# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/5/21

# The Life of Power to Follow



Jesus answered him, ‘Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.’ —[John 13:36](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+13%3A36)

‘And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me’ ‘ ([John 21:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+21:19)). Three years earlier Jesus had said, ‘Follow Me’ ([Matthew 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+4:19)), and Peter followed with no hesitation. The irresistible attraction of Jesus was upon him and he did not need the Holy Spirit to help him do it. Later he came to the place where he denied Jesus, and his heart broke. Then he received the Holy Spirit and Jesus said again, ‘Follow Me’ ([John 21:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+21:19)). Now no one is in front of Peter except the Lord Jesus Christ. The first ‘Follow Me’ was nothing mysterious; it was an external following. Jesus is now asking for an internal sacrifice and yielding (see [John 21:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+21:18)).

Between these two times Peter denied Jesus with oaths and curses (see [Matthew 26:69-75](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26:69-75)). But then he came completely to the end of himself and all of his self-sufficiency. There was no part of himself he would ever rely on again. In his state of destitution, he was finally ready to receive all that the risen Lord had for him. ‘…He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ ‘ ([John 20:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20:22)). No matter what changes God has performed in you, never rely on them. Build only on a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, and on the Spirit He gives.

All our promises and resolutions end in denial because we have no power to accomplish them. When we come to the end of ourselves, not just mentally but completely, we are able to ‘receive the Holy Spirit.’ ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ — the idea is that of invasion. There is now only One who directs the course of your life, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We are not to preach the doing of good things; good deeds are not to be preached, they are to be performed.  
[So Send I You](http://www.dhp.org/Products/So-Send-I-You-emandem-Workmen-of-God__9741.aspx)

# CCEL – 1/5/21

**We which have believed do enter into rest.**—[HEB. 4:3.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.3)

They weary themselves to commit iniquity.—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. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works.—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.—This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing.

[Jer. 9:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.9.html" \l "Jer.9.5). -[Rom. 7:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html" \l "Rom.7.23).[Matt. 11:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.11.html" \l "Matt.11.28). -[Rom. 5:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.1).[Heb. 4:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.10). -[Phi. 3:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.9). -[Isa. 28:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.28.html" \l "Isa.28.12).

‘And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.’

### [Genesis 1:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.1.html" \l "Gen.1.4)

Light might well be good since it sprang from that fiat of goodness, ‘Let there be light.’ We who enjoy it should be more grateful for it than we are, and see more of God in it and by it. Light physical is said by Solomon to be sweet, but gospel light is infinitely more precious, for it reveals eternal things, and ministers to our immortal natures. When the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual light, and opens our eyes to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we behold sin in its true colours, and ourselves in our real position; we see the Most Holy God as he reveals himself, the plan of mercy as he propounds it, and the world to come as the Word describes it. Spiritual light has many beams and prismatic colours, but whether they be knowledge, joy, holiness, or life, all are divinely good. If the light received be thus good, what must the essential light be, and how glorious must be the place where he reveals himself. O Lord, since light is so good, give us more of it, and more of thyself, the true light.

No sooner is there a good thing in the world, than a division is necessary. Light and darkness have no communion; God has divided them, let us not confound them. Sons of light must not have fellowship with deeds, doctrines, or deceits of darkness. The children of the day must be sober, honest, and bold in their Lord’s work, leaving the works of darkness to those who shall dwell in it forever. Our Churches should by discipline divide the light from the darkness, and we should by our distinct separation from the world do the same. In judgment, in action, in hearing, in teaching, in association, we must discern between the precious and the vile, and maintain the great distinction which the Lord made upon the world’s first day. O Lord Jesus, be thou our light throughout the whole of this day, for thy light is the light of men.

# Word Live – 1/5/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/5/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/5/21

# A New Way to Forgive

**Read:** [**Matthew 18:21–35**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3a21%e2%80%9335)

### **The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant**

21Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

22Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3a21%e2%80%9335" \l "fen-NIV-23750a" \o "See footnote a)]

23“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3a21%e2%80%9335#fen-NIV-23752b)] was brought to him. 25Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ 27The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

28“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3a21%e2%80%9335#fen-NIV-23756c)] He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

29“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

30“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ 34In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 18:22](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3a21%e2%80%9335#en-NIV-23750) Or seventy times seven
2. [Matthew 18:24](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3a21%e2%80%9335#en-NIV-23752) Greek ten thousand talents; a talent was worth about 20 years of a day laborer’s wages.
3. [Matthew 18:28](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3a21%e2%80%9335#en-NIV-23756) Greek a hundred denarii; a denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer (see 20:2).

How many times should we let someone off the hook before punishment is enforced? Peter asked Jesus this logical question, whose answer was probably not what we might expect. “Seventy- seven times,” Jesus responded. Or more literally translated, “seventy times seven times” (v. 22). Jesus was not teaching Peter a quick math lesson; rather, He was teaching him what a new way to forgive looks like in the kingdom of God.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

Before Peter could respond, Jesus launched into a parable to shed light on His answer. In this parable, the servant owed his master the equivalent of 20 years of wages (v. 24). Yet, he was forgiven. However, when his co-worker owed the forgiven servant just a small sum, he was unwilling to forgive (vv. 28–30). Jesus’ point was not that a severe punishment comes from the master when he is crossed. That would be contrary to Jesus’ teaching in the prior verses. Rather, Jesus was teaching that because we have been forgiven beyond comprehension, we are to forgive others. This was a new concept for people in the first century, and it can be a difficult one for us today.

In a culture where the custom was “an eye for an eye” and “a tooth for a tooth” (Ex. 21:24), Jesus taught that forgiveness is a new way, a better way. It is never easy, but it is what we have been called to do. Christ’s words to His oppressors from the cross, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34), remind us that even while we wait for justice to come in this world, we have been called to forgive. Not just once, or twice, but unconditionally and unendingly.

**Apply the Word**

Who do you need to forgive? Maybe it is a neighbor, co-worker, old friend, or family member? Maybe you need help forgiving yourself? Remember that God unconditionally and unendingly forgives, and so should we.

In this fallen world where wrongdoing abounds, we ask for the ability to forgive those who have injured us. We rejoice in your forgiveness of our own unpayable debts. Thank you, dear God!

### **Pray with Us**

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/5/21

# A Ripening Process

 **Read:** [**Jeremiah 15:15–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2015.15%E2%80%9318)

15Lord, you understand;  
    remember me and care for me.  
    Avenge me on my persecutors.  
You are long-suffering—do not take me away;  
    think of how I suffer reproach for your sake.  
16When your words came, I ate them;  
    they were my joy and my heart’s delight,  
for I bear your name,  
    Lord God Almighty.  
17I never sat in the company of revelers,  
    never made merry with them;  
I sat alone because your hand was on me  
    and you had filled me with indignation.  
18Why is my pain unending  
    and my wound grievous and incurable?  
You are to me like a deceptive brook,  
    like a spring that fails.

When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight. [Jeremiah 15:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2015.16)

Early in his fifty-year ministry in Cambridge, England, Charles Simeon (1759–1836) met a neighboring pastor, Henry Venn, and his daughters. After the visit, the daughters remarked how harsh and self-assertive the young man seemed. In response, Venn asked his daughters to pick a peach from the trees. When they wondered why their father would want the unripe fruit, he responded, “Well, my dears, it is green now, and we must wait; but a little more sun, and a few more showers, and the peach will be ripe and sweet. So it is with Mr. Simeon.”

Over the years Simeon did soften through God’s transforming grace. One reason was his commitment to read the Bible and pray every day. A friend who stayed with him for a few months witnessed this practice and remarked, “Here was the secret of his great grace and spiritual strength.”

Simeon in his daily time with God followed the practice of the prophet Jeremiah, who faithfully listened for God’s words. Jeremiah depended on them so much that he said, “When your words came, I ate them.” He mulled and chewed over God’s words, which were his “joy” and “heart’s delight” ([Jeremiah 15:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2015.16)).

If we too resemble a sour green fruit, we can trust that God will help to soften us through His Spirit as we get to know Him through reading and obeying the Scriptures.

By:  [Amy Boucher Pye](https://odb.org/author/amyboucherpye/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How has reading the Bible changed you? Why might you sometimes not read it?

God, the Scriptures feed me and protect me from sin. Help me to read them every day.

#### **Insight**

In [Jeremiah 15:15–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2015.15%E2%80%9318), several metaphors vividly capture Jeremiah’s experience of his calling as a prophet. In verse 16, he uses the metaphor of eating to capture the idea of fully embracing and internalizing God’s words. Some scholars suggest that to “bear [God’s] name” in this context may allude to the shared name that results from marriage. In addition, the words joy and delight elsewhere in Jeremiah are always connected with wedding festivities (7:34; 16:9; 25:10; 33:11).

In [Jeremiah 15:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2015.18), the prophet uses the metaphor of streambeds or wadis to capture his bewilderment at the stark contrast between his initial intimacy with God and his current anguish. Such streambeds in the summertime were often dried up and therefore unreliable sources of water. In this way, Jeremiah vividly captures a feeling of deep betrayal at experiencing God in this way, rather than as the everlasting “spring of living water” He’d described Himself as (2:13).

To learn more about how the geography of the Holy Land enhances our understanding of the Bible, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/NT110](https://ChristianUniversity.org/NT110).

# God Calling – 1/5/21

# Hoard Nothing

Love Me and do My Will. No evil shall befall you. Take no thought for tomorrow. Rest in My presence brings Peace. God will help you. Desire brings fulfillment. Peace like a quiet flowing river cleanses, sweeps all irritants away.

You shall be taught, continue these prayer times, even if they seem fruitless. The devil will try by any means to stop them. Heed him not. He will say evil spirits may enter in. Heed him not.

Rest your nerves. Tired nerves are a reflection on, not of, God's Power. Hope all the time.

Do not be afraid of poverty. Let money flow freely. I will let it flow in but you must let it flow out. I never send money to stagnate - only to those who pass it on.  Keep nothing for yourself. Hoard nothing. Only have what you need and use. This is My Law of Discipleship.

Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.  Psalm 37:5

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/6/21

# Worship



He moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. —[Genesis 12:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+12%3A8)

Worship is giving God the best that He has given you. Be careful what you do with the best you have. Whenever you get a blessing from God, give it back to Him as a love-gift. Take time to meditate before God and offer the blessing back to Him in a deliberate act of worship. If you hoard it for yourself, it will turn into spiritual dry rot, as the manna did when it was hoarded (see [Exodus 16:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+16:20)). God will never allow you to keep a spiritual blessing completely for yourself. It must be given back to Him so that He can make it a blessing to others.

Bethel is the symbol of fellowship with God; Ai is the symbol of the world. Abram ‘pitched his tent’ between the two. The lasting value of our public service for God is measured by the depth of the intimacy of our private times of fellowship and oneness with Him. Rushing in and out of worship is wrong every time— there is always plenty of time to worship God. Days set apart for quiet can be a trap, detracting from the need to have daily quiet time with God. That is why we must ‘pitch our tents’ where we will always have quiet times with Him, however noisy our times with the world may be. There are not three levels of spiritual life— worship, waiting, and work. Yet some of us seem to jump like spiritual frogs from worship to waiting, and from waiting to work. God’s idea is that the three should go together as one. They were always together in the life of our Lord and in perfect harmony. It is a discipline that must be developed; it will not happen overnight.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/6/21

**Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands.**—[PSA. 90:17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.90.html" \l "Ps.90.17)

Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.—We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon us.

Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.—Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.—Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

[Ezek. 16:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.16.html" \l "Ezek.16.14). -[II Cor. 3:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.3.html" \l "iiCor.3.18). -[I Pet. 4:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.14).[Psa. 128:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.128.html" \l "Ps.128.1). -[Prov. 16:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.16.html" \l "Prov.16.3).[Phi. 2:12,13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.12). -[II Thes. 2:16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiThess.2.html" \l "iiThess.2.16).

‘Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.’ [1 Peter 5:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.7)

It is a happy way of soothing sorrow when we can feel—’HE careth for me.’ Christian! do not dishonour religion by always wearing a brow of care; come, cast your burden upon your Lord. You are staggering beneath a weight which your Father would not feel. What seems to you a crushing burden, would be to him but as the small dust of the balance. Nothing is so sweet as to

‘Lie passive in God’s hands,

And know no will but his.’

O child of suffering, be thou patient; God has not passed thee over in his providence. He who is the feeder of sparrows, will also furnish you with what you need. Sit not down in despair; hope on, hope ever. Take up the arms of faith against a sea of trouble, and your opposition shall yet end your distresses. There is One who careth for you. His eye is fixed on you, his heart beats with pity for your woe, and his hand omnipotent shall yet bring you the needed help. The darkest cloud shall scatter itself in showers of mercy. The blackest gloom shall give place to the morning. He, if thou art one of his family, will bind up thy wounds, and heal thy broken heart. Doubt not his grace because of thy tribulation, but believe that he loveth thee as much in seasons of trouble as in times of happiness. What a serene and quiet life might you lead if you would leave providing to the God of providence! With a little oil in the cruse, and a handful of meal in the barrel, Elijah outlived the famine, and you will do the same. If God cares for you, why need you care too? Can you trust him for your soul, and not for your body? He has never refused to bear your burdens, he has never fainted under their weight. Come, then, soul! have done with fretful care, and leave all thy concerns in the hand of a gracious God.

# Word Live – 1/6/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/6/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/6/21

# A New Attitude

**Read:** [**Matthew 6:25–34**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a25%e2%80%9334)

### **Do Not Worry**

25“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a25%e2%80%9334#fen-NIV-23310a)]?

28“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 6:27](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a25%e2%80%9334#en-NIV-23310) Or single cubit to your height

What do you worry about? What is pressing on your heart today? As Jesus preached on the hillside, He must have sensed that people had concerns about their next meal or providing for their household’s daily needs. Our text comes from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, but it was most likely a message He had often communicated. Jesus implored His listeners to shift their thinking when it came to anxiety and worry. He wanted His followers to have a new type of attitude and perspective.

Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Matthew 6:34

In this short section of His sermon, He uses the word “worry” or “anxious” six times. We know from reading other portions of Scripture that it is good to remember the past and prepare for the future, but Jesus reminds us here, that our attitude needs to be one of reliance on God in the present. In His sermon, he uses visual aids to get His message across to His listeners. First, while most likely pointing to the birds flying on the shoreline, Jesus reminds His listeners of the ease at which the birds were able to find food and how much more valuable people are to God than the birds (v. 26).

Then Jesus points to the flowers growing in the fields off in the distance (v. 28). Just as flowers grow with beauty and simplicity, Jesus teaches that His followers should not worry about the past or the future. Instead, seeking first the kingdom of God ought to be on the forefront of our minds. While it is challenging not to worry, especially after a year like 2020, we can follow Jesus’ reminder to rely on God’s provision and protection every day and to live for Him.

**Apply the Word**

This passage doesn’t say that we will never worry, it does reframe our worries as children of God. God is our provider. He knows our past, our present, and our future. Nothing escapes His control. Write down your worries today and bring them to God in prayer.

### **Pray with Us**

We confess that we often allow yesterday’s regrets and tomorrow’s worries  
to rule our thoughts. Lord, today we submit our anxieties to you, remembering that you are the one who gives us our daily bread.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/6/21

# Depths of Love

 **Read:** [**1 John 3:1–6**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.1%E2%80%936)

3 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-30582a" \o "See footnote a)] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

4Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 5But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. 6No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 John 3:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#en-NIV-30582) Or when it is made known

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! [1 John 3:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.1)

Three-year-old Dylan McCoy had just learned to swim when he fell through a rotted plywood covering into a forty-foot deep, stone-walled well in his grandfather’s backyard. Dylan managed to stay afloat in ten feet of water until his father went down to rescue him. Firefighters brought ropes to raise the boy, but the father was so worried about his son that he’d already climbed down the slippery rocks to make sure he was safe.

Oh, the love of a parent! Oh, the lengths (and depths) we will go for our children!

When the apostle John writes to believers in the early church who were struggling to find footing for their faith as false teaching swirled about them, he extends these words like a life-preserver: “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” ([1 John 3:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.1)). Naming believers in Jesus as “children” of God was an intimate and legal labeling that brought validity to all who trust in Him.

Oh, the lengths and depths God will go for His children!

There are actions a parent will take only for their child—like Dylan’s dad descending into a well to save his son. And like the ultimate act of our heavenly Father, who sent His only Son to gather us close to His heart and restore us to life with Him (vv. 5–6).

By:  [Elisa Morgan](https://odb.org/author/elisamorgan/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When has God rescued you from a dark well of need? How have you seen Him bring you to a place of hope?

Oh, heavenly Father, thank You for reaching into the well of my need to rescue me and bring me back to You!

Read more about the love of God at [DiscoverySeries.org/Q0612.](https://DiscoverySeries.org/Q0612.)

#### **Insight**

In [1 John 3:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.2), John reminds his “dear friends” of the return of Jesus with the phrase “when Christ appears.” The promise of Jesus’ physical return is a consistent theme in the New Testament and was shared by the Savior Himself ([Matthew 16:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2016.27); [Mark 8:38](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%208.38); [Luke 9:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%209.26); [John 14:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.1%E2%80%933)), then echoed by the angels following His ascension ([Acts 1:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%201.11)). This return is integral to our hope in Christ which carries us through the difficulties of life. In 1 John, however, the apostle’s focus isn’t on endurance in times of trial. Rather, he points us to the appearing of Jesus as the ultimate culmination of God’s plan for His children to be made fully like Him. Notice the pattern of John’s hopeful words: Christ shall appear, we shall see Him, and we’ll be finally and completely conformed to Him. When Jesus returns, God’s transforming work in us will be complete.

# God Calling – 1/6/21

# Sharp and Ready

Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah,   
Pilgrim through this foreign land.   
I am weak but Thou art mighty,   
Guide me with Thy powerful Hand.

You must pray.  The way will open. God cares and His plans unfold. Just love and wait.

Love is the key. No door is too difficult for it to open.

What cause have you to fear? Has He not cared for and protected you? Hope on. Hope gladly. Hope with certainty. Be calm, calm in My Power.

Never neglect these times, pray and read your Bible and train and discipline yourself. That is your work - Mine to use you. But My instruments must be sharp and ready.  Then I use them.

Discipline and perfect yourselves at all costs. Do this for soon every fleeting thought will be answered, every wish gratified, every deed used. It is a fearful Power, a mighty Power. Oh! be careful that you ask nothing amiss - nothing that is not according to My Spirit.

All thoughts harmful must be turned out. See how necessary I have made the purity and goodness of your own lives to you. Soon, you shall ask and at once it will come. Welcome the training. Without it I dare not give you this Power.

Do not worry about other's lives. You must perfect yourselves first in My Strength. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth.  2 Timothy 2:15

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/7/21

# Intimate With Jesus



Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip?’ —[John 14:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+14%3A9)

These words were not spoken as a rebuke, nor even with surprise; Jesus was encouraging Philip to draw closer. Yet the last person we get intimate with is Jesus. Before Pentecost the disciples knew Jesus as the One who gave them power to conquer demons and to bring about a revival (see [Luke 10:18-20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10:18-20)). It was a wonderful intimacy, but there was a much closer intimacy to come: ‘…I have called you friends…’ ([John 15:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:15)). True friendship is rare on earth. It means identifying with someone in thought, heart, and spirit. The whole experience of life is designed to enable us to enter into this closest relationship with Jesus Christ. We receive His blessings and know His Word, but do we really know Him?

Jesus said, ‘It is to your advantage that I go away…’ ([John 16:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:7)). He left that relationship to lead them even closer. It is a joy to Jesus when a disciple takes time to walk more intimately with Him. The bearing of fruit is always shown in Scripture to be the visible result of an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ (see [John 15:1-4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:1-4)).

Once we get intimate with Jesus we are never lonely and we never lack for understanding or compassion. We can continually pour out our hearts to Him without being perceived as overly emotional or pitiful. The Christian who is truly intimate with Jesus will never draw attention to himself but will only show the evidence of a life where Jesus is completely in control. This is the outcome of allowing Jesus to satisfy every area of life to its depth. The picture resulting from such a life is that of the strong, calm balance that our Lord gives to those who are intimate with Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/7/21

**Think upon me, my God, for good.**—[NEH. 5:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Neh.5.html" \l "Neh.5.19)

Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness.—I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.—I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you.—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.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.—I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number.—Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them they are more than can be numbered.

[Jer. 2:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.2.html" \l "Jer.2.2). -[Ezek. 16:60](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.16.html" \l "Ezek.16.60). -[Jer. 29:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.29.html" \l "Jer.29.10). -[Jer. 29:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.29.html" \l "Jer.29.11).[Isa. 55:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.55.html" \l "Isa.55.9). -[Job. 5:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.5.html" \l "Job.5.8). -[Psa. 40:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.40.html" \l "Ps.40.5).

‘For me to live is Christ.’ [Philippians 1:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.1.html" \l "Phil.1.21)

The believer did not always live to Christ. He began to do so when God the Holy Spirit convinced him of sin, and when by grace he was brought to see the dying Saviour making a propitiation for his guilt. From the moment of the new and celestial birth the man begins to live to Christ. Jesus is to believers the one pearl of great price, for whom we are willing to part with all that we have. He has so completely won our love, that it beats alone for him; to his glory we would live, and in defence of his gospel we would die; he is the pattern of our life, and the model after which we would sculpture our character. Paul’s words mean more than most men think; they imply that the aim and end of his life was Christ—nay, his life itself was Jesus. In the words of an ancient saint, he did eat, and drink, and sleep eternal life. Jesus was his very breath, the soul of his soul, the heart of his heart, the life of his life. Can you say, as a professing Christian, that you live up to this idea? Can you honestly say that for you to live is Christ? Your business—are you doing it for Christ? Is it not done for self- aggrandizement and for family advantage? Do you ask, ‘Is that a mean reason?’ For the Christian it is. He professes to live for Christ; how can he live for another object without committing a spiritual adultery? Many there are who carry out this principle in some measure; but who is there that dare say that he hath lived wholly for Christ as the apostle did? Yet, this alone is the true life of a Christian—its source, its sustenance, its fashion, its end, all gathered up in one word—Christ Jesus. Lord, accept me; I here present myself, praying to live only in thee and to thee. Let me be as the bullock which stands between the plough and the altar, to work or to be sacrificed; and let my motto be, ‘Ready for either.’

# Word Live – 1/7/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/7/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/7/21

# A New Generosity

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 6:17–19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+6%3a17%e2%80%9319)

17Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Over the last year, the economy was often on our minds. Debates raged on whether or not businesses should reopen at the risk of more COVID-19 cases. The stock market fluctuated and people’s retirement funds went for a series of roller coaster rides. But no matter what economic situation we may face in the days ahead, the principle from our text today never changes: Be committed to being content and be generous with your deeds.

Be generous and willing to share. 1 Timothy 6:18

As we follow Jesus, we begin to look at money and wealth differently. The apostle Paul reminded his protégé, Timothy, to instruct the Ephesian Christians to become rich not in material goods, but in good works, and to be content with all the Lord had provided them. He writes, “For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it” (1 Tim. 6:7). Paul urges Timothy to teach followers of Christ about living with a new perspective on generosity. Paul commands his readers to put their hope in God and not in worldly possessions (v. 17). Instead of hoarding wealth, Christ-followers are to be open-handed and willing to share (v. 18). Paul knew that being generous with one’s life and resources would guard our hearts from materialism and misplaced hope. But why is being generous worth it?

Paul answers, “So that they may take hold of the life that is truly life” (v. 19). In the original language, this could also be translated, “to seize with one’s own hands, life, indeed.” Being generous no doubt helps others, but the main reason you and I are commanded to be generous is that we need to be givers. When we become generous with our lives, we reflect our Savior Jesus Christ, who was most generous with His life.

**Apply the Word**

How can you be more generous with your life and resources? What are you currently giving, including both finances and time? Find a ministry you are passionate about and decide how you can invest in it.

### **Pray with Us**

Heavenly Father, you have bestowed each of us with gifts to use in your service. Guide us as we seek to be generous with the time, talents, and physical resources you have given us for the glory of your name.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/7/21

# Sound the Trumpets

 **Read:** [**Numbers 10:8–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2010.8%E2%80%9310)

8“The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to blow the trumpets. This is to be a lasting ordinance for you and the generations to come. 9When you go into battle in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by the Lord your God and rescued from your enemies. 10Also at your times of rejoicing—your appointed festivals and New Moon feasts—you are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before your God. I am the Lord your God.”

At your times of rejoicing—your appointed festivals and New Moon feasts—you are to sound the trumpets. [Numbers 10:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2010.10)

“Taps” is a trumpet call played by the US military at the end of the day as well as at funerals. I was amazed when I read the unofficial lyrics and discovered that many of the verses end with the phrase “God is nigh” (God is near). Whether before the dark of each night settles in or while mourning the loss of a loved one, the lyrics offer soldiers the beautiful assurance that God is near.

In the Old Testament, trumpets were also a reminder to the Israelites that God was near. In the middle of celebrating the feasts and festivals that were part of the covenant agreement between God and the nation of Israel, the Jews were to “sound the trumpets” ([Numbers 10:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2010.10)). Blowing a trumpet was a reminder not only of God’s presence but also that He was available when they needed Him most—and He longed to help them.

Today, we still need reminders that God is near. And in our own style of worship, we too can call out to God in prayer and song. Perhaps our prayers can be thought of as trumpets asking God to help us. And the beautiful encouragement is that God always hears those calls ([1 Peter 3:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%203.12)). To each of our pleas, He responds with the assurance of His presence that strengthens and comforts us in the difficulties and sorrows of life.

By:  [Lisa M. Samra](https://odb.org/author/lisasamra/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When have your prayers felt like calls for help? How does the reminder that God listens to our prayers encourage you?

Heavenly Father, thank You that You respond to my call for help and assure me of Your powerful presence and love.

#### **Insight**

The description of the trumpets in [Numbers 10:1–10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2010.1%E2%80%9310) marks a significant transition for the Israelites. After spending eleven months camped at Sinai where they received direction and instruction from God, they were now to continue their journey to Canaan, the land God promised to Abraham for his descendants ([Genesis 17:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2017.8)). They were to use the trumpets to call “the community together and for having the camps set out” ([Numbers 10:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2010.2)).

Throughout Israel’s history, trumpets and other instruments, such as animal horns, were used for various reasons: to signal movement, in war, to call the Israelites to assemble, and to mark festivals. For example, trumpets were used when the Israelites moved the ark of the covenant ([1 Chronicles 13:7–8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2013.7%E2%80%938); [15:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chronicles%2015.24)) and when they dedicated and purified the temple ([2 Chronicles 5:12–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chron%205.12%E2%80%9313); [29:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chronicles%2029.26)). The ark and temple were where God dwelt and met with the Israelite priests, and where He communicated with His people.

# God Calling – 1/7/21

# The Secret Pearl

Look upon us with Thy favor, O Lord, while we behold ‘The land that is very far off’ and yet so near to the seeing eye and the listening ear.

Wait. Wonders are unfolding. Tremble with awe. No man can stand upon the threshold of Eternity unshaken. I give unto you Eternal Life. A free gift, a wonderful gift - the Life of the Ages.

**Silently comes the Kingdom**. No man can judge when it enters the heart of man, only in results. Listen quietly. Sometimes you may get no message. Meet thus all the same. You will absorb an atmosphere.

Cultivate silence. ‘God speaks in silences.’ A silence, a soft wind. Each can be a message to convey My meaning to the heart, though by no voice, or even word.

Each word or thought of yours can be like a pearl that you drop into the secret place of another heart, and in some hour of need, lo! the recipient finds the treasure and realizes for the first time its value.

Do not be too ready to do, just be. I said, ‘Be ye therefore perfect’ not ‘do’ perfect things. Try and grasp this. Individual efforts avail nothing. It is only the work of the Universal Spirit - My Spirit - that counts.

Dwell in thought on this, more and more, saints have taken a lifetime to grasp it.

Be still, and know that I am God.  Psalm 46:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/8/21

# Is My Sacrifice Living?



Abraham built an altar…; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar… —[Genesis 22:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+22%3A9)

This event is a picture of the mistake we make in thinking that the ultimate God wants of us is the sacrifice of death. What God wants is the sacrifice through death which enables us to do what Jesus did, that is, sacrifice our lives. Not— ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You…to death’ ([Luke 22:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+22:33)). But— ‘I am willing to be identified with Your death so that I may sacrifice my life to God.’

We seem to think that God wants us to give up things! God purified Abraham from this error, and the same process is at work in our lives. God never tells us to give up things just for the sake of giving them up, but He tells us to give them up for the sake of the only thing worth having, namely, life with Himself. It is a matter of loosening the bands that hold back our lives. Those bands are loosened immediately by identification with the death of Jesus. Then we enter into a relationship with God whereby we may sacrifice our lives to Him.

It is of no value to God to give Him your life for death. He wants you to be a ‘living sacrifice’— to let Him have all your strengths that have been saved and sanctified through Jesus ([Romans 12:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Roman+12:1)). This is what is acceptable to God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/8/21

**They that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.**—[PSA. 9:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.9.html" \l "Ps.9.10)

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.—I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord **JEHOVAH** is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.—For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints, they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.—The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.—Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.

Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

[Prov. 18:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.18.html" \l "Prov.18.10). -[Isa. 12:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.12.html#Isa.12.2).[Psa. 37:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.25). -[Psa. 37:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.28). -[I Sam. 12:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.12.html" \l "iSam.12.22). -[II Cor. 1:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.10).[Heb. 13:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.5).

‘The iniquity of the holy things.’ [Exodus 28:38](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.28.html" \l "Exod.28.38)

What a veil is lifted up by these words, and what a disclosure is made! It will be humbling and profitable for us to pause awhile and see this sad sight. The iniquities of our public worship, its hypocrisy, formality, luke-warmness, irreverence, wandering of heart and forgetfulness of God, what a full measure have we there! Our work for the Lord, its emulation, selfishness, carelessness, slackness, unbelief, what a mass of defilement is there! Our private devotions, their laxity, coldness, neglect, sleepiness, and vanity, what a mountain of dead earth is there! If we looked more carefully we should find this iniquity to be far greater than appears at first sight. Dr. Payson, writing to his brother, says, ‘My parish, as well as my heart, very much resembles the garden of the sluggard; and what is worse, I find that very many of my desires for the melioration of both, proceed either from pride or vanity or indolence. I look at the weeds which overspread my garden, and breathe out an earnest wish that they were eradicated. But why? What prompts the wish? It may be that I may walk out and say to myself, ‘In what fine order is my garden kept!’ This is pride. Or, it may be that my neighbours may look over the wall and say, ‘How finely your garden flourishes!’ This is vanity. Or I may wish for the destruction of the weeds, because I am weary of pulling them up. This is indolence.’ So that even our desires after holiness may be polluted by ill motives. Under the greenest sods worms hide themselves; we need not look long to discover them. How cheering is the thought, that when the High Priest bore the iniquity of the holy things he wore upon his brow the words, ‘Holiness to the Lord:’ and even so while Jesus bears our sin, he presents before his Father’s face not our unholiness, but his own holiness. O for grace to view our great High Priest by the eye of faith!

# Word Live – 1/8/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/8/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/8/21

# A New Respect

**Read:** [**1 Peter 2:11–17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3a11%e2%80%9317)

### **Living Godly Lives in a Pagan Society**

11Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 12Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

13Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, 14or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. 16Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. 17Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

One of the problems with social media is that many people feel free to say whatever they think about everything. And, because they are posting online, they often express their opinions in harsher language than they would if they were talking to their opponent face to face. As believers, we may feel pulled into these conflicts and return harsh words to those who oppose us, but God’s Word reminds us that we are to “show proper respect to everyone” (v. 17).

Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor. 1 Peter 2:17

Peter reminds his readers in our text today that while we may have some say in the affairs of this world, we must remember that we are really just foreigners, passing through (v. 11). Even though our sinful desires push and pull us in directions that oppose God, Peter says we are to live such radical lives that when the outside world sees us, God will be glorified because of our good deeds (v. 12). One of the most drastic ways, our lives can stand out among nonbelievers is by submitting ourselves to “every human authority” (v. 13). Peter says it is the Lord’s will that “by doing good” we would put to silence the talk of those who are contrary to the gospel (v. 15). However, this begs the question, “How does one do good?” Where does one even start to do good when there seems to be so much conflict and division among people?

Peter says it starts with showing “proper respect” (v. 17). In the original language, this phrase is actually the same as “honor,” like honoring a king. According to Peter, we are to treat everyone as if they have extreme value. The reality is that they do have value in God’s eyes, a tremendous amount of worth. Treating others with respect and dignity will help us navigate the waters of this world.

**Apply the Word**

How can you show Christ’s love by demonstrating proper respect to others? Examine your own words and actions on social media. How can you better reflect the One you serve?

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, forgive us when we reduce people to the political views they espouse or the irritating things they do. Help us to see each person for who they are: your image-bearer with inherent value.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/8/21

# God of the Invisible

 **Read:** [**John 1:35–42**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201.35%E2%80%9342)

### **John’s Disciples Follow Jesus**

35The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

37When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?”

They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

39“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

40Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). 42And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A35%E2%80%9342&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26087a)]).

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 1:42](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A35%E2%80%9342&version=NIV#en-NIV-26087) Cephas (Aramaic) and Peter (Greek) both mean rock.

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people. [Hebrews 6:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%206.10)

“Sometimes I feel as if I’m invisible. But I so want God to use me.”

Ann was tidying up the exercise room at the hotel I was visiting when we struck up a conversation. As we talked, I discovered she had an amazing story.

“I used to be a crack addict and prostitute living on the streets,” she said. “But I knew God wanted me to put down my pipe and walk with Him. One day years ago I knelt at Jesus’ feet, and He set me free.”

I thanked Ann for sharing what God had done for her and assured her she wasn’t invisible—He had used her in our conversation in a beautiful way to remind me of His power to transform lives.

God loves to use people others might overlook. The apostle Andrew isn’t as well known as his brother Peter, but the Bible recounts that “the first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon [Peter] and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’. . . . And he brought him to Jesus” ([John 1:41–42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201.41%E2%80%9342)).

Peter met Jesus through Andrew. When Andrew, one of John the Baptist’s disciples, learned about Jesus from John, he followed Jesus and believed—and immediately told his brother. Andrew’s quiet faithfulness had an impact that would shake the world.

God values faithful service over fame. He can use us powerfully wherever we are—even when no one is looking.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Whose quiet faithfulness made a difference in your life? How can you serve God by serving someone else today?

Thank You for never overlooking me, Father! I’m thankful You can use me to make a difference wherever I am.

#### **Insight**

The term “Lamb of God” is unique to John. Twice in [John 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201), John the Baptist calls Jesus the “Lamb of God” (vv. 29, 36). Verse 29 includes the description “who takes away the sin of the world!” This is a reference to the sin offering prescribed in the law of Moses (see [Leviticus 4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%204)), where a lamb was one of several animals used as a sacrifice.

This isn’t the only place where the apostle John refers to Jesus as a lamb. In the book of Revelation, Jesus is described as “the Lamb, who was slain” (5:12) and the Lamb who opens the seals (6:1, 3, 5, 7). The blood of the Lamb overcomes the enemy (12:11), and the names of those who believe in Christ are recorded in the Lamb’s book of life (13:8).

# God Calling – 1/8/21

# Love Bangs the Door

Life with Me is not immunity from difficulties, but peace in difficulties.  My guidance is often by shut doors. Love bangs as well as opens.

Joy is the result of faithful trusting acceptance of My Will, when It seems not joyous.

St. Paul, my servant, learnt this lesson of the banged doors when he said ‘our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’  Expect rebuffs until this is learned - it is the only way.

Joy is the daughter of calm.

They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. Psalm 125:1

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/9/21

# Prayerful Inner-Searching



May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless… —[1 Thessalonians 5:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Thessalonians+5%3A23)

“Your whole spirit….” The great, mysterious work of the Holy Spirit is in the deep recesses of our being which we cannot reach. Read [Psalm 139](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+139). The psalmist implies— “O Lord, You are the God of the early mornings, the God of the late nights, the God of the mountain peaks, and the God of the sea. But, my God, my soul has horizons further away than those of early mornings, deeper darkness than the nights of earth, higher peaks than any mountain peaks, greater depths than any sea in nature. You who are the God of all these, be my God. I cannot reach to the heights or to the depths; there are motives I cannot discover, dreams I cannot realize. My God, search me.”

Do we believe that God can fortify and protect our thought processes far beyond where we can go? “…the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” ([1 John 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1:7)). If this verse means cleansing only on our conscious level, may God have mercy on us. The man who has been dulled by sin will say that he is not even conscious of it. But the cleansing from sin we experience will reach to the heights and depths of our spirit if we will “walk in the light as He is in the light” (1 John 1:7). The same Spirit that fed the life of Jesus Christ will feed the life of our spirit. It is only when we are protected by God with the miraculous sacredness of the Holy Spirit that our spirit, soul, and body can be preserved in pure uprightness until the coming of Jesus-no longer condemned in God’s sight.

We should more frequently allow our minds to meditate on these great, massive truths of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We begin our Christian life by believing what we are told to believe, then we have to go on to so assimilate our beliefs that they work out in a way that redounds to the glory of God. The danger is in multiplying the acceptation of beliefs we do not make our own. Conformed to His Image, 381 L

# CCEL – 1/9/21

**Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.**—[PSA. 60:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.60.html" \l "Ps.60.4)

Jehovah Nissi (The Lord my banner).—When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.—The Lord hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God.—We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.—Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—The captain of our salvation.

My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.—Valiant for the truth.—Fight the Lord's battles.—Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: fear ye not.—Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.—Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

[Exo. 17:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.17.html" \l "Exod.17.15). -[Isa. 59:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.59.html" \l "Isa.59.19).[Psa. 20:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.20.html" \l "Ps.20.5). -[Jer. 51:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.51.html" \l "Jer.51.10). -[Rom. 8:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.37). -[I Cor. 15:57](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.57). -[Heb. 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.10).[Eph. 6:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.10). -[Jer. 9:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.9.html" \l "Jer.9.3). -[I Sam. 18:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.18.html" \l "iSam.18.17). -[Hag. 2:4,5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hag.2.html" \l "Hag.2.4). -[John 4:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.4.html" \l "John.4.35). -[Heb. 10:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.37).

“I will be their God.” [Jeremiah 31:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.31.html" \l "Jer.31.33)

Christian! here is all thou canst require. To make thee happy thou wantest something that shall satisfy thee; and is not this enough? If thou canst pour this promise into thy cup, wilt thou not say, with David, “My cup runneth over; I have more than heart can wish”? When this is fulfilled, “I am thy God”, art thou not possessor of all things? Desire is insatiable as death, but he who filleth all in all can fill it. The capacity of our wishes who can measure? But the immeasurable wealth of God can more than overflow it. I ask thee if thou art not complete when God is thine? Dost thou want anything but God? Is not his all-sufficiency enough to satisfy thee if all else should fail? But thou wantest more than quiet satisfaction; thou desirest rapturous delight. Come, soul, here is music fit for heaven in this thy portion, for God is the Maker of Heaven. Not all the music blown from sweet instruments, or drawn from living strings, can yield such melody as this sweet promise, “I will be their God.” Here is a deep sea of bliss, a shoreless ocean of delight; come, bathe thy spirit in it; swim an age, and thou shalt find no shore; dive throughout eternity, and thou shalt find no bottom. “I will be their God.” If this do not make thine eyes sparkle, and thy heart beat high with bliss, then assuredly thy soul is not in a healthy state. But thou wantest more than present delights—thou cravest something concerning which thou mayest exercise hope; and what more canst thou hope for than the fulfilment of this great promise, “I will be their God”? This is the masterpiece of all the promises; its enjoyment makes a heaven below, and will make a heaven above. Dwell in the light of thy Lord, and let thy soul be always ravished with his love. Get out the marrow and fatness which this portion yields thee. Live up to thy privileges, and rejoice with unspeakable joy.

# Word Live – 1/9/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/9/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/9/21

# A New Family

**Read:** [**1 John 3:1–3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3a1%e2%80%933)

3 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3a1%e2%80%933" \l "fen-NIV-30582a" \o "See footnote a)] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 John 3:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3a1%e2%80%933#en-NIV-30582) Or when it is made known

Not too long ago, I had a conversation with a friend about God and Heaven. In the midst of our conversation, he told me he believed that everyone is a “child of God.” I explained that while it is true that we are all created by God and made in His image (Gen. 1:26–27), being part of God’s family is different.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! 1 John 3:1

In John’s account of Jesus’ life, he states that the world did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, nor did they receive Him as their Rescuer (John 1:10–11). However, to those who do believe in Jesus and His resurrection, “he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). When God the Father looked at a depraved humanity, it would have been astounding if He only had pity or charitable compassion for the lost souls. It would have been extremely generous if He merely set forth a plan to save them from eternal punishment. But God went well beyond that. He called them His children.

Our text highlights that it is only because of God’s love that believers can be called His children (v. 1). The word for “love” John used here is agape, a never-ending, unconditional love. He states that God “lavished” or “bestowed as a gift” this love on us (v. 1) and therefore we are included as part of His family. When you and I believe in Jesus, we become part of a new family, the family of God. As His children, we bear His name and His reputation. Wherever we go and whatever we do, we carry the name of Christ. Being in Him makes us part of a new family.

**Apply the Word**

Do people know you are part of God’s family? The early believers did not keep it a secret they were part of the household of God. Their lives were testimonies of who they belonged to and the same should be known about us.

### **Pray with Us**

We rejoice in our status as children of God! Father, let the joy we have in our identity be evident to all around us, drawing them into your family of faith.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/9/21

# Dig It Up

 **Read:** [**Ruth 1:3–5**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ruth%201.3%E2%80%935)

3Now Elimelek, Naomi’s husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. 4They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, 5both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

**Read:** [**Ruth 1:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ruth%201.3%E2%80%935)[**20–21**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ruth%201.20%E2%80%9321)

20“Don’t call me Naomi,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+1%3A3%E2%80%935+%2C+20%E2%80%9321&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-7148a" \o "See footnote a)]” she told them. “Call me Mara,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+1%3A3%E2%80%935+%2C+20%E2%80%9321&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-7148b" \o "See footnote b)] because the Almighty[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+1%3A3%E2%80%935+%2C+20%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7148c)] has made my life very bitter. 21I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+1%3A3%E2%80%935+%2C+20%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7149d)] me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ruth 1:20](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+1%3A3%E2%80%935+%2C+20%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-7148) Naomi means pleasant.
2. [Ruth 1:20](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+1%3A3%E2%80%935+%2C+20%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-7148) Mara means bitter.
3. [Ruth 1:20](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+1%3A3%E2%80%935+%2C+20%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-7148) Hebrew Shaddai; also in verse 21
4. [Ruth 1:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+1%3A3%E2%80%935+%2C+20%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-7149) Or has testified against

Get rid of all bitterness. [Ephesians 4:31](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%204.31)

When Rebecca’s brother and sister-in-law started having marriage problems, Rebecca prayed earnestly for their reconciliation. But they divorced. Then her sister-in-law took the children out of state and their dad didn’t protest. Rebecca never again saw the nieces she dearly loved. Years later she said, “Because of trying to handle this sadness on my own, I let a root of bitterness start in my heart, and it began to spread to my family and friends.”

The book of Ruth tells about a woman named Naomi who struggled with a heart of grief that grew into bitterness. Her husband died in a foreign land, and ten years later both her sons died. She was left destitute with her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah (1:3–5). When Naomi and Ruth returned to Naomi’s home country, the whole town was excited to see them. But Naomi told her friends: “The Almighty has made my life very bitter. . . . The Lord has afflicted me” (vv. 20–21). She even asked them to call her “Mara,” meaning bitter.

Who hasn’t faced disappointment and been tempted toward bitterness? Someone says something hurtful, an expectation isn’t met, or demands from others make us resentful. When we acknowledge to ourselves and God what’s happening deep in our hearts, our tender Gardener can help us dig up any roots of bitterness—whether they’re still small or have been growing for years—and can replace them with a sweet, joyful spirit.

By:  [Anne Cetas](https://odb.org/author/annecetas/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What areas of life do you tend to become bitter about? What’s growing inside your heart that needs God’s loving care?

God, help me to see the goodness in life You’re always displaying. And dig up any root of bitterness in my heart that dishonors You.

#### **Insight**

The book of Ruth isn’t the only time we see the name Mara or Marah (bitter) in the Bible. In Exodus we read how the Israelites had just escaped slavery in Egypt when God miraculously parted the Red Sea. After the Israelites crossed the sea, He released the water so their Egyptian pursuers were swallowed up. The result? “When the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant” (14:31). Yet, three days later, the Israelites couldn’t find water and began to doubt Moses (and God). They found an oasis, but because its water was undrinkable, they named the place Marah. God instructed Moses to throw a piece of wood in the water and it immediately became sweet (15:22–25; see [Numbers 33:8–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2033.8%E2%80%939)).

# God Calling – 1/9/21

# No Strain

Be calm, no matter what may befall you. Rest in Me. Be patient, and let patience have her perfect work. Never think things overwhelming. How can you be overwhelmed when I am with you?

Do not feel the strain of life.  There is no strain for My children.  Do you not see I am a Master Instrument-maker?  Have I not fashioned each part? Do I not know just what it can bear without a strain? Would I, the maker of so delicate an instrument, ask of it anything that could destroy or strain?

No! The Strain is only when you are serving another master, the world, fame, the good opinion of men - or carrying two days' burden on the one day.

Remember that it must not be.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. Psalm 37:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/10/21

# The Opened Sight



I now send you, to open their eyes…that they may receive forgiveness of sins… —[Acts 26:17-18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+26%3A17-18)

This verse is the greatest example of the true essence of the message of a disciple of Jesus Christ in all of the New Testament.

God’s first sovereign work of grace is summed up in the words, “…that they may receive forgiveness of sins….” When a person fails in his personal Christian life, it is usually because he has never received anything. The only sign that a person is saved is that he has received something from Jesus Christ. Our job as workers for God is to open people’s eyes so that they may turn themselves from darkness to light. But that is not salvation; it is conversion— only the effort of an awakened human being. I do not think it is too broad a statement to say that the majority of so-called Christians are like this. Their eyes are open, but they have received nothing. Conversion is not regeneration. This is a neglected fact in our preaching today. When a person is born again, he knows that it is because he has received something as a gift from Almighty God and not because of his own decision. People may make vows and promises, and may be determined to follow through, but none of this is salvation. Salvation means that we are brought to the place where we are able to receive something from God on the authority of Jesus Christ, namely, forgiveness of sins.

This is followed by God’s second mighty work of grace: “…an inheritance among those who are sanctified….” In sanctification, the one who has been born again deliberately gives up his right to himself to Jesus Christ, and identifies himself entirely with God’s ministry to others.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/10/21

**I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**—[I THES. 5:23.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.5.html" \l "iThess.5.23)

Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.—Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

The peace of God . . . passeth all understanding.—Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body.

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.—Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Eph. 5:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.25),[27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.27). -[Col. 1:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.28).[Phi. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.7). -[Col. 3:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.15).[II Thes. 2:16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiThess.2.html#iiThess.2.16). -[I Cor. 1:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.1.html" \l "iCor.1.8).

“There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” [2 Timothy 4:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.4.html" \l "iiTim.4.8)

Doubting one! thou hast often said, “I fear I shall never enter heaven.” Fear not! all the people of God shall enter there. I love the quaint saying of a dying man, who exclaimed, “I have no fear of going home; I have sent all before me; God’s finger is on the latch of my door, and I am ready for him to enter.” “But,” said one, “are you not afraid lest you should miss your inheritance?” “Nay,” said he, “nay; there is one crown in heaven which the angel Gabriel could not wear, it will fit no head but mine. There is one throne in heaven which Paul the apostle could not fill; it was made for me, and I shall have it.” O Christian, what a joyous thought! thy portion is secure; “there remaineth a rest.” “But cannot I forfeit it?” No, it is entailed. If I be a child of God I shall not lose it. It is mine as securely as if I were there. Come with me, believer, and let us sit upon the top of Nebo, and view the goodly land, even Canaan. Seest thou that little river of death glistening in the sunlight, and across it dost thou see the pinnacles of the eternal city? Dost thou mark the pleasant country, and all its joyous inhabitants? Know, then, that if thou couldst fly across thou wouldst see written upon one of its many mansions, “This remaineth for such a one; preserved for him only. He shall be caught up to dwell forever with God.” Poor doubting one, see the fair inheritance; it is thine. If thou believest in the Lord Jesus, if thou hast repented of sin, if thou hast been renewed in heart, thou art one of the Lord’s people, and there is a place reserved for thee, a crown laid up for thee, a harp specially provided for thee. No one else shall have thy portion, it is reserved in heaven for thee, and thou shalt have it ere long, for there shall be no vacant thrones in glory when all the chosen are gathered in.

# Word Live – 1/10/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/10/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/10/21

# A New Message

**Read:** [**John 14:1–7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3a1%e2%80%937)

### **Jesus Comforts His Disciples**

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3a1%e2%80%937#fen-NIV-26670a)]; believe also in me. 2My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4You know the way to the place where I am going.”

### **Jesus the Way to the Father**

5Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

6Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7If you really know me, you will know[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3a1%e2%80%937#fen-NIV-26676b)] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 14:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3a1%e2%80%937#en-NIV-26670) Or Believe in God
2. [John 14:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3a1%e2%80%937#en-NIV-26676) Some manuscripts If you really knew me, you would know

If you were given life-changing news, how would you share it? Would you post on Facebook or perhaps text a friend? Because of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and His bodily resurrection, we have a wonderful and important message to share. It is a message of hope, encouragement, thankfulness, and love. It is the simple message that Jesus is “the way and the truth and the life” (v. 6). How will you share this message?

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6

Last week, we focused on the new ways we live because of Christ’s transformative work in us. This week we’ll study the new message we have to share with a world that desperately needs Him. Hours before His arrest, Jesus prepared His friends for what was going to happen. It must have been difficult for them to fully grasp. They were worried on His behalf, and probably concerned about their own welfare too. In the midst of this uncertainty, Jesus comforted them, saying, “Do not let your hearts be troubled” (v. 1). How could they not be distressed?! Not only were the authorities looking for Jesus and His friends, but Jesus had just told Peter that the disciple would disown Him three times before sunrise (John 13:38).

Jesus described His return to His Father and His mission to prepare a place for all who believe. Then, He dropped a bombshell of a message that continues to shake the world today. After Thomas’s inquiry as to where Jesus was going and how they could follow Him there, Jesus proclaims, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (v. 6). What was only pictured in the Old Testament sacrifices of the law was now revealed in flesh and blood. Eternal life comes through Jesus Christ alone.

**Apply the Word**

Is there someone in your life who needs to hear this message? Begin to pray that God will create opportunities for you and others to share this good news with them.

### **Pray with Us**

Dear God, please grant us opportunities and words of grace to share the vital truth that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We want everyone to know you!

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/10/21

# Paper Crowns

 **Read:** [**1 Corinthians 6:1–6**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%206.1%E2%80%936)

### **Lawsuits Among Believers**

6 If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord’s people? 2Or do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 3Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! 4Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? 5I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? 6But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

The Lord’s people will judge the world. [1 Corinthians 6:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%206.2)

After a holiday meal at my house, everyone opened party favors filled with candy, small toys, and confetti. But there was something else in the favors—a paper crown for each of us. We couldn’t resist trying them on, and we smiled at each other as we sat around the table. For just a moment, we were kings and queens, even if our kingdom was a dining room littered with the remnants of our dinner.

This sparked a memory of a Bible promise I don’t often think about. In the next life, all believers will share ruling authority with Jesus. Paul mentions this in [1 Corinthians 6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%206) where he asks, “Do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world?” (v. 2). Paul referenced this future privilege because he wanted to inspire believers to settle disputes peacefully on earth. They had been suing each other and consequently harming the reputation of other believers in their community.

We become better at resolving conflict as the Holy Spirit produces self-control, gentleness, and patience within us. By the time Jesus returns and completes the Spirit’s work in our lives ([1 John 3:2–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.2%E2%80%933)), we’ll be ready for our eventual role as “a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and . . . reign on the earth” ([Revelation 5:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%205.10)). Let’s hold on to this promise that glitters in Scripture like a diamond set in a crown of gold.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How does the Holy Spirit influence your words and actions when you experience conflict? How does this affect those around you?

Almighty God, thank You for the wonderful future I have with You. Help me to look to You when it’s hard to cooperate with others.

To learn more about the Spirit’s work in our lives, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/ST410-12.](https://ChristianUniversity.org/ST410-12.)

#### **Insight**

In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, he gives his readers ways of thinking about judgment that implies more than crime and punishment. Making good judgments is more about our heart and humility than law. On one hand, Paul reasons, we aren’t even good judges of our own motives let alone the motives of others (4:1–5; 5:12). On the other hand, he didn’t want them to underestimate their capacities for good judgment in matters that might at first seem too difficult to resolve. For example, Paul saw it to be poor judgment to drag some disputes between believers in Jesus into public courts. While certain civil and criminal matters must be handled by the proper authorities, others could be handled by calm and discerning minds. Much can be learned by proving our faith—and settling differences—as we love others well as the Spirit guides us (6:1–8; [John 13:35](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2013.35); [1 Corinthians 13:1–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%2013.1%E2%80%9313)).

# God Calling – 1/10/21

# Influence

When you come to Me, and I give you that Eternal Life I give it to all who believe in Me, it alters your whole existence, the words you speak, the influences you have.

These are all eternal. They must be.  They spring from the life within you, My Life, Eternal Life, so that they too live forever.  Now you see how vast, how stupendous, is the work of any soul that has Eternal Life. The words, the influence, go on down the ages forever.

You must ponder on these truths I give you.  They are not surface facts, but the secrets of My Kingdom, the hidden pearls of rare price.

Meditate upon them. Work at them in your minds and hearts.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.  John 10:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/11/21

# What My Obedience to God Costs Other People



As they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon…, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. —[Luke 23:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+23%3A26)

If we obey God, it is going to cost other people more than it costs us, and that is where the pain begins. If we are in love with our Lord, obedience does not cost us anything— it is a delight. But to those who do not love Him, our obedience does cost a great deal. If we obey God, it will mean that other people’s plans are upset. They will ridicule us as if to say, “You call this Christianity?” We could prevent the suffering, but not if we are obedient to God. We must let the cost be paid.

When our obedience begins to cost others, our human pride entrenches itself and we say, “I will never accept anything from anyone.” But we must, or disobey God. We have no right to think that the type of relationships we have with others should be any different from those the Lord Himself had (see [Luke 8:1-3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+8:1-3)).

A lack of progress in our spiritual life results when we try to bear all the costs ourselves. And actually, we cannot. Because we are so involved in the universal purposes of God, others are immediately affected by our obedience to Him. Will we remain faithful in our obedience to God and be willing to suffer the humiliation of refusing to be independent? Or will we do just the opposite and say, “I will not cause other people to suffer”? We can disobey God if we choose, and it will bring immediate relief to the situation, but it will grieve our Lord. If, however, we obey God, He will care for those who have suffered the consequences of our obedience. We must simply obey and leave all the consequences with Him.

Beware of the inclination to dictate to God what consequences you would allow as a condition of your obedience to Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We are all based on a conception of importance, either our own importance, or the importance of someone else; Jesus tells us to go and teach based on the revelation of His importance. “All power is given unto Me.… Go ye therefore ….”  So Send I You, 1325 R

# CCEL – 1/11/21

**Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion.**—[PSA. 65:1.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.65.html" \l "Ps.65.1)

To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.—All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.—By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.—Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

[I Cor. 8:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.8.html" \l "iCor.8.6). -[John 5:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.5.html" \l "John.5.23). -[Heb. 13:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.15). -[Psa. 50:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.50.html" \l "Ps.50.23).[Rev. 7:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.7.html" \l "Rev.7.9),[12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.7.html" \l "Rev.7.12).

“These have no root.” [Luke 8:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.8.html" \l "Luke.8.13)

My soul, examine thyself this morning by the light of this text. Thou hast received the word with joy; thy feelings have been stirred and a lively impression has been made; but, remember, that to receive the word in the ear is one thing, and to receive Jesus into thy very soul is quite another; superficial feeling is often joined to inward hardness of heart, and a lively impression of the word is not always a lasting one. In the parable, the seed in one case fell upon ground having a rocky bottom, covered over with a thin layer of earth; when the seed began to take root, its downward growth was hindered by the hard stone and therefore it spent its strength in pushing its green shoot aloft as high as it could, but having no inward moisture derived from root nourishment, it withered away. Is this my case? Have I been making a fair show in the flesh without having a corresponding inner life? Good growth takes place upwards and downwards at the same time. Am I rooted in sincere fidelity and love to Jesus? If my heart remains unsoftened and unfertilized by grace, the good seed may germinate for a season, but it must ultimately wither, for it cannot flourish on a rocky, unbroken, unsanctified heart. Let me dread a godliness as rapid in growth and as wanting in endurance as Jonah’s gourd; let me count the cost of being a follower of Jesus, above all let me feel the energy of his Holy Spirit, and then I shall possess an abiding and enduring seed in my soul. If my mind remains as obdurate as it was by nature, the sun of trial will scorch, and my hard heart will help to cast the heat the more terribly upon the ill-covered seed, and my religion will soon die, and my despair will be terrible; therefore, O heavenly Sower, plough me first, and then cast the truth into me, and let me yield thee a bounteous harvest.

# Word Live – 1/11/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/11/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/11/21

# Message of Hope

**Read:** [**1 Peter 1:3–9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+1%3a3%e2%80%939)

### **Praise to God for a Living Hope**

3Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Most sports fans hope their favorite team will win the championship. But they also realize that only one team can actually bring home the trophy. The word hope can be a  noun or a verb. When fans “verb- hope” for their team to win, they want something to happen. However, when we have “noun-hope,” we have the assured expectation that something will happen. For Christians, the hope Christ gives us through His resurrection is not a wanting or wishful hope, but an assured expectation of what we know is to come.

He has given us new birth into a living hope. 1 Peter 1:3

Peter explains that believers in Christ are given a “new birth into a living hope” (v. 3). It’s similar to Paul’s idea in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that when one trusts in Jesus, he or she becomes a “new creature.” We are given a new life and a new identity. In verse three, Peter uses hope as a noun. This message of hope is more than just a want or a desire. Peter assures us that this living hope is a joyful and confident expectation.

Peter continues in verse four to say that the new birth also gives us an eternal inheritance. This assures us that we will be united with Christ forever. Unlike any earthly inheritance, we might receive, this eternal inheritance can “never perish, spoil or fade” because of God’s omnipotence and supremacy (vv. 4–7). Christ’s resurrection from the dead gives us complete confidence that this hope will last for all eternity. The idea of a living hope and inheritance was a brand-new message for those early believers (vv. 8–9). Now, we have the honor of receiving that same hope and sharing our living hope with others. Remember, that your hope in Christ is not wishful thinking, but an assured expectation of what is to come.

**Apply the Word**

When we place hope in things and people, we are often disappointed. How does your “noun- hope” in Christ compare to your “verb-hope” for things in this world?

### **Pray with Us**

Thank you, Father, for the assured expectation that is our hope in Christ. Help us to live with conviction, knowing that the things you have promised will come to pass.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/11/21

# Lift Up Your Eyes

 **Read:** [**Psalm 121**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20121)

#### **A song of ascents.**

1I lift up my eyes to the mountains—  
    where does my help come from?  
2My help comes from the Lord,  
    the Maker of heaven and earth.

3He will not let your foot slip—  
    he who watches over you will not slumber;  
4indeed, he who watches over Israel  
    will neither slumber nor sleep.

5The Lord watches over you—  
    the Lord is your shade at your right hand;  
6the sun will not harm you by day,  
    nor the moon by night.

7The Lord will keep you from all harm—  
    he will watch over your life;  
8the Lord will watch over your coming and going  
    both now and forevermore.

My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. [Psalm 121:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20121.2)

The clouds hung low, blocking the horizon and limiting visibility to only a few hundred yards. The minutes dragged on. The effect on my mood was noticeable. But then, as afternoon approached, the clouds began to break, and I saw it: beautiful Pikes Peak, the most recognizable landmark of my city, flanked on each side by the mountain range. A smile broke over my face. I considered that even our physical perspective—our literal line of sight—can affect our spiritual vision. And I was reminded of the psalmist singing, “I lift up my eyes to the mountains” ([Psalm 121:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20121.1)). Sometimes we simply need to lift our eyes a bit higher!

The psalmist pondered where his help came from, maybe because the hilltops around Israel were dotted with altars to pagan gods and often contained robbers. Or it could have been because the psalmist looked up beyond the hills to Mount Zion where the temple stood and remembered that the Maker of heaven and earth was his covenant God (v. 2). Either way, to worship we must look up. We have to lift our eyes higher than our circumstances, higher than our troubles and trials, higher than the empty promises of the false gods of our day. Then we can see the Creator and Redeemer, the One who calls us by name. He’s the One who will “watch over your coming and going” today and forevermore (v. 8).

By:  [Glenn Packiam](https://odb.org/author/glennpackiam/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you “look up” today—beyond your circumstances—to see God? What would it look like to call upon Him for the help you really need?

Dear Father, thank You that You’re the Creator and Keeper—the One who made the heavens and the earth and watches over me. Help me to lift my eyes higher to see You and to put my trust in You.

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 121](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20121) is the second of the fifteen “songs of ascent” ([Psalms 120–134](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20120%E2%80%93134)) which were sung by Jewish pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem for the three great festivals each year ([Deuteronomy 16:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2016.16)): Unleavened Bread (Passover), Weeks (Firstfruits), and Tabernacles. As such, it isn’t surprising that they trust themselves to God’s protection from the dangers and difficulties of the road. Since most traveling was done on foot, [Psalm 121:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20121.3) anticipates God’s protection from stumbling along the way. Since most journeys by foot took several days, the people had confidence that while they slept along roads that could be dangerous (wild animals, highway robbers), their God didn’t sleep but was alert to their needs (v. 3). They sang of God’s around-the-clock protection: “the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night” (v. 6). This was the God they trusted in and would worship upon arriving in Jerusalem.

# God Calling – 1/11/21

# The Ache of Love

Use My unlimited stores for your needs and those of others.  Seek My wonderful truths and you shall find.

There may come times when you sit in silence, when it seems as if you were left alone. Then, I command you to remember I have spoken to you.

You will have the consciousness of My Presence when you hear no voice. Abide in that Presence. "I am the light of the world," but sometimes in tender pity, I withhold too glaring a light, lest, in its dazzling brightness, you should miss your daily path and work.

Not until Heaven is reached, do souls sit and drink in the ecstasy of God's revelation to His Own. At the moment you are pilgrims and need only your daily marching orders, and strength and guidance for the day.

Oh! Listen to My Voice, eagerly, joyfully. Never crowd it out. I have no rival claimants and if men seek the babble of the world, then I withdraw.

Life has hurt you. Only scarred lives can really save.

You cannot escape the discipline. It is the hallmark of discipleship. My children, trust Me always. Never rebel.

The trust given to Me today, takes away the ache of rejection of My love, that I suffered on earth, and have suffered through the ages. "I died for you, My children, and could ye treat Me so?"

And the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. John 10:4