gave them a blessing ([Acts 20:32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2020.32)) and reminded them of the importance of generosity. Paul pointed to his own work ethic as an example for them to follow. “In everything I did,” he said, “I showed you that by . . . hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ ” (v. 35).

Being generous reflects God. “For God so loved the world that He gave . . .” ([John 3:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%203.16)). Let’s follow His glorious example as He guides us.

By:  [Patricia Raybon](https://odb.org/author/patriciaraybon/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What good gift have you given recently? How did your gift help someone?

Dear Father, please open my hands to give to others with Your love in my heart.

#### **Insight**

[Proverbs 11:24-25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2011.24-25) provides winsome images that illustrate principles of generosity and stinginess. “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered” (esv). Contrary to human reasoning and self-preservation, giving can result in gain and emptying to fullness. Closed hands, clenched fists, and hoarding are inconsistent with the gospel and the teaching and example of Jesus (see [Luke 6:38](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%206.38)). In [2 Corinthians 8:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%208.9), Paul summed up the generosity of Christ: “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

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

# God Calling – 2/3/24

# If Man Oppose

Only believe. The walls of Jericho fell down. Was it axes or human implements that brought them down? Rather the Songs of Praise of the people and My Thought carried out in action.

All walls shall fall before you, too. There is no earth-power. It falls like a house of paper, at My miracle-working touch. Your faith and My power -- the only to essentials. Nothing else is needed.

So, if Man's petty opposition still holds good it is only because I choose to let it stand between you and what would be a mistake for you. If not -- a word -- a thought -- from Me, and it is gone. The hearts of Kings are in My rule and governance. All men can be moved at My wish.

Rest in this certainty. Rely on Me.

"Be not afraid, only believe." Mark 5:36

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/4/24

# The Compelling Majesty of His Power



The love of Christ compels us… —[2 Corinthians 5:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14)

Paul said that he was overpowered, subdued, and held as in a vise by “the love of Christ.” Very few of us really know what it means to be held in the grip of the love of God. We tend so often to be controlled simply by our own experience. The one thing that gripped and held Paul, to the exclusion of everything else, was the love of God. “The love of Christ compels us….” When you hear that coming from the life of a man or woman it is unmistakable. You will know that the Spirit of God is completely unhindered in that person’s life.

When we are born again by the Spirit of God, our testimony is based solely on what God has done for us, and rightly so. But that will change and be removed forever once you “receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you…” ([Acts 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:8)). Only then will you begin to realize what Jesus meant when He went on to say, “…you shall be witnesses to Me….” Not witnesses to what Jesus can do— that is basic and understood— but “witnesses to Me….” We will accept everything that happens as if it were happening to Him, whether we receive praise or blame, persecution or reward. No one is able to take this stand for Jesus Christ who is not totally compelled by the majesty of His power. It is the only thing that matters, and yet it is strange that it’s the last thing we as Christian workers realize. Paul said that he was gripped by the love of God and that is why he acted as he did. People could perceive him as mad or sane— he did not care. There was only one thing he lived for— to persuade people of the coming judgment of God and to tell them of “the love of Christ.” This total surrender to “the love of Christ” is the only thing that will bear fruit in your life. And it will always leave the mark of God’s holiness and His power, never drawing attention to your personal holiness.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

No one could have had a more sensitive love in human relationship than Jesus; and yet He says there are times when love to father and mother must be hatred in comparison to our love for Him.   So Send I You, 1301 L

# CCEL – 2/4/24

**The Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.**—[DEUT. 17:16.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.17.html" \l "Deut.17.16)

Truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is a heavenly. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.—The just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.—No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.—Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

[Heb. 11:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.11.html" \l "Heb.11.15),[25,26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.11.html" \l "Heb.11.25). -[Heb. 10:38,39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.38). -[Luke 9:62](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.9.html" \l "Luke.9.62).[Gal. 6:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.14). -[II Cor. 6:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.17).[Phi. 1:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.1.html" \l "Phil.1.6).

“The love of the Lord.” [Hosea 3:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.3.html" \l "Hos.3.1)

Believer, look back through all thine experience, and think of the way whereby the Lord thy God has led thee in the wilderness, and how he hath fed and clothed thee every day—how he hath borne with thine ill manners—how he hath put up with all thy murmurings, and all thy longings after the flesh-pots of Egypt—how he has opened the rock to supply thee, and fed thee with manna that came down from heaven. Think of how his grace has been sufficient for thee in all thy troubles—how his blood has been a pardon to thee in all thy sins—how his rod and his staff have comforted thee. When thou hast thus looked back upon the love of the Lord, then let faith survey his love in the future, for remember that Christ’s covenant and blood have something more in them than the past. He who has loved thee and pardoned thee, shall never cease to love and pardon. He is Alpha, and he shall be Omega also: he is first, and he shall be last. Therefore, bethink thee, when thou shalt pass through the valley of the shadow of death, thou needest fear no evil, for he is with thee. When thou shalt stand in the cold floods of Jordan, thou needest not fear, for death cannot separate thee from his love; and when thou shalt come into the mysteries of eternity thou needest not tremble, “For I am persuaded, that neither death; nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Now, soul, is not thy love refreshed? Does not this make thee love Jesus? Doth not a flight through illimitable plains of the ether of love inflame thy heart and compel thee to delight thyself in the Lord thy God? Surely as we meditate on “the love of the Lord,” our hearts burn within us, and we long to love him more.

# Word Live – 2/4/24

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# Scripture Union – 2/4/24

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# Today in the Word – 2/4/24

# What Do I Believe?

**Read:** [**Acts 17:16–34**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3a16%e2%80%9334)

### **In Athens**

16While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. 18A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. 19Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” 21(All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

22Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

24“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3A16%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27552a)] As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3A16%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27552b)]

29“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. 30In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

32When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” 33At that, Paul left the Council. 34Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Acts 17:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3A16%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-27552) From the Cretan philosopher Epimenides
2. [Acts 17:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3A16%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-27552) From the Cilician Stoic philosopher Aratus

Did you have a favorite childhood story—one you read again and again? Maybe you imagined you were that princess who rose from rags to riches. Or you soared with a superhero who donned a cape to save the world. Stories shape us in subtle and significant ways. From them we learn values, priorities, and goals. They can shape our view of God.

For in him we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:28

What happens, though, when the Bible contradicts these stories? Which one wins the war for our mind? Loving God with all our mind means examining our worldview and aligning it not with our culture, but with the God of the Bible. In today’s passage, Paul was “greatly distressed” when he saw how the wrong stories were winning the allegiance of the Athenians. They were intellectual people, but they were misguided. Paul’s emotion and compassion compelled him to action.

Instead of preaching to the people of Athens, Paul went to their synagogue and marketplace and reasoned with them. He likely asked them questions, using the popular Socratic method. Paul understood the people and met them where they were. They believed in many gods and worshiped each god for the specific role it played. Paul acknowledged their study and quoted their poets. Then, rather than attack their world- view, he invited them into a new narrative: of a God who “made the world and everything in it” (v. 24).

Paul told the story of God’s development of the nations (v. 26) and His desire to be known by them (v. 27). This God is a personal Father (v. 29) who “commands all people everywhere to repent” (v. 30) and will one day judge the world’s response to Jesus whom He raised from the dead (v. 31). Paul’s story contradicted everything they had learned. How would they respond?

## **Go Deeper**

What stories have influenced your worldview? How does the truth of Scripture reshape our values, priorities, and goals?

**Pray with Us:**

Is my mind aligned with the truth of Your Word? Give us discernment to navigate all the worldviews and teachings of society and never lose sight of Scripture’s wisdom and sound mind.

### BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 2/4/24

# Rewired by Gratitude



**Read:** [**Psalm 103:1–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103.1%E2%80%938)**,** [**17**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalm%20103.17)

#### **Of David.**

1Praise the Lord, my soul;  
    all my inmost being, praise his holy name.  
2Praise the Lord, my soul,  
    and forget not all his benefits—  
3who forgives all your sins  
    and heals all your diseases,  
4who redeems your life from the pit  
    and crowns you with love and compassion,  
5who satisfies your desires with good things  
    so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

6The Lord works righteousness  
    and justice for all the oppressed.

7He made known his ways to Moses,  
    his deeds to the people of Israel:  
8The Lord is compassionate and gracious,  
    slow to anger, abounding in love.

**Read:** [**Psalm 103:1–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103.1%E2%80%938)**,** [**17**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalm%20103.17)

17But from everlasting to everlasting  
    the Lord’s love is with those who fear him,  
    and his righteousness with their children’s children—

Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits. [Psalm 103:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103.2)

After being diagnosed with a brain tumor, Christina Costa noticed how much of the talk around facing cancer is dominated by the language of fighting. She found that this metaphor quickly started to feel exhausting. She “didn’t want to spend over a year at war with [her] own body.” Instead, what she found most helpful were daily practices of gratitude—for the team of professionals caring for her and for the ways her brain and body were showing healing. She experienced firsthand that no matter how difficult the struggle, practices of gratitude can help us resist depression and “wire our brains to help us build resilience.”

Costa’s powerful story reminded me that practicing gratitude isn’t just something believers do out of duty. Although it’s true that God deserves our gratitude, it’s also profoundly good for us. When we lift up our hearts to say, “Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits” ([Psalm 103:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103.2)), we’re reminded of the countless ways God’s at work—assuring us of forgiveness, working healing in our bodies and hearts, letting us experience “love and compassion” and countless “good things” in His creation (vv. 3–5).

While not all suffering will find complete healing in this lifetime, our hearts can always be renewed by gratitude, for God’s love is with us “from everlasting to everlasting” (v. 17).

By:  [Monica La Rose](https://odb.org/author/monicalarose/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How have you experienced healing through gratitude? What are you grateful for today?

Dear God, thank You for always giving me reasons for gratitude and hope.

#### **Insight**

The Psalms, perhaps more than any other book of the Bible, are filled with praise and gratitude to God. The psalmists David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, Solomon, and other unnamed writers all praise Him for His attributes and wondrous deeds. [Psalm 103](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103) is such a psalm. David had many reasons to praise God who’d “been good to [him]” (13:6): God chose David, a lowly shepherd, to be king. He forgave his grievous sins (see [2 Samuel 11-12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2011-12); [Psalms 32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2032), [51](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2051)) and gave him victory over his enemies (18:3). The psalmist sang God’s praises because of His righteousness and love (7:17; 31:21), counsel and instruction (16:7). God, his strength and fortress (59:17), lifted him “out of the slimy pit” and “put a new song in [his] mouth” (40:2-3). God, the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort” deserves our praise ([2 Corinthians 1:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%201.3)).

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

# God Calling – 2/4/24

# Drop Your Crutch

Just go step by step. My will shall be revealed as you go. You will never cease to be thankful for this time when you felt at peace and trustful, and yet had no human security.

That is the time of the True learning of trust in Me. "When thy Father and Mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up." This is a literal dependence on Me.

When human support or material help of any kind is removed, then My power can become operative. I cannot teach a man to walk who is trusting to a crutch. Away with your crutch, and My power shall so invigorate you that you shall indeed walk on to victory. Never limit My power. It is limitless.

"God has spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." Psalm 62:11

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/5/24

# Are You Ready To Be Poured Out As an Offering? (1)



If I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. —[Philippians 2:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Philippians+2%3A17)

Are you willing to sacrifice yourself for the work of another believer—to pour out your life sacrificially for the ministry and faith of others? Or do you say, “I am not willing to be poured out right now, and I don’t want God to tell me how to serve Him. I want to choose the place of my own sacrifice. And I want to have certain people watching me and saying, ‘Well done.’ ”

It is one thing to follow God’s way of service if you are regarded as a hero, but quite another thing if the road marked out for you by God requires becoming a “doormat” under other people’s feet. God’s purpose may be to teach you to say, “I know how to be abased…” ([Philippians 4:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+4:12)). Are you ready to be sacrificed like that? Are you ready to be less than a mere drop in the bucket— to be so totally insignificant that no one remembers you even if they think of those you served? Are you willing to give and be poured out until you are used up and exhausted— not seeking to be ministered to, but to minister? Some saints cannot do menial work while maintaining a saintly attitude, because they feel such service is beneath their dignity.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 2/5/24

**I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**—[JOHN 10:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.10)

In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.—She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.—If by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.—Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.—Our Saviour Jesus Christ, . . . hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.—For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

[Gen. 2:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.2.html" \l "Gen.2.17). -[Gen. 3:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.3.html" \l "Gen.3.6).[Rom. 6:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.23). -[Rom. 5:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.17). -[I Cor. 15:21,22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.21). -[II Tim. 1:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.1.html" \l "iiTim.1.10).[I John 5:11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html" \l "iJohn.5.11). -[John 3:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html" \l "John.3.17).

“The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” [1 John 4:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.14)

It is a sweet thought that Jesus Christ did not come forth without his Father’s permission, authority, consent, and assistance. He was sent of the Father, that he might be the Saviour of men. We are too apt to forget that, while there are distinctions as to the persons in the Trinity, there are no distinctions of honour. We too frequently ascribe the honour of our salvation, or at least the depths of its benevolence, more to Jesus Christ than we do the Father. This is a very great mistake. What if Jesus came? Did not his Father send him? If he spake wondrously, did not his Father pour grace into his lips, that he might be an able minister of the new covenant? He who knoweth the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost as he should know them, never setteth one before another in his love; he sees them at Bethlehem, at Gethsemane, and on Calvary, all equally engaged in the work of salvation. O Christian, hast thou put thy confidence in the Man Christ Jesus? Hast thou placed thy reliance solely on him? And art thou united with him? Then believe that thou art united unto the God of heaven. Since to the Man Christ Jesus thou art brother, and holdest closest fellowship, thou art linked thereby with God the Eternal, and “the Ancient of days” is thy Father and thy friend. Didst thou ever consider the depth of love in the heart of Jehovah, when God the Father equipped his Son for the great enterprise of mercy? If not, be this thy day’s meditation. The Father sent him! Contemplate that subject. Think how Jesus works what the Father wills. In the wounds of the dying Saviour see the love of the great I AM. Let every thought of Jesus be also connected with the Eternal, ever-blessed God, for “It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.”

# Word Live – 2/5/24

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# Scripture Union – 2/5/24

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# Today in the Word – 2/5/24

# Remain Teachable

**Read:** [**2 Peter 1:3–11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+1%3a3%e2%80%9311)

### **Confirming One’s Calling and Election**

3His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

5For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 8For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

10Therefore, my brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+1%3A3%E2%80%9311+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30490a)] make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, 11and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [2 Peter 1:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+1%3A3%E2%80%9311+&version=NIV#en-NIV-30490) The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family.

In Carol Dweck’s popular book Mindset: The New Psychology of Success she explains a theory that became popular in the classroom. Students with a growth mindset believe their skills and understanding can be improved with study and practice. They are engaged in the teaching and learning process.

For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control. 2 Peter 1:5–6

How about us? Do we have a growth mindset when it comes to our Christian walk? Remaining open to input and instruction should be our approach to all areas of life, including the spiritual. In 2 Peter 1, Peter assured his audience that God had given them everything they need to pursue spiritual growth and maturity (v. 3). He describes the goal of discipleship as godliness (“good worship”), intimacy with God, and freedom from evil desires (v. 4).

Then Peter lays out a pattern to attain growth, which begins with a basic faith in Jesus Christ. While salvation is essential, it is only the starting place. Peter explains the process, “Add to your faith goodness” (v. 6), virtue, or high moral standards. True faith affects how we live.

To goodness, we are to add “knowledge” or the ability to discern truth. These believers were to weigh all new knowledge against the Scripture. After knowledge, Peter calls them to “self-control” (the discipline to resist temptation) and “perseverance” (the strength to withstand trials).

The very top of this progression is love (v. 7). Philadelphia (“brotherly kindness”) and agape (“love”). The process unfolds like a flower—petal by petal—until the full revelation of love at the end. In verse 8, Peter urges us to teachability. While believers already “possess these qualities” in some measure, loving God with our mind means that we keep growing and focus on the eternal reward (v. 11).

## **Go Deeper**

Do you have a “growth” or “fixed” mindset? How open are you to input and instruction? In what ways are you pursuing spiritual growth and truth?

**Pray with Us:**

We may think that growth is attained by knowledge. But today’s passage says that growth begins with faith, and then comes goodness, then knowledge. May we live by faith, with goodness, knowledge, and Your love. Amen!

### BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 2/5/24

# Extending Dignity



**Read:** [**John 8:2–11**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.2%E2%80%9311)

2At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” 6They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

9At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

11“No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Has no one condemned you? [John 8:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.10)

Maggie’s young friend showed up in church shockingly dressed. No one should have been surprised though; she was a prostitute. Maggie’s visitor shifted uneasily in her seat, alternately tugging at her much-too-short skirt and folding her arms self-consciously around herself.

“Oh, are you cold?” Maggie asked, deftly diverting attention away from how she was dressed. “Here! Take my shawl.”

Maggie introduced dozens of people to Jesus simply by inviting them to come to church and helping them feel comfortable. The gospel had a way of shining through her winsome methods. She treated everyone with dignity.

When religious leaders dragged a woman before Jesus with the harsh (and accurate) charge of adultery, Christ kept the attention off her until He sent her accusers away. Once they were gone, He could have scolded her. Instead, He asked two simple questions: “Where are they?” and “Has no one condemned you?” ([John 8:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.10)). The answer to the latter question, of course, was no. So Jesus gave her the gospel in one brief statement: “Then neither do I condemn you.” And then the invitation: “Go now and leave your life of sin” (v. 11).

Never underestimate the power of genuine love for people—the kind of love that refuses to condemn, even as it extends dignity and forgiveness to everyone.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How will you react when you see someone who’s living a hard lifestyle? Who can you invite to church this week and how might you get them to come?

Gracious God, please forgive me for having a judgmental spirit, and help me to show others Your love and grace.

Learn more about the importance of [extending forgiveness.](https://odbu.org/lessons/sf107-01/?utm_source=2024+02+05+ODB+Article+Link&utm_medium=digital+%28email%2C+app%2C+web%29&utm_campaign=2024+02+05+ODB+Article+Link%E2%80%94+70x7&utm_id=2024+02+05+ODB+Article+Link%E2%80%94+70x7)

#### **Insight**

In the passage about Jesus and the woman caught in adultery in [John 8:2-11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.2-11), the religious leaders were trying to entrap Him on the horns of a dilemma (a situation where you have two choices, but both are wrong). If He excuses the woman’s sin, He’d be seen as denying Moses’ law and would be exposed as a false teacher. But if He said to stone her to death, He’d be defying Roman law—for only Rome could enact capital punishment. Instead, He chooses a third option—making the religious leaders the subject of examination instead of the woman and offering her compassion.

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

# God Calling – 2/5/24

# You Shall Know

Walk with Me. I will teach you. Listen to Me and I will speak. Continue to meet Me, in spite of all opposition and every obstacle, in spite of the days when you may hear no voice, and there may come no intimate heart-to-heart telling.

As you persist in this, and make a life-habit of it, in many marvelous ways I will reveal My will to you. You shall have more sure knowing of both the present and the future. But that will be only the reward of the regular coming to meet Me.

Life is a school. There are many teachers. Not to everyone do I come personally. Believe literally that the problems and difficulties of your lives can be explained by Me more clearly and effectually than by any other.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John 7:17