# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/5/20

# Judgment and the Love of God

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

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

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

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

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 5/5/20

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Word Live – 5/5/20

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# Scripture Union – 5/5/20

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# Today in the Word – 5/5/20

# Men, Women, and Worship

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 2:8–15**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3a8%e2%80%9315)

8Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. 9I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, 10but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

11A woman[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3a8%e2%80%9315#fen-NIV-29728a)] should learn in quietness and full submission. 12I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man;[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3a8%e2%80%9315" \l "fen-NIV-29729b" \o "See footnote b)] she must be quiet. 13For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. 15But women[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3a8%e2%80%9315#fen-NIV-29732c)] will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Timothy 2:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3a8%e2%80%9315#en-NIV-29728) Or wife; also in verse 12
2. [1 Timothy 2:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3a8%e2%80%9315#en-NIV-29729) Or over her husband
3. [1 Timothy 2:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3a8%e2%80%9315#en-NIV-29732) Greek she

In 2006, a team of researchers studied two elementary schools at recess. One had a fence around their playground, the other did not. The children from the unfenced playground stayed more packed together and closer to the teacher. The children in the fenced playground roamed the whole space, feeling free to explore. Having clear boundaries encouraged more freedom and creative play.

Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. 1 Timothy 2:8

The Ephesian church was troubled by controversy. False teaching in the church was throwing the congregation into a state of confusion. Paul sent Timothy to bring order back to this beleaguered church. In this section of the letter (2:1–3:13), Paul was setting up boundaries for propriety in public worship. Here Paul commanded believers what to do and what not to do.

In verse 8, Paul commanded men to lift up “holy hands” in prayer. And they were to do this “without anger or disputing” (v. 8). In verse 9, Paul addressed women in the congregation. He urged them to dress modestly, not flaunting wealth or status with their expensive clothing. They were also instructed to learn “in quietness and full submission” (v. 11). This command mirrored other instructions to men who were being disruptive (see 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:11–12). Paul further commanded, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man” (v. 12). The Moody Bible Commentary notes that Paul was not prohibiting all teaching by women, but “the authoritative teaching of the Scriptures that is associated particularly with the office of overseer or elder.” Paul’s statement in verse 15 suggests an order established at creation.

>> Paul understood that public worship worked best when boundaries were in place. We are to conduct ourselves in ways that honor God and inspire outsiders to follow Christ. For a more detailed examination of this passage, see The Moody Bible Commentary.

### **Pray with Us**

Today’s Scripture shows the importance of worship, prayer, and relationships in our churches. Thank God for His instructions concerning the church life that teach us to love and respect each other “without anger or disputing” (1 Tim. 2:8).

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/5/20

# Strength for the Journey

 **Read:** [**1 Kings 19:1**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%2019%E2%80%9320)**-9**

### **Elijah Flees to Horeb**

19 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”

3Elijah was afraid[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+1+Kings+19%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9391a)] and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4while he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” 5Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” 6He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” 8So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. 9There he went into a cave and spent the night.

### **The Lord Appears to Elijah**

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

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Kings 19:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+1+Kings+19%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-9391) Or Elijah saw

All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.”  [1 Kings 19:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%2019.5)

One summer, I faced what seemed an impossible task—a big writing project with a looming deadline. Having spent day after day on my own, endeavoring to get the words onto the page, I felt exhausted and discouraged, and I wanted to give up. A wise friend asked me, “When’s the last time you felt refreshed? Maybe you need to allow yourself to rest and to enjoy a good meal.”

I knew immediately that she was right. Her advice made me think of Elijah and the terrifying message he received from Jezebel ([1 Kings 19:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%2019.2))—although, of course, my writing project wasn’t anywhere near the cosmic scale of the prophet’s experience. After Elijah triumphed over the false prophets on Mount Carmel, Jezebel sent word that she would capture and kill him, and he despaired, longing to die. But then he enjoyed a good sleep and was twice visited by an angel who gave him food to eat. After God renewed his physical strength, he was able to continue with his journey.

When the “journey is too much” for us (v. 7), we might need to rest and enjoy a healthy and satisfying meal. For when we are exhausted or hungry, we can easily succumb to disappointment or fear. But when God meets our physical needs through His resources, as much as possible in this fallen world, we can take the next step in serving Him.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Looking back, when have you needed to slow down and receive sustenance before pressing on? How can you look for signs of burnout as you serve God?

Creator God, You formed us as Your people. Thank You for our limitations, which remind us that You’re God and we’re not. Help us to serve You with gladness and joy.

#### **Insight**

Following Israel’s dramatic return to the God of their fathers on Mount Carmel, Queen Jezebel’s threats against Elijah’s life ([1 Kings 19:1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%2019.1%E2%80%932)) drove him to Mount Horeb (v. 8), where he encountered God. Horeb is also known as Mount Sinai—where Moses had encountered God many years before ([Exodus 19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2019)ff.). This is one of several connections between these two Old Testament giants, but those connections aren’t limited to the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Elijah and Moses were united on another mountain—the Mount of Transfiguration—where they discussed with Jesus His coming departure from Jerusalem ([Luke 9:28–31](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%209.28%E2%80%9331)).

# God Calling – 5/5/20

# Let Me Choose

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

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

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

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

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

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/6/20

# Liberty and the Standards of Jesus

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free… —[Galatians 5:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Galatians+5%3A1)

A spiritually-minded person will never come to you with the demand— “Believe this and that”; a spiritually-minded person will demand that you align your life with the standards of Jesus. We are not asked to believe the Bible, but to believe the One whom the Bible reveals (see [John 5:39-40](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+5:39-40)). We are called to present liberty for the conscience of others, not to bring them liberty for their thoughts and opinions. And if we ourselves are free with the liberty of Christ, others will be brought into that same liberty— the liberty that comes from realizing the absolute control and authority of Jesus Christ.

Always measure your life solely by the standards of Jesus. Submit yourself to His yoke, and His alone; and always be careful never to place a yoke on others that is not of Jesus Christ. It takes God a long time to get us to stop thinking that unless everyone sees things exactly as we do, they must be wrong. That is never God’s view. There is only one true liberty— the liberty of Jesus at work in our conscience enabling us to do what is right.

Don’t get impatient with others. Remember how God dealt with you— with patience and with gentleness. But never water down the truth of God. Let it have its way and never apologize for it. Jesus said, “Go…and make disciples…” ([Matthew 28:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28:19)), not, “Make converts to your own thoughts and opinions.”

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

“I have chosen you” (John 15:16). Keep that note of greatness in your creed. It is not that you have got God, but that He has got you.  My Utmost for His Highest, October 25, 837 R

# CCEL – 5/6/20

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.—[PSA. 85:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.85.html" \l "Ps.85.10)

A just God and a Saviour.

The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.—Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forebearance of God; to declare I say at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.—He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes, we are healed.—Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.—To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly; his faith is counted for righteousness.

[Isa. 45:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.45.html" \l "Isa.45.21).[Isa. 42:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.42.html" \l "Isa.42.21).[II Cor. 5:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.19). -[Rom. 3:25,26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.3.html" \l "Rom.3.25). -[Isa. 53:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.5). -[Rom. 8:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.33). -[Rom. 4:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.4.html" \l "Rom.4.5).

“We dwell in him.” [1 John 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.13)

Do you want a house for your soul? Do you ask, “What is the purchase?” It is something less than proud human nature will like to give. It is without money and without price. Ah! you would like to pay a respectable rent! You would love to do something to win Christ? Then you cannot have the house, for it is “without price.” Will you take my Master’s house on a lease for all eternity, with nothing to pay for it, nothing but the ground-rent of loving and serving him forever? Will you take Jesus and “dwell in him?” See, this house is furnished with all you want, it is filled with riches more than you will spend as long as you live. Here you can have intimate communion with Christ and feast on his love; here are tables well-stored with food for you to live on forever; in it, when weary, you can find rest with Jesus; and from it you can look out and see heaven itself. Will you have the house? Ah! if you are houseless, you will say, “I should like to have the house; but may I have it?” Yes; there is the key—the key is, “Come to Jesus.” “But,” you say, “I am too shabby for such a house.” Never mind; there are garments inside. If you feel guilty and condemned, come; and though the house is too good for you, Christ will make you good enough for the house by-and-by. He will wash you and cleanse you, and you will yet be able to sing, “We dwell in him.” Believer: thrice happy art thou to have such a dwelling-place! Greatly privileged thou art, for thou hast a “strong habitation” in which thou art ever safe. And “dwelling in him,” thou hast not only a perfect and secure house, but an everlasting one. When this world shall have melted like a dream, our house shall live, and stand more imperishable than marble, more solid than granite, self-existent as God, for it is God himself—“We dwell in him.”

# Word Live – 5/6/20

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# Scripture Union – 5/6/20

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# Today in the Word – 5/6/20

# Overseeing the Church

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

### **Qualifications for Overseers and Deacons**

3 Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. 2Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

How a company describes the type of employees they are looking for can tell you a lot about their corporate culture. One career service organization listed current buzzwords often used in job postings. Some of the most-used words include: “self-starter,” “dynamic,” “detail-oriented,” “flexible,” and even “ninja”!

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Matthew 5:8

In today’s reading, Paul begins to outline the qualifications for the office of overseer in the church. His list focuses primarily on the character and reputation of the office holder. The overarching quality is that the overseer should be “above reproach” (v. 2). The other eleven characteristics in these verses give a picture of what that kind of life looks like. The overseer should be “faithful to his wife” (v. 2). Paul is not focused here on whether or not an overseer had to be married, or if he could be remarried. One commentator says Paul is saying that “church leaders live exemplary married lives” if they are married.

Paul assumes that the private life of an overseer will have consequences for the church. An overseer should therefore be temperate and self-controlled (v. 2). These qualities would rule out being controlled by alcohol or greed (v. 3). This kind of life leads others to view him with respect (v. 2). In relations with others, he is to be hospitable (v. 2). He should also be a competent teacher. In the context of heresy in the church, this assumes that the overseer is equipped to refute false teaching.

The leader and teacher of the church should be gentle and “not quarrelsome” (v. 3). This was a problem in Ephesus, where the false teachers were known for their quarrels (1:4). They should lead in a way that promotes peace and unity.

>> What an overwhelming job description! All too often in the news we hear about pastors or church leaders who have succumbed to moral failure. Being a godly leader requires maturity, wisdom, and dependence upon the Spirit. Today, hold up in prayer your pastor and other church leaders.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord Jesus, we thank you for today’s reading that shows us the qualities of a true leader! Today we support in prayer our pastors, deacons, and ministry leaders, asking for your Spirit to give them wisdom and strength for the journey.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/6/20

# Impossible Forgiveness

 **Read:** [**Luke 23:32–43**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.32%E2%80%9343)

32Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 33When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. 34Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+23%3A32%E2%80%9343&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25970a)] And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

35The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

36The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

38There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews.

39One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

40But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? 41We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

42Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+23%3A32%E2%80%9343&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-25978b" \o "See footnote b)]”

43Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Luke 23:34](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+23%3A32%E2%80%9343&version=NIV#en-NIV-25970) Some early manuscripts do not have this sentence.
2. [Luke 23:42](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+23%3A32%E2%80%9343&version=NIV#en-NIV-25978) Some manuscripts come with your kingly power

Father, forgive them. [Luke 23:34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.34)

Liberators found the following prayer crumpled among the remains of the Ravensbruck concentration camp where Nazis exterminated nearly 50,000 women: O Lord, remember not only the men and women of goodwill, but also those of ill will. But do not remember the suffering they have inflicted upon us. Remember the fruits we brought thanks to this suffering—our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, the courage, the generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of this. And when they come to judgment, let all the fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness.

I can’t imagine the fear and pain inflicted on the terrorized woman who wrote this prayer. I can’t imagine what kind of inexplicable grace these words required of her. She did the unthinkable: she sought God’s forgiveness for her oppressors.

This prayer echoes Christ’s prayer. After being wrongly accused, mocked, beaten, and humiliated before the people, Jesus was “crucified . . . along with [two] criminals” ([Luke 23:33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.33)). Hanging, with mutilated body and gasping for breath, from a rough-hewn cross, I would expect Jesus to pronounce judgment on His tormentors, to seek retribution or divine justice. However, Jesus uttered a prayer contradicting every human impulse: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (v. 34).

The forgiveness Jesus offers seems impossible, but He offers it to us. In His divine grace, impossible forgiveness spills free.

By:  [Winn Collier](https://odb.org/author/wcollier/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How has God’s impossible forgiveness changed you? How can we help others experience true forgiveness in Him?

God, Your forgiveness is a strange, impossible thing. In our pain, it’s hard to imagine this possibility. Help us. Teach us Your love.

#### **Insight**

In [Psalm 22:17–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2022.17%E2%80%9318), crucifixion was prophetically described some 600 years before it was invented: “All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.”

In the first century, the common attire for a Jewish man included five pieces of clothing—shoes, turban, belt, loincloth, and outer tunic. The soldiers stripped Jesus naked and after crucifying Him divided His garments as their spoils for performing the task. Then they gambled for the tunic ([John 19:23–24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2019.23%E2%80%9324)).

# God Calling – 5/6/20

# Sublime Audacity

The way is long and weary. It is a weary world. So many today are weary. "Come unto Me, ... and I will give you rest."

My children, who range yourselves under My flag, you must see that on it are inscribed those words "The Son of Man."

Whatever the world is feeling, I must feel, I - the son of Man. You are My followers - so the weariness of man today must be shared by you - the weary and heavy-laden must come to you, and find that rest that you found in Me.

My children, My followers must be prepared not to sit on My right hand and My left, but to drink of the cup that I drink of.

Poor world - teach it that there is only one cure for all its ills - Union with Me. Dare to suffer, dare to conquer, be filled with My sublime audacity.  Remember that. Claim the unclaimable.

Just what the world would think impossible can always be yours.  Remember, My children, sublime audacity.

And whosever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water ... verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.  Matthew 10:42

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/7/20

# Building For Eternity

Which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it… —[Luke 14:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+14%3A28)

Our Lord was not referring here to a cost which we have to count, but to a cost which He has already counted. The cost was those thirty years in Nazareth, those three years of popularity, scandal, and hatred, the unfathomable agony He experienced in Gethsemane, and the assault upon Him at Calvary— the central point upon which all of time and eternity turn. Jesus Christ has counted the cost. In the final analysis, people are not going to laugh at Him and say, “This man began to build and was not able to finish” ([Luke 14:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14:30)).

The conditions of discipleship given to us by our Lord in verses 26, 27, and 33 mean that the men and women He is going to use in His mighty building enterprises are those in whom He has done everything. “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple ” ([Luke 14:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14:26)). This verse teaches us that the only men and women our Lord will use in His building enterprises are those who love Him personally, passionately, and with great devotion— those who have a love for Him that goes far beyond any of the closest relationships on earth. The conditions are strict, but they are glorious.

All that we build is going to be inspected by God. When God inspects us with His searching and refining fire, will He detect that we have built enterprises of our own on the foundation of Jesus? (see [1 Corinthians 3:10-15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+3:10-15)). We are living in a time of tremendous enterprises, a time when we are trying to work for God, and that is where the trap is. Profoundly speaking, we can never work for God. Jesus, as the Master Builder, takes us over so that He may direct and control us completely for His enterprises and His building plans; and no one has any right to demand where he will be put to work.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Defenders of the faith are inclined to be bitter until they learn to walk in the light of the Lord. When you have learned to walk in the light of the Lord, bitterness and contention are impossible. Biblical Psychology, 199 R

# CCEL – 5/7/20

Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled.—[MATT. 24:6.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.24.html" \l "Matt.24.6)

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.—Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.—In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.—Your life is hid with Christ in God.

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting the Lord.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

[Psa. 46:1-3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.46.html" \l "Ps.46.1). -[Isa. 26:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.26.html" \l "Isa.26.20). -[Psa. 57:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.57.html" \l "Ps.57.1). -[Col. 3:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.3).[Psa. 112:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.112.html" \l "Ps.112.7).[John 16:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html#John.16.33).

“Great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all.” [Matthew 12:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.12.html" \l "Matt.12.15)

What a mass of hideous sickness must have thrust itself under the eye of Jesus! Yet we read not that he was disgusted, but patiently waited on every case. What a singular variety of evils must have met at his feet! What sickening ulcers and putrefying sores! Yet he was ready for every new shape of the monster evil, and was victor over it in every form. Let the arrow fly from what quarter it might, he quenched its fiery power. The heat of fever, or the cold of dropsy; the lethargy of palsy, or the rage of madness; the filth of leprosy, or the darkness of ophthalmia—all knew the power of his word, and fled at his command. In every corner of the field he was triumphant over evil, and received the homage of delivered captives. He came, he saw, he conquered everywhere. It is even so this morning. Whatever my own case may be, the beloved Physician can heal me; and whatever may be the state of others whom I may remember at this moment in prayer, I may have hope in Jesus that he will be able to heal them of their sins. My child, my friend, my dearest one, I can have hope for each, for all, when I remember the healing power of my Lord; and on my own account, however severe my struggle with sins and infirmities, I may yet be of good cheer. He who on earth walked the hospitals, still dispenses his grace, and works wonders among the sons of men: let me go to him at once in right earnest.

Let me praise him, this morning, as I remember how he wrought his spiritual cures, which bring him most renown. It was by taking upon himself our sicknesses. “By his stripes we are healed.” The Church on earth is full of souls healed by our beloved Physician; and the inhabitants of heaven itself confess that “He healed them all.” Come, then, my soul, publish abroad the virtue of his grace, and let it be “to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off.”

# Word Live – 5/7/20

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# Scripture Union – 5/7/20

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# Today in the Word – 5/7/20

# Spiritual Maturity

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 3:4–7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a4%e2%80%937)

4He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a4%e2%80%937#fen-NIV-29736a)] respect. 5(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) 6He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. 7He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Timothy 3:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a4%e2%80%937#en-NIV-29736) Or him with proper

“Blood is thicker than water” is a well known proverb coined around a thousand years ago. It originally referred to the fact that distance, or even ocean water, cannot sever family ties of blood and kinship. It has come to mean that one should be loyal to one’s own family before any other commitments.

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. Luke 16:10

In today’s reading, Paul completes his list of qualifications for the office of overseer. Each is accompanied by a rationale for inclusion in the list. The first qualification is that “he manage his own family well” (v. 4). Because the church is a spiritual family, it was important that an overseer managed his own biological family in a godly manner. In the ancient world, this included not only having the respect of one’s children, but also caring for and providing for an extended family. If one could not manage a household, how could he be expected to care for a spiritual family (v. 5)?

Notice that an elder should “not be a recent convert” (v. 6). In the ancient world, most people would see a leadership position as an opportunity for personal advancement and as a chance to raise their social standing. Paul’s warning was directed against this type of attitude. Leadership in the church looks quite different than leadership in the world. To illustrate what true leadership looks like, Jesus humbly washed His disciples’ feet (John 13:1–17). Finally, an overseer “must have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap” (v. 7). By the “devil’s trap,” Paul is referring to the fact that an overseer with a bad reputation among outsiders could bring reproach to the message of the gospel that the church is tasked to proclaim.

>> These official qualifications offer us a good description of what spiritual maturity looks like for any Christian. Read through 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and consider in what areas you have grown most as a believer and what areas of your life provide opportunities for future growth.

### **Pray with Us**

Today’s devotional encourages us to seek spiritual maturity. May we always look at Jesus and follow His example of love and humility. Lord, help us to live in a way that’s pleasing to you!

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/7/20

# Go-Between Prayer

 **Read:** [**Romans 8:26–34**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.26%E2%80%9334)

26In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.

28And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A26%E2%80%9334&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28145a)] have been called according to his purpose. 29For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

### **More Than Conquerors**

31What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 8:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A26%E2%80%9334&version=NIV#en-NIV-28145) Or that all things work together for good to those who love God, who; or that in all things God works together with those who love him to bring about what is good—with those who

The Spirit intercedes for God’s people. [Romans 8:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.27)

Late one Saturday afternoon, my family and I stopped at a local restaurant for lunch. As the waiter set crispy fries and thick burgers on our table, my husband glanced up and asked his name. Then he said, “We pray as a family before we eat. Is there something we can pray for you today?” Allen, whose name we now knew, looked at us with a mixture of surprise and anxiety. A short silence followed before he told us that he was sleeping on his friend’s couch each night, his car had just quit working, and he was broke.

As my husband quietly asked God to provide for Allen and show him His love, I thought about how our go-between prayer was similar to what happens when the Holy Spirit takes up our cause and connects us with God. In our moments of greatest need—when we realize we’re no match to handle life on our own, when we don’t know what to say to God, “The Spirit intercedes for God’s people” ([Romans 8:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.27)). What the Spirit says is a mystery, but we’re assured that it always fits with God’s will for our lives.

The next time you pray for God’s guidance, provision, and protection in someone else’s life, let that act of kindness remind you that your spiritual needs are also being lifted to God who knows your name and cares about your problems.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Is there anyone you can pray for today? How might you respond to temptation differently if you knew that the Holy Spirit was praying for you during the struggle?

Jesus, I thank You that temptation has no power to separate me from You. Please give me victory today through the power of Your resurrection from the dead.

#### **Insight**

The terminology Paul uses in [Romans 8:31–35](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.31%E2%80%9335) are legal terms used in court. Words such as charge, justify, and condemn fit well into the passage where Paul discusses legalities, giving readers the image of a heavenly courtroom. Additionally, Paul explains that no one condemns believers in Christ (building on his statement in verse 1) because Jesus died for them and is now interceding on their behalf (v. 34). The word interceding has the idea of someone approaching a ruler in court on behalf of someone else, making petitions for them. It’s interesting to note that both Christ and the Holy Spirit do this for us (vv. 26–29, 34). Jesus, the one who could condemn believers, instead died and is now seated at the right hand of God on our behalf.

# God Calling – 5/7/20

# Against the Tide

The oarsman, trusting in Me, does not lean on his oars and drift with the tide, trusting to the current.

Nay, more often - once I have shown the way - it is against the tide you must direct all your effort.  And even when difficulties come, it is by your effort that they will be surmounted.  But always strength and the Joy in the doing you can have through Me.

My fishermen-disciples did not find the fishes ready on the shore in their nets.  I take man's efforts and bless that.  I need man's effort - he needs My blessing. This partnership it is that means success.

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.  Philippians 2:13

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/8/20

# The Faith to Persevere

Because you have kept My command to persevere… —[Revelation 3:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Revelation+3%3A10)

Perseverance means more than endurance— more than simply holding on until the end. A saint’s life is in the hands of God like a bow and arrow in the hands of an archer. God is aiming at something the saint cannot see, but our Lord continues to stretch and strain, and every once in a while the saint says, “I can’t take any more.” Yet God pays no attention; He goes on stretching until His purpose is in sight, and then He lets the arrow fly. Entrust yourself to God’s hands. Is there something in your life for which you need perseverance right now? Maintain your intimate relationship with Jesus Christ through the perseverance of faith. Proclaim as Job did, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” ([Job 13:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+13:15)).

Faith is not some weak and pitiful emotion, but is strong and vigorous confidence built on the fact that God is holy love. And even though you cannot see Him right now and cannot understand what He is doing, you know Him. Disaster occurs in your life when you lack the mental composure that comes from establishing yourself on the eternal truth that God is holy love. Faith is the supreme effort of your life— throwing yourself with abandon and total confidence upon God.

God ventured His all in Jesus Christ to save us, and now He wants us to venture our all with total abandoned confidence in Him. There are areas in our lives where that faith has not worked in us as yet— places still untouched by the life of God. There were none of those places in Jesus Christ’s life, and there are to be none in ours. Jesus prayed, “This is eternal life, that they may know You…” ([John 17:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17:3)). The real meaning of eternal life is a life that can face anything it has to face without wavering. If we will take this view, life will become one great romance— a glorious opportunity of seeing wonderful things all the time. God is disciplining us to get us into this central place of power.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Am I becoming more and more in love with God as a holy God, or with the conception of an amiable Being who says, “Oh well, sin doesn’t matter much”?  Disciples Indeed, 389 L

# CCEL – 5/8/20

It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.—[ISA. 53:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.10)

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.—Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.—Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.—For I came down from heaven, not to do mine will, but the will of him that sent me.—The cup which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.—My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,—Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.

[John 12:27,28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.12.html" \l "John.12.27). -[Luke 22:42,43](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.22.html" \l "Luke.22.42).[Phi. 2:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.8). -[John 10:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.17). -[John 6:38](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.6.html" \l "John.6.38). -[John 18:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.18.html" \l "John.18.11).[John 8:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.8.html" \l "John.8.29). -[Matt. 3:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.3.html" \l "Matt.3.17). -[Isa. 42:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.42.html" \l "Isa.42.1).

“He that was healed wist not who it was.” [John 5:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.5.html" \l "John.5.13)

Years are short to the happy and healthy; but thirty-eight years of disease must have dragged a very weary length along the life of the poor impotent man. When Jesus, therefore, healed him by a word, while he lay at the pool of Bethesda, he was delightfully sensible of a change. Even so the sinner who has for weeks and months been paralysed with despair, and has wearily sighed for salvation, is very conscious of the change when the Lord Jesus speaks the word of power, and gives joy and peace in believing. The evil removed is too great to be removed without our discerning it; the life imparted is too remarkable to be possessed and remain inoperative; and the change wrought is too marvellous not to be perceived. Yet the poor man was ignorant of the author of his cure; he knew not the sacredness of his person, the offices which he sustained, or the errand which brought him among men. Much ignorance of Jesus may remain in hearts which yet feel the power of his blood. We must not hastily condemn men for lack of knowledge; but where we can see the faith which saves the soul, we must believe that salvation has been bestowed. The Holy Spirit makes men penitents long before he makes them divines; and he who believes what he knows, shall soon know more clearly what he believes. Ignorance is, however, an evil; for this poor man was much tantalized by the Pharisees, and was quite unable to cope with them. It is good to be able to answer gainsayers; but we cannot do so if we know not the Lord Jesus clearly and with understanding. The cure of his ignorance, however, soon followed the cure of his infirmity, for he was visited by the Lord in the temple; and after that gracious manifestation, he was found testifying that “it was Jesus who had made him whole.” Lord, if thou hast saved me, show me thyself, that I may declare thee to the sons of men.

# Word Live – 5/8/20

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# Scripture Union – 5/8/20

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# Today in the Word – 5/8/20

# Servants and Deacons

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 3:8–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a8%e2%80%9313)

8In the same way, deacons[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a8%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-29740a)] are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 9They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 10They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

11In the same way, the women[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a8%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-29743b)] are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

12A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. 13Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Timothy 3:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a8%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-29740) The word deacons refers here to Christians designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in verse 12; and in Romans 16:1 and Phil. 1:1.
2. [1 Timothy 3:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a8%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-29743) Possibly deacons’ wives or women who are deacons

Greatness in God’s kingdom looks different than in the world. When the disciples gathered in the upper room to share their final meal with Jesus, He did something that shocked them. He wrapped a towel around His waist, grabbed a water basin and began to wash their dusty feet.

Not so with you. Instead whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. Matthew 20:26

Jesus was teaching His disciples an important lesson: “The greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matt. 23:11). The word servant in that verse is the same word for “deacon” in today’s reading.

In the Greco-Roman world the role of a servant was considered undignified and unattractive. Yet, Jesus’ example had such a profound impact on the early church that one of the respected offices of church leadership was called “servant” or deacon.

Today’s reading outlines the qualifications for the role. They are strikingly similar to those for an overseer. Deacons are to control their appetites either for alcohol or money (v. 8). They are to hold to correct doctrine (v. 9). They are to pass the test of public scrutiny (v. 10). Finally, they are to be faithful to their spouse and manage their children and home with integrity (v. 12).

Commentators debate whether or not the women mentioned in verse 11 are the wives of deacons, or female deacons. Whoever Paul had in mind, they were expected to exhibit the same kind of blameless character in their personal and private lives as those addressed in verses 8–10.

>> Are you called to lead or to serve? It is human to long for positions of respect and authority, even in the church. But the very title of the office of deacon reminds us that we serve a Savior whose life was characterized by an attitude of humble service. He calls us to live with a different approach to greatness and leadership.

### **Pray with Us**

We ask the Lord to help us live according to His teaching. We thank Christ that He left His heavenly glory and became a servant clothed in humility. Do we have the courage to humble ourselves in the same way?

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/8/20

# The Man Who Couldn’t Talk



**Read:** [**Psalm 96**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2096)

1Sing to the Lord a new song;  
    sing to the Lord, all the earth.  
2Sing to the Lord, praise his name;  
    proclaim his salvation day after day.  
3Declare his glory among the nations,  
    his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

4For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;  
    he is to be feared above all gods.  
5For all the gods of the nations are idols,  
    but the Lord made the heavens.  
6Splendor and majesty are before him;  
    strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

7Ascribe to the Lord, all you families of nations,  
    ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.  
8Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;  
    bring an offering and come into his courts.  
9Worship the Lord in the splendor of his[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+96&version=NIV#fen-NIV-15475a)] holiness;  
    tremble before him, all the earth.  
10Say among the nations, “The Lord reigns.”  
    The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;  
    he will judge the peoples with equity.

11Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;  
    let the sea resound, and all that is in it.  
12Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;  
    let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.  
13Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes,  
    he comes to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world in righteousness  
    and the peoples in his faithfulness.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 96:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+96&version=NIV#en-NIV-15475) Or Lord with the splendor of

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. [Psalm 96:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2096.4)

Sitting in his wheelchair at a senior citizens home in Belize, a man joyfully listened as a group of American high school teenagers sang about Jesus. Later, as some of the teens tried to communicate with him, they discovered he couldn’t talk. A stroke had robbed him of his ability to speak.

Since they couldn’t carry on a conversation with the man, the teens decided to sing to him. As they began to sing, something amazing happened. The man who couldn’t talk began to sing. With enthusiasm, he belted out “How Great Thou Art” right along with his new friends.

It was a remarkable moment for everyone. This man’s love for God broke through the barriers and poured out in audible worship—heartfelt, joyous worship.

We all have worship barriers from time to time. Maybe it’s a relationship conflict or a money problem. Or it could be a heart that’s grown a bit cold in its relationship to God.

Our non-talking friend reminds us that the greatness and majesty of our almighty God can overcome any barrier. “O Lord, my God—when I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds Thy hands have made!”

Struggling in your worship? Reflect on how great our God is by reading a passage such as [Psalm 96](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2096), and you too may find your obstacles and objections replaced by praise.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

As you read [Psalm 96](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2096), what stands out about our great God? What barriers to worship sometimes halt you? How can you grow from silence to praise?

Our great God, I do hold You in awesome wonder. How great Thou art!

To learn more about who God is, visit [christianuniversity.org/CA310.](https://christianuniversity.org/CA310.)

#### **Insight**

God chose Abraham as the father of His chosen people. Yet God never intended salvation to be the exclusive claim of the Hebrew nation. From start to finish of this majestic psalm of praise, we see God’s gracious inclusion of everyone who will believe. The psalm begins, “Sing to the Lord, all the earth” (v. 1). Verse 3 charges God’s people to “declare his glory among the nations.” Verse 7 calls on “all you families of nations” to praise God. The psalm concludes, “He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness” (v. 13). God’s plan was for His chosen people to bring the good news of His love to the entire human race.

# God Calling – 5/8/20

# The Rest of God

I lead you. The way is clear. Go forward unafraid. I am beside you. Listen, listen, listen to My Voice. My Hand is controlling all.

Remember that I can work through you better when you are at rest. Go very slowly, very quietly from one duty to the next - taking the time to rest and pray between.

Do not be too busy. Take all in order as I say. The Rest of God is in a realm beyond all man's activities. Venture there often, and you will indeed find Peace and Joy.

All work that results from resting with God is miracle-work.  Claim the power to work miracles, both of you.

Know that you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. Nay, more, know that you can do all things through Christ who rests you.

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse ... and his rest shall be glorious.  Isaiah 11:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/9/20

# Reaching Beyond Our Grasp

Where there is no revelation [or prophetic vision], the people cast off restraint… —[Proverbs 29:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Proverbs+29%3A18)

There is a difference between holding on to a principle and having a vision. A principle does not come from moral inspiration, but a vision does. People who are totally consumed with idealistic principles rarely do anything. A person’s own idea of God and His attributes may actually be used to justify and rationalize his deliberate neglect of his duty. Jonah tried to excuse his disobedience by saying to God, “…I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, One who relents from doing harm” ([Jonah 4:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah+4:2)). I too may have the right idea of God and His attributes, but that may be the very reason why I do not do my duty. But wherever there is vision, there is also a life of honesty and integrity, because the vision gives me the moral incentive.

Our own idealistic principles may actually lull us into ruin. Examine yourself spiritually to see if you have vision, or only principles.

Ah, but a man’s reach should exceed his grasp,  
Or what’s a heaven for?

“Where there is no revelation [or prophetic vision]….” Once we lose sight of God, we begin to be reckless. We cast off certain restraints from activities we know are wrong. We set prayer aside as well and cease having God’s vision in the little things of life. We simply begin to act on our own initiative. If we are eating only out of our own hand, and doing things solely on our own initiative without expecting God to come in, we are on a downward path. We have lost the vision. Is our attitude today an attitude that flows from our vision of God? Are we expecting God to do greater things than He has ever done before? Is there a freshness and a vitality in our spiritual outlook?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 5/9/20

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.—[HEB. 11:1.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.11.html" \l "Heb.11.1)

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.—After that ye believed ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.—Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

We walk by faith, not by sight.—Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

[I Cor. 15:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.19).[I Cor. 2:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.2.html" \l "iCor.2.9). -[Eph. 1:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.13). -[John 20:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.20.html" \l "John.20.29). -[I Pet. 1:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.8).[II Cor. 5:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.7). -[Heb. 10:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.35).

“Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings.” [Ephesians 1:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.3)

All the goodness of the past, the present, and the future, Christ bestows upon his people. In the mysterious ages of the past the Lord Jesus was his Father’s first elect, and in his election he gave us an interest, for we were chosen in him from before the foundation of the world. He had from all eternity the prerogatives of Sonship, as his Father’s only-begotten and well-beloved Son, and he has, in the riches of his grace, by adoption and regeneration, elevated us to sonship also, so that to us he has given “power to become the sons of God.” The eternal covenant, based upon suretiship and confirmed by oath, is ours, for our strong consolation and security. In the everlasting settlements of predestinating wisdom and omnipotent decree, the eye of the Lord Jesus was ever fixed on us; and we may rest assured that in the whole roll of destiny there is not a line which militates against the interests of his redeemed. The great betrothal of the Prince of Glory is ours, for it is to us that he is affianced, as the sacred nuptials shall ere long declare to an assembled universe. The marvellous incarnation of the God of heaven, with all the amazing condescension and humiliation which attended it, is ours. The bloody sweat, the scourge, the cross, are ours forever. Whatever blissful consequences flow from perfect obedience, finished atonement, resurrection, ascension, or intercession, all are ours by his own gift. Upon his breastplate he is now bearing our names; and in his authoritative pleadings at the throne he remembers our persons and pleads our cause. His dominion over principalities and powers, and his absolute majesty in heaven, he employs for the benefit of them who trust in him. His high estate is as much at our service as was his condition of abasement. He who gave himself for us in the depths of woe and death, doth not withdraw the grant now that he is enthroned in the highest heavens.

# Word Live – 5/9/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/9/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/9/20

# The Mystery of Godliness

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 3:14–16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a14%e2%80%9316)

### **Reasons for Paul’s Instructions**

14Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, 15if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. 16Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great:

He appeared in the flesh,  
    was vindicated by the Spirit,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a14%e2%80%9316" \l "fen-NIV-29748a" \o "See footnote a)]  
was seen by angels,  
    was preached among the nations,  
was believed on in the world,  
    was taken up in glory.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Timothy 3:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3%3a14%e2%80%9316#en-NIV-29748) Or vindicated in spirit

Just one day after we showed our young son how to operate a microwave, I caught him putting a bowl of macaroni and cheese into the oven with a metal spoon still in the bowl. I reacted strongly, “NO! You can’t put a spoon in the microwave!” He was taken aback and asked, “Why not?” He didn’t understand the reason behind my strong reaction.

He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. 1 Timothy 3:16

The church in Ephesus had a number of problems. Leaders in the church were engaged in false teaching (1:3). During times of prayer people were expressing anger and hostility (2:8). Some women were dressing in ways to show off their wealth and status (2:9). In the first half of this letter, Paul gave clear instructions for these people in the church to change their behavior. But, just like my son, the church needed to understand the reasons behind these changes.

Paul explains why godly behavior is required in the church. First, the church is “God’s household” (v. 15). The conduct of members of the household will reflect on the master of the house. How we behave demonstrates to those outside the church what God is like. Second, the church is the “church of the living God” (v. 15). In contrast to the pagan temples and idols around them in Ephesus, the church worshiped the one, true, and living God. Finally, the church is the “pillar and foundation of the truth” (v. 15). The church is to proclaim the truth of the gospel to the world. When its members are immoral or unethical, the evangelistic message of the church is compromised.

>> Being a member of God’s household is a great responsibility and a great comfort. We come under His authority and protection. We have a shared identity with other believers, brothers and sisters in Christ. And, when we love, respect, and support each other, we bring credibility to the gospel we proclaim.

### **Pray with Us**

Today’s reading reminds us that the church is “God’s household” (1 Tim. 3:15), and the way we behave either supports or compromises the gospel. Our prayer is that our godly behavior will bring credibility to the truths we proclaim.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/9/20

# Doubt and Faith



**Read:** [**Job 1:20–22**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%201.20%E2%80%9322)

20At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship 21and said:

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,  
    and naked I will depart.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+1%3A20%E2%80%9322+%3B+2%3A7%E2%80%9310&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-12891a" \o "See footnote a)]  
The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;  
    may the name of the Lord be praised.”

22In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Job 1:21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+1%3A20%E2%80%9322+%3B+2%3A7%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-12891) Or will return there

**Read:** [**Job**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%201.20%E2%80%9322) [**2:7–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%202.7%E2%80%9310)

7So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. 8Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

9His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!”

10He replied, “You are talking like a foolish[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+1%3A20%E2%80%9322+%3B+2%3A7%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-12902a)] woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Job 2:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+1%3A20%E2%80%9322+%3B+2%3A7%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-12902) The Hebrew word rendered foolish denotes moral deficiency.

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised. [Job 1:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%201.21)

MingTeck woke up with a severe headache and thought it was another migraine. But when he got out of bed, he collapsed onto the floor. He was admitted to the hospital where the doctors informed him he’d had a stroke. After four months of rehabilitation, he recovered his ability to think and talk but still walks with a painful limp. He often struggles with despair, but he finds great comfort from the book of Job.

Job lost all his wealth and his children overnight. Despite the harrowing news, he at first looked to God in hope and praised Him for being the source of everything. He acknowledged God’s sovereign hand even in times of calamity ([Job 1:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%201.21)). We marvel at his strong faith, but Job also struggled with despair. After he lost his health too (2:7), he cursed the day he was born (3:1). He was honest with his friends and God about his pain. Eventually, however, he came to accept that both good and bad come from God’s hand (13:15; 19:25–27).

In our sufferings, we too may find ourselves vacillating between despair and hope, doubt and faith. God doesn’t require us to be dauntless in the face of adversity but instead invites us to come to Him with our questions. Though our faith may fail at times, we can trust God to always be faithful.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What doubts and questions do you need to bring before God today? How can you use [Job 1:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%201.21) to guide you in your prayers?

Dear Father, when doubts and fears overwhelm me, help me remember I’m precious in Your sight. You’re always in control, and You care for me.

#### **Insight**

Job’s story, even with its extremities of loss and suffering, is an honest presentation of life in a broken world. We face opposition both spiritual (Satan) and human (Job’s wife and friends). We experience seasons of fullness ([Job 1:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%201.1%E2%80%933)) and extended times of great loss (chs. 1–2). We endure heartache related to those we love (1:18–19) as well as trials related to our own health (2:7). Job’s trials were so comprehensive that they touched almost every area of human suffering, and his responses were also completely human. At times, Job expressed extraordinary faith and trust in God (1:20–22), and at other times he questioned the Creator’s seeming lack of care in his struggles (30:20–24). This roller-coaster of spiritual and emotional turmoil reminds us of life’s realities—realities in which God calls us to rest in Him (chs. 38–41), even when we don’t understand what’s happening to us.

# God Calling – 5/9/20

# Harmony Within

Follow My Guidance.  Be afraid to venture on your own as a child fears to leave its mother's side. Doubt of your own wisdom, and reliance on Mine, will teach you humility.

Humility is not the belittling of the self.  It is forgetting the self.  Nay more, forgetting the self, because you are remembering Me.

You must not expect to live in a world where all is harmony.  You must not expect to live where others are in unbroken accord with you.  It is your task to maintain your own heart peace in adverse circumstances. Harmony is always yours when you strain your ear to catch Heaven's music.

Doubt always your power or wisdom to put things right, ask Me to right all as you leave it to Me, and go on your way loving and laughing. I am wisdom. Only My wisdom can rightly decide anything - settle any problem. So rely on Me. All is well.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.  1 Peter 5:6

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/10/20

# Take the Initiative

…add to your faith virtue… —[2 Peter 1:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Peter+1%3A5)

Add means that we have to do something. We are in danger of forgetting that we cannot do what God does, and that God will not do what we can do. We cannot save nor sanctify ourselves— God does that. But God will not give us good habits or character, and He will not force us to walk correctly before Him. We have to do all that ourselves. We must “work out” our “own salvation” which God has worked in us ([Philippians 2:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2:12)). Add means that we must get into the habit of doing things, and in the initial stages that is difficult. To take the initiative is to make a beginning— to instruct yourself in the way you must go.

Beware of the tendency to ask the way when you know it perfectly well. Take the initiative— stop hesitating— take the first step. Be determined to act immediately in faith on what God says to you when He speaks, and never reconsider or change your initial decisions. If you hesitate when God tells you to do something, you are being careless, spurning the grace in which you stand. Take the initiative yourself, make a decision of your will right now, and make it impossible to go back. Burn your bridges behind you, saying, “I will write that letter,” or “I will pay that debt”; and then do it! Make it irrevocable.

We have to get into the habit of carefully listening to God about everything, forming the habit of finding out what He says and heeding it. If, when a crisis comes, we instinctively turn to God, we will know that the habit has been formed in us. We have to take the initiative where we are, not where we have not yet been.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Sincerity means that the appearance and the reality are exactly the same. Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, 1449 L

# CCEL – 5/10/20

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.—[I JOHN 3:8.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.8)

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.—Forasmuch . . . as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death. that is, the devil.—And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them.—I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Eph. 6:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.12). -[Heb. 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.14). -[Col 2:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.15). -[Rev. 12:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.12.html" \l "Rev.12.10).[I Cor. 15:57](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.57).

“But now is Christ risen from the dead.” [1 Corinthians 15:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.20)

The whole system of Christianity rests upon the fact that “Christ is risen from the dead;” for, “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain: ye are yet in your sins.” The divinity of Christ finds its surest proof in his resurrection, since he was “Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” It would not be unreasonable to doubt his deity if he had not risen. Moreover, Christ’s sovereignty depends upon his resurrection, “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” Again, our justification, that choice blessing of the covenant, is linked with Christ’s triumphant victory over death and the grave; for “He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Nay, more, our very regeneration is connected with his resurrection, for we are “Begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” And most certainly our ultimate resurrection rests here, for, “If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” If Christ be not risen, then shall we not rise; but if he be risen then they who are asleep in Christ have not perished, but in their flesh shall surely behold their God. Thus, the silver thread of resurrection runs through all the believer’s blessings, from his regeneration onwards to his eternal glory, and binds them together. How important then will this glorious fact be in his estimation, and how will he rejoice that beyond a doubt it is established, that “now is Christ risen from the dead”!

“The promise is fulfill'd,

Redemption’s work is done,

Justice with mercy’s reconciled,

For God has raised his Son.”

# Word Live – 5/10/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/10/20

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# Today in the Word – 5/10/20

# God’s Good Creation

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 4:1–5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+4%3a1%e2%80%935)

4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

Do you recognize false teachers in the world today? On Paul’s final trip to Jerusalem, he stopped for one final meeting with the elders in Ephesus on this very topic (Acts 20:17). He warned them, “I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29–30). This prophecy came true. In today’s reading Paul warns Timothy about these false teachers.

The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Psalm 24:1

Paul reminds Timothy that he should not be surprised that false teachers infiltrated the church. In these “later times,” one of Satan’s most potent weapons is false teaching (v. 1). First and foremost, they are deceptive. Paul calls them “hypocritical liars” and people “whose consciences have been seared” (v. 2). But even though they are contrary to God’s truth, these demonic teachings appear reasonable and compelling to many. In this instance, false teachers were teaching that the resurrection of believers had already occurred (2 Tim. 2:18). This led them to forbid marriage and certain kinds of food.

The problem with this teaching was that it denied a central tenet of Scripture: “everything God created is good” (v. 4). Paul echoes the teaching of Jesus by declaring that all foods are clean (Luke 11:40–41). Paul advises them that food should be “received with thanksgiving” (v. 3). God has created food as a provision for us. It is a gift to be received in gratitude.

>> False teachers still exist today. C. S. Lewis once wrote that Christians can fall into two opposite errors in thinking about demons. “One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive . . . interest in them.” Part of growing as a Christian is understanding biblical truth which protects us from the lies of Satan.

### Pray with Us

Reading about false teachers in today’s Scripture passage makes us even more grateful for Moody’s faculty and prompts us to pray for them fervently. Please uphold our professors in prayer as they minister to today’s students.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/10/20

# Forever Love

 **Read:** [**Psalm 136:1–**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20136.1%E2%80%939)**9**

1Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.  
His love endures forever.  
2Give thanks to the God of gods.  
His love endures forever.  
3Give thanks to the Lord of lords:  
His love endures forever.

4to him who alone does great wonders,  
His love endures forever.  
5who by his understanding made the heavens,  
His love endures forever.  
6who spread out the earth upon the waters,  
His love endures forever.  
7who made the great lights—  
His love endures forever.  
8the sun to govern the day,  
His love endures forever.  
9the moon and stars to govern the night;  
His love endures forever.

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. [1 John 4:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%204.16)

Years ago, my four-year-old son gave me a framed wooden heart mounted on a metal plate with the word forever painted in its center. “I love you forever, Mommy,” he said.

I thanked him with a hug. “I love you more.”

That priceless gift still assures me of my son’s never-ending love. On tough days, God uses that sweet present to comfort and encourage me as He affirms I’m deeply loved.

The frame also reminds me of the gift of God’s everlasting love, as expressed throughout His Word and confirmed by His Spirit. We can trust God’s unchanging goodness and sing grateful praises that confirm His enduring love, as the psalmist does ([Psalm 136:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20136.1)). We can exalt the Lord as greater than and above all (vv. 2–3), as we reflect on His endless wonders and unlimited understanding (vv. 4–5). The God who loves us forever is the conscious and caring Maker of the heavens and earth, who maintains control of time itself (vv. 6–9).

We can rejoice because the everlasting love the psalmist sang about is the same continuing love our all-powerful Creator and Sustainer pours into the lives of His children today. No matter what we’re facing, the One who made us and remains with us strengthens us by asserting He loves us unconditionally and completely. Thank You, God, for the countless reminders of Your endless and life-transforming love!

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How has God assured you of His love? How has He strengthened your faith?

God, please help us to love You and others, as we become more confident in Your never-ending love for us.

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 136](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20136) is structured around the refrain “His love endures forever,” which is repeated each second measure. This clause seems to have been used often in Israel’s liturgies (see [1 Chronicles 16:34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2016.34); [2 Chronicles 5:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chron%205.13); [7:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chronicles%207.3); [20:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chronicles%2020.21); [Ezra 3:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%203.11); [Psalm 100:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20100.5); [106:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalm%20106.1); [107:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalm%20107.1)).

The word in this refrain that the New International Version translates “love” is the Hebrew word hesed, a central theological term in both this psalm and in the Old Testament. Hesed, sometimes translated “steadfast love,” refers to a love that’s reliable and faithful. Hesed is a love towards another shown not just in emotion or words but in action, through dependably working for the good of the one loved.

[Psalm 136](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20136), echoing the description of creation in [Genesis 1:5–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%201.5%E2%80%939), describes hesed as the defining quality of God. For all of time, God has been working for the good of not only His people but all of creation.

# God Calling – 5/10/20

# Calm - Not Speed

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

All agitation is destructive of good.  All calm is constructive of good, and at the same time destructive of evil.

When man wants evil destroyed so often he rushes to action.  It is wrong. First be still and know that I am God. Then act only as I tell you. Always calm with God. Calm is trust in action. Only trust, perfect trust can keep one calm.

Never be afraid of any circumstances or difficulties that help you to cultivate this calm. As the world, to attain, has to learn speed, you, to attain, have to learn calm.  All great work for Me is done first in the individual soul of the worker.

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way,   
and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.  Jeremiah 6:16

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/11/20

# “Love One Another”

…add to your…brotherly kindness love. —[2 Peter 1:5, 7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Peter+1%3A5%2C+7)

Love is an indefinite thing to most of us; we don’t know what we mean when we talk about love. Love is the loftiest preference of one person for another, and spiritually Jesus demands that this sovereign preference be for Himself (see [Luke 14:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14:26)). Initially, when “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” ([Romans 5:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5:5)), it is easy to put Jesus first. But then we must practice the things mentioned in 2 Peter 1 to see them worked out in our lives.

The first thing God does is forcibly remove any insincerity, pride, and vanity from my life. And the Holy Spirit reveals to me that God loved me not because I was lovable, but because it was His nature to do so. Now He commands me to show the same love to others by saying, “…love one another as I have loved you” ([John 15:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:12)). He is saying, “I will bring a number of people around you whom you cannot respect, but you must exhibit My love to them, just as I have exhibited it to you.” This kind of love is not a patronizing love for the unlovable— it is His love, and it will not be evidenced in us overnight. Some of us may have tried to force it, but we were soon tired and frustrated.

“The Lord…is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish…” ([2 Peter 3:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+3:9)). I should look within and remember how wonderfully He has dealt with me. The knowledge that God has loved me beyond all limits will compel me to go into the world to love others in the same way. I may get irritated because I have to live with an unusually difficult person. But just think how disagreeable I have been with God! Am I prepared to be identified so closely with the Lord Jesus that His life and His sweetness will be continually poured out through Me? Neither natural love nor God’s divine love will remain and grow in me unless it is nurtured. Love is spontaneous, but it has to be maintained through discipline.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Am I getting nobler, better, more helpful, more humble, as I get older? Am I exhibiting the life that men take knowledge of as having been with Jesus, or am I getting more self-assertive, more deliberately determined to have my own way? It is a great thing to tell yourself the truth. The Place of Help, 1005 R

# CCEL – 5/11/20

Awake to righteousness, and sin not.—[I COR. 15:34.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.34)

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.—Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.—Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed: and make you a new heart and a new spirit.—Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.—Little children, abide in him that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

[I Thes. 5:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.5.html" \l "iThess.5.5).[Rom. 13:11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.13.html" \l "Rom.13.11). -[Eph. 6:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.13). -[Ezek. 18:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.18.html" \l "Ezek.18.31). -[Jas. 1:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.21). -[I John 2:28,29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.28).

“I am with you alway.” [Matthew 28:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.28.html" \l "Matt.28.20)

It is well there is One who is ever the same, and who is ever with us. It is well there is one stable rock amidst the billows of the sea of life. O my soul, set not thine affections upon rusting, moth-eaten, decaying treasures, but set thine heart upon him who abides forever faithful to thee. Build not thine house upon the moving quicksands of a deceitful world, but found thy hopes upon this rock, which, amid descending rain and roaring floods, shall stand immovably secure. My soul, I charge thee, lay up thy treasure in the only secure cabinet; store thy jewels where thou canst never lose them. Put thine all in Christ; set all thine affections on his person, all thy hope in his merit, all thy trust in his efficacious blood, all thy joy in his presence, and so thou mayest laugh at loss, and defy destruction. Remember that all the flowers in the world’s garden fade by turns, and the day cometh when nothing will be left but the black, cold earth. Death’s black extinguisher must soon put out thy candle. Oh! how sweet to have sunlight when the candle is gone! The dark flood must soon roll between thee and all thou hast; then wed thine heart to him who will never leave thee; trust thyself with him who will go with thee through the black and surging current of death’s stream, and who will land thee safely on the celestial shore, and make thee sit with him in heavenly places forever. Go, sorrowing son of affliction, tell thy secrets to the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. Trust all thy concerns with him who never can be taken from thee, who will never leave thee, and who will never let thee leave him, even “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” “Lo, I am with you alway,” is enough for my soul to live upon, let who will forsake me.

# Word Live – 5/11/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/11/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/11/20

# Spiritually Fit

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 4:6–10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+4%3a6%e2%80%9310)

6If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+4%3a6%e2%80%9310" \l "fen-NIV-29754a" \o "See footnote a)] you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 7Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 8For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 9This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. 10That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Timothy 4:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+4%3a6%e2%80%9310#en-NIV-29754) The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family.

Legendary football coach Tom Landry once described the craft of coaching in this way: “I don’t believe in team motivation. I believe in getting a team prepared so it knows it will have the necessary confidence when it steps on a field and be prepared to play a good game.” Coaches know that ninety-five percent of winning a game is about preparing well.

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things.1 Timothy 4:8

Like a good coach, Paul wanted to encourage Timothy to form habits that would sustain him for faithful ministry in a difficult context. In today’s reading, Paul exhorts Timothy to maintain three priorities in his life. First, to be daily in Scripture. Timothy should be “nourished on the truths of the faith and good teaching” so that he could be a “good minister” (v. 6). The metaphor of nourishment is a good one. Just as we need nutritious food on a regular and habitual basis, we should also be immersed in teaching from God’s Word on a daily basis.

Secondly, Timothy was to train himself for godliness (v. 7). This involved avoiding and distancing himself from “godless myths” and “old wives’ tales” (v. 7). Specifically, Paul is referencing the false teaching being spread in the Ephesian church. Paul compares training in godliness to physical training. Some of us devote time to making our physical bodies more fit. Paul recognizes that this has some real value. But how much more important is training in godliness, which has value for “the present life and the life to come” (v. 8).

Finally, Paul encourages Timothy to keep his eyes on the goal. His “labor” and striving is grounded in the hope that Jesus is the Savior of all people (v. 10). Proclaiming this message faithfully is worthy of our best efforts.

>> Hope is a powerful motivator. In verse 10, Paul gives insight into what motivated him to work as hard as he did for the spread of the gospel. Take a moment to reflect on what motivates you most in life? What do you labor and strive for and why?

### **Pray with Us**

Coming to the Lord in prayer, we ask for deeper understanding of Paul’s metaphors of spiritual nourishment and training. We want to be wholehearted followers of Christ and put all “our hope in the living God” (1 Tim. 4:10).

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/11/20

# Learning from Little Ones



**Read:** [**Matthew 21:8–16**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2021.8%E2%80%9316)

8A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23836a)] to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23836b)]

“Hosanna[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23836c)] in the highest heaven!”

10When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

11The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

### **Jesus at the Temple**

12Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 13“It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-23840d" \o "See footnote d)] but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23840e)]”

14The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. 15But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant.

16“Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him.

“Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read,

“‘From the lips of children and infants  
    you, Lord, have called forth your praise’[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-23843f" \o "See footnote f)]?”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 21:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-23836) A Hebrew expression meaning “Save!” which became an exclamation of praise; also in verse 15
2. [Matthew 21:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-23836) Psalm 118:25,26
3. [Matthew 21:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-23836) A Hebrew expression meaning “Save!” which became an exclamation of praise; also in verse 15
4. [Matthew 21:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-23840) Isaiah 56:7
5. [Matthew 21:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-23840) Jer. 7:11
6. [Matthew 21:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-23843) Psalm 8:2 (see Septuagint)

From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise. [Matthew 21:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2021.16)

When a friend and I rode into one of the slums in Nairobi, Kenya, our hearts were deeply humbled by the poverty we witnessed. In that same setting, however, different emotions—like fresh waters—were stirred in us as we witnessed young children running and shouting, “Mchungaji, Mchungaji!” (Swahili for “pastor”). Such was their joy-filled response upon seeing their spiritual leader in the vehicle with us. With these tender shouts, the little ones welcomed the one known for his care and concern for them.

As Jesus arrived in Jerusalem riding on a donkey, joyful children were among those who celebrated Him. “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! . . . Hosanna to the Son of David” ([Matthew 21:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2021.9), [15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matthew%2021.15)). But praises for Jesus were not the only sounds in the air. One can imagine the noisiness of scurrying, money-making merchants who were put to flight by Jesus (vv. 12–13). Furthermore, religious leaders who had witnessed His kindness in action “were indignant” (vv. 14–15). They voiced their displeasure with the children’s praises (v. 16) and thereby exposed the poverty of their own hearts.

We can learn from the faith of children of God of all ages and places who recognize Jesus as the Savior of the world. He’s the One who hears our praises and cries, and He cares for and rescues us when we come to Him with childlike trust.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How have your views of Jesus changed over the years? What things get in the way of seeing Him as the Son of God who has come to save you?

Jesus, help me to see You for who You are—my Lord and Savior.

#### **Insight**

In what’s called the triumphal entry, Jesus rides a colt into Jerusalem just prior to the Passover celebration ([Matthew 21:5–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2021.5%E2%80%937); [Mark 11:1–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%2011.1%E2%80%937); [Luke 19:30–36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2019.30%E2%80%9336)). This act is in fulfillment of the prophecy in [Zechariah 9:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Zech%209.9): “Your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” In ancient times, when a king came on a donkey, it signified that he was coming in peace (as opposed to in war). In response, the people celebrated and shouted, “Hosanna” ([Matthew 21:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2021.9)), which means “God delivers.” The delivering King was coming to His people in peace.

# God Calling – 5/11/20

# The Divine Third

When I have led you through these storms there will be other words for you, other messages - other guidance.

So deep is your friendship and so great your desire to love and follow and serve Me that soon, when this time of difficulty is over, to be alone together will always mean to be shut in with Me.

There are few friendships in the world like that and yet I taught, when on earth, as I have you both, the power of the two together.

And now tonight I have more to say to you.  I say that the time is coming, is even now here, when those who visit you two together will know that I am the Divine Third in your friendship.

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing  
 that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.  Matthew 18:19