## My Utmost for His Highest – 5/9/23



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 – 5/9/23

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 – 5/9/23

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

## Scripture Union – 5/9/23

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

## Today in the Word – 5/9/23

## A Compromising Choice

**Read:** [**1 Kings 11:1–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+11%3a1%e2%80%9313)

### **Solomon’s Wives**

11 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh’s daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. 2They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, “You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.” Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. 3He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 4As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. 5He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 6So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.

7On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 8He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

9The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. 10Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord’s command. 11So the Lord said to Solomon, “Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. 12Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.”

Sometimes what seems like a small compromise can lead to devastating results. Maybe you’ve taken a short cut to home repair only to discover the resulting damage was far worse than if you’d fixed it the right way at the beginning.

His heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God. 1 Kings 11:4

The same was true of Solomon. Considering the wisdom and wealth Solomon received from the Lord in the early years of his life, it is great disappointment that the king turned away from the Lord. How did this happen? The desertion comes through worshiping false gods. Solomon disobeyed the instructions God gave Israel about kingship. In Deuteronomy 17:14–21, God commanded that Israel’s kings were not to take many wives. We can assume non-Israelite wives were in view because the command comes with a reason. These wives would turn the king’s heart after foreign gods.

As Israel’s leader, it was of utmost importance to remain faithful to Yahweh. For as the heart of the king goes, so goes the nation. Solomon brought wives into his home who worshiped foreign gods. Over time he allowed himself to be persuaded to worship those gods. He even built shrines to false gods on a hill opposite Jerusalem within sight of the Temple he built for Yahweh (vv. 7–8)!

In an echo of the golden calf incident in Exodus when Israel worshiped an idol in full view of Yahweh on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 32), Solomon’s act of betrayal resulted in an extreme consequence—his kingdom would be turned over to an adversary. God raised up enemies, including Jeroboam, who upon Solomon’s death would gain control of a large portion of the kingdom. But the consequences would not only affect Solomon but also the lives of everyone he led.

**Apply the Word**

Today’s reading serves as a caution in our own walk with God. Are you making compromising choices? Stop and consider the effect this will have on your relationship with God and with others. Is the cost worth the compromise?

## Pray with Us

Expediency, simplicity, conformity—these are often the goals that lead us into making small compromises. Lord, anything that is not holy is wrong. Remind us of the seriousness of sin when we want to compromise.

### BY Dr. Steven H. Sanchez

## Our Daily Bread – 5/9/23

## Known by God

 **Read:** [**John 20:11–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2020.11%E2%80%9318)

### **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

11Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” 14At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

16Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

17Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

18Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

[Mary] turned toward him and cried out . . . “Rabboni!” [John 20:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2020.16)

After two brothers were separated by adoption, a DNA test helped to reunite them almost twenty years later. When Kieron texted Vincent, the man he believed was his brother, Vincent thought, Who is this stranger? When Kieron asked him what name he’d been given at birth, he immediately answered, “Tyler.” Then he knew they were brothers. He was recognized by his name!

Consider how a name plays a key role in the Easter story. As it unfolds, Mary Magdalene comes to Christ’s tomb, and she weeps when she finds His body missing. “Woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asks ([John 20:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2020.15)). She didn’t recognize Him, however, until He spoke her name: “Mary” (v. 16).

Hearing Him say it, she “cried out in Aramaic, ‘Rabboni!’ (Which means ‘Teacher’)” (v. 16). Her reaction expresses the joy believers in Jesus feel on Easter morning, recognizing that our risen Christ conquered death for all, knowing each of us as His children. As He told Mary, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (v. 17).

In Georgia, two reunited brothers bonded by name, vowed to take “this relationship to the next level.” On Easter, we praise Jesus for already taking the utmost step to rise in sacrificial love for those He knows as His own. For you and me, indeed, He’s alive!

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How does it feel knowing that Jesus rose again and knows you by name? How can you know Him better?

Your knowledge of me is humbling, dear Jesus. Thank You for the sacrificial gift of Your knowing love.

#### **Insight**

When Jesus called Mary’s name ([John 20:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2020.16)), He spoke to her in Aramaic, which was the native tongue of Jesus and the people of His day. In speaking to Mary, He addressed her as Miriam. Commentator William Hendriksen notes: “When Mary hears this word—her own name in her own language—spoken in that familiar way as only one person could ever pronounce it, she quickly turns away from the tomb and toward the speaker.” The term by which Mary addressed Jesus is Rabboni, which John interpreted for those less familiar with the Aramaic term (see 19:13, 17 where other Aramaic terms are explained). The term, akin to rabbi, means “my master” or “my teacher” and was one of respect, so honorable that it was given to just a few Jewish rabbis.

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

## God Calling – 5/9/23

## 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 – 5/10/23

## 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 – 5/10/23

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 – 5/10/23

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

## Scripture Union – 5/10/23

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

## Today in the Word – 5/10/23

## Idols and Discipline

**Read:** [**1 Kings 11:14–43**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+11%3a14%e2%80%9343)

### **Solomon’s Adversaries**

14Then the Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad the Edomite, from the royal line of Edom. 15Earlier when David was fighting with Edom, Joab the commander of the army, who had gone up to bury the dead, had struck down all the men in Edom. 16Joab and all the Israelites stayed there for six months, until they had destroyed all the men in Edom. 17But Hadad, still only a boy, fled to Egypt with some Edomite officials who had served his father. 18They set out from Midian and went to Paran. Then taking people from Paran with them, they went to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave Hadad a house and land and provided him with food.

19Pharaoh was so pleased with Hadad that he gave him a sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpenes, in marriage. 20The sister of Tahpenes bore him a son named Genubath, whom Tahpenes brought up in the royal palace. There Genubath lived with Pharaoh’s own children.

21While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David rested with his ancestors and that Joab the commander of the army was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Let me go, that I may return to my own country.”

22“What have you lacked here that you want to go back to your own country?” Pharaoh asked.

“Nothing,” Hadad replied, “but do let me go!”

23And God raised up against Solomon another adversary, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah. 24When David destroyed Zobah’s army, Rezon gathered a band of men around him and became their leader; they went to Damascus, where they settled and took control. 25Rezon was Israel’s adversary as long as Solomon lived, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad. So Rezon ruled in Aram and was hostile toward Israel.

### **Jeroboam Rebels Against Solomon**

26Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon’s officials, an Ephraimite from Zeredah, and his mother was a widow named Zeruah.

27Here is the account of how he rebelled against the king: Solomon had built the terraces[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+11%3A14%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9136a)] and had filled in the gap in the wall of the city of David his father. 28Now Jeroboam was a man of standing, and when Solomon saw how well the young man did his work, he put him in charge of the whole labor force of the tribes of Joseph.

29About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country, 30and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. 31Then he said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon’s hand and give you ten tribes. 32But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe. 33I will do this because they have[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+11%3A14%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9142b)] forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molek the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in obedience to me, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my decrees and laws as David, Solomon’s father, did.

34“‘But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon’s hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who obeyed my commands and decrees. 35I will take the kingdom from his son’s hands and give you ten tribes. 36I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name. 37However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. 38If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you. 39I will humble David’s descendants because of this, but not forever.’”

40Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon’s death.

### **Solomon’s Death**

41As for the other events of Solomon’s reign—all he did and the wisdom he displayed—are they not written in the book of the annals of Solomon? 42Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 43Then he rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [1 Kings 11:27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+11%3A14%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#en-NIV-9136) Or the Millo
2. [1 Kings 11:33](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+11%3A14%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#en-NIV-9142) Hebrew; Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac because he has

There are some very dramatic examples of God’s punishment for sin in the Bible. In Numbers, the ground opened and swallowed people whole (Num. 16:31–35). In Acts, Ananias and his wife Sapphira were judged for lying and fell down dead (Acts 5:5,10). But in Solomon’s case, God used a different type of discipline.

Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God’s love for them. Jonah 2:8

God had already described what would await the disobedient king when he made a covenant with David. At that time, God warned that He would “punish him with a rod wielded by men” (2 Sam. 7:14). In this chapter we see what that means. God used war and the threat of rebellion to take away peace. Hadad, an Edomite who had suffered as a child under David, returned as a rival (v. 14). Another man named Rezon, settled in Damascus to set up a rival kingdom (v. 23).

Finally, the Lord raised up Jeroboam, a talented young man who worked for Solomon. He was so gifted that Solomon put him in charge of a large construction project in Jerusalem (v. 28). But God intended to give ten of Israel’s twelve tribes to Jeroboam. God sent a prophet to give Jeroboam the message, but Solomon heard and tried to kill his new rival. Jeroboam escaped to Egypt, where Pharaoh, previously Solomon’s ally, protected him.

Why would the Lord punish a king whom he previously blessed? The answer is found in verse 33: “[B]ecause they have forsaken me... and have not walked in obedience to me, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my decrees and laws as David, Solomon’s father, did” (1 Kings 11:33). The end of Solomon’s 40-year reign is summarized in verses 41–43.

**Apply the Word**

The punishment God inflicted for Solomon’s disobedience is a stern reminder of how He views sin. Spend some time in confession today. As believers on this side of the Cross, we are able to experience His forgiveness (1 John 1:9; Heb. 8:12).

## Pray with Us

Father, we plead with You not to let our love for You grow cold. When our focus wanes, stir us to greater faithfulness! Let our devotion to You widen and deepen with each passing year.

### BY Dr. Steven H. Sanchez

## Our Daily Bread – 5/10/23

## Stolen Gods

 **Read:** [**Genesis 31:19–21**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2031.19%E2%80%9321)

19When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father’s household gods. 20Moreover, Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was running away. 21So he fled with all he had, crossed the Euphrates River, and headed for the hill country of Gilead.

**Read:** [**Genesis**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2031.19%E2%80%9321) [**32:22–30**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Genesis%2032.22%E2%80%9330)

### **Jacob Wrestles With God**

22That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.”

But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

27The man asked him, “What is your name?”

“Jacob,” he answered.

28Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31%3A19%E2%80%9321+%3B+32%3A22%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#fen-NIV-957a)] because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.”

29Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.”

But he replied, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he blessed him there.

30So Jacob called the place Peniel,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31%3A19%E2%80%9321+%3B+32%3A22%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#fen-NIV-959b)] saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Genesis 32:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31%3A19%E2%80%9321+%3B+32%3A22%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#en-NIV-957) Israel probably means he struggles with God.
2. [Genesis 32:30](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31%3A19%E2%80%9321+%3B+32%3A22%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#en-NIV-959) Peniel means face of God.

You have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome. [Genesis 32:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2032.28)

A carved wooden figure—a household god—had been stolen from a woman named Ekuwa, so she reported it to the authorities. Believing they had found the idol, law enforcement officials invited her to identify it. “Is this your god?” they asked. She said sadly, “No, my god is much larger and more beautiful than that.”

People have long tried to give shape to their concept of deity, hoping for a handmade god to protect them. Perhaps that’s why Jacob’s wife Rachel “stole her father’s household gods” as they fled from Laban ([Genesis 31:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2031.19)). But God had His hand on Jacob, despite the idols hidden in his camp (v. 34).

Later, on that same journey, Jacob wrestled all night with “a man” (32:24). He must have understood this opponent was no mere human, because at daybreak Jacob insisted, “I will not let you go unless you bless me” (v. 26). The man renamed him Israel (“God fights”) and then blessed him (vv. 28–29). Jacob called the spot Peniel (“face of God”), “because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared” (v. 30).

This God—the one true God—is infinitely larger and more beautiful than anything Ekuwa could have ever imagined. He can’t be carved, stolen, or hidden. Yet, as Jacob learned that night, we can approach Him! Jesus taught His disciples to call this God “our Father in heaven” ([Matthew 6:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%206.9)).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How would you describe God? How might your ideas of Him be too limited?

Heavenly Father, forgive me for seeing You as smaller than You really are. Help me embrace the reality of who You truly are.

#### **Insight**

Rachel stole her father’s “household gods” ([Genesis 31:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2031.19)). The Hebrew word used here is teraphim. This word is used several times in the Old Testament (see [Judges 17:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Judg%2017.5); [18:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Judges%2018.14); [1 Samuel 15:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2015.23); [2 Kings 23:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%2023.24)), but scholars are uncertain about what such household gods or idols were used for. It’s possible they were used in everything from divination practices to status symbols denoting who was the rightful heir of the household. It’s further unclear why Rachel stole them from her father, as these idols aren’t mentioned again in the rest of the story of Jacob or his offspring.

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

## God Calling – 5/10/23

## 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 – 5/11/23

## “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 – 5/11/23

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 – 5/11/23

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

## Scripture Union – 5/11/23

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## Today in the Word – 5/11/23

## “I Will Make It Heavier”

**Read:** [**1 Kings 12:1–17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12%3a1%e2%80%9317)

### **Israel Rebels Against Rehoboam**

12 Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone there to make him king. 2When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12%3A1%E2%80%9317+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9154a)] Egypt. 3So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: 4“Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.”

5Rehoboam answered, “Go away for three days and then come back to me.” So the people went away.

6Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. “How would you advise me to answer these people?” he asked.

7They replied, “If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.”

8But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. 9He asked them, “What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, ‘Lighten the yoke your father put on us’?”

10The young men who had grown up with him replied, “These people have said to you, ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter.’ Now tell them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist. 11My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.’”

12Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, “Come back to me in three days.” 13The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, 14he followed the advice of the young men and said, “My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.” 15So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the Lord, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.

16When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:

“What share do we have in David,  
    what part in Jesse’s son?  
To your tents, Israel!  
    Look after your own house, David!”

So the Israelites went home. 17But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [1 Kings 12:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12%3A1%E2%80%9317+&version=NIV#en-NIV-9154) Or he remained in

Whenever a new boss takes charge, they make changes. Some of those decisions are welcomed by their employees, others are met with disapproval. After King Solomon died, two men stepped into leader- ship. Solomon’s son and successor, Rehoboam, and his rival, Jeroboam.

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. Colossians 1:16

For Rehoboam, this was a chance to rise to the occasion of leadership and cultivate an identity apart from his father. Unlike David, Solomon seems to have made a clear plan for succession, there was no confusion as when David died. But Rehoboam had a different problem. Although Israel prospered under Solomon, the prosperity came at a cost. The people had experienced heavy taxation and a forced labor system. They yearned for relief (v. 4).

They found a spokesperson for their cause in Jeroboam, the man who had fled to Egypt to hide from Solomon (v. 2). He led a delegation to make a request of the new king (Rehoboam). “Lighten the hard service...and we will serve you” (v. 4). Initially Rehoboam sought counsel from his father’s advisors who advised Rehoboam to speak gently to the people and agree with their request (v. 7). But the king rejected their advice and consulted a younger set of advisors, men he had known for years. They advised that he take a hard line: “My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier” (v. 11). Agreeing, Rehoboam spoke harshly to the people and watched as ten tribes sided with Jeroboam and formed their own kingdom.

Here we see God’s sovereignty on display, even through the poor choice of their new leader. It is easy to wonder if Rehoboam could have avoided this situation if he had listened to older, wiser men. But we must not forget that this was the plan of God. He was at work even through these difficulties.

**Apply the Word**

Are you facing a difficult situation? Do not despair, rather consider how God might be guiding you through it. God is still on the throne. What might He be teaching you?

## Pray with Us

Guide us through each step of our journey, we pray. Bless us as we seek to honor You with our choices and lifestyles. Make us discern the conviction and prompting of the Holy Spirit, that we may truly know Your mind and heart.

### BY Dr. Steven H. Sanchez

## Our Daily Bread – 5/11/23

## God Sees, Understands, and Cares

 **Read:** [**Psalm 147:1–5**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20147.1%E2%80%935)

1Praise the Lord.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+147%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#fen-NIV-16353a)]

How good it is to sing praises to our God,  
    how pleasant and fitting to praise him!

2The Lord builds up Jerusalem;  
    he gathers the exiles of Israel.  
3He heals the brokenhearted  
    and binds up their wounds.  
4He determines the number of the stars  
    and calls them each by name.  
5Great is our Lord and mighty in power;  
    his understanding has no limit.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Psalm 147:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+147%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#en-NIV-16353) Hebrew Hallelu Yah; also in verse 20

Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit. [Psalm 147:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20147.5)

Sometimes, living with chronic pain and fatigue leads to being isolated at home and feeling alone. I’ve often felt unseen by God and others. During an early morning prayer-walk with my service dog, I struggled with these feelings. I noticed a hot-air balloon in the distance. The people in its basket could enjoy a bird’s-eye view of our quiet neighborhood, but they couldn’t really see me. As I continued walking past my neighbors’ houses, I sighed. How many people behind those closed doors feel unseen and insignificant? As I finished my walk, I asked God to give me opportunities to let my neighbors know that I see them and care for them, and so does He.

God determined the exact number of stars that He spoke into existence. He identified each star with a name ([Psalm 147:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20147.4)), an intimate act that demonstrates His attention to the smallest details. His strength—insight, discernment, and knowledge—have “no limit” in the past, present, or future (v. 5).

God hears each desperate cry and sees each silent tear as clearly as He notices each sigh of contentment and belly laugh. He sees when we’re stumbling and when we’re standing in triumph. He understands our deepest fears, our innermost thoughts, and our wildest dreams. He knows where we’ve been and where we’re going. As God helps us see, hear, and love our neighbors, we can trust Him to see, understand, and care for us.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How have your neighbors loved you? How can you love others today?

God, please help me see, hear, and love others in practical ways.

For further study, read [Loving Our Neighbors](https://discoverodb.org/articles/loving-our-neighbors/).

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 147](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20147), near the end of the Hebrew psalter, is toward the end of Book Five—in a set of psalms focused on giving praise to God. [Psalm 147](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20147) fits well into this group, as it both begins and ends with the words “Praise the Lord” (Hebrew, halelu-yah). Some scholars speculate that these psalms were assembled to celebrate the rebuilding of Jerusalem following the Babylonian captivity of the southern tribe of Judah (see v. 2). But the praise for God isn’t limited to that expression of gratitude. There’s also celebration for God’s creation (vv. 4, 8), care for the weak (v. 6), provision of rain (v. 8), and provision of food (v. 14). Additionally, the people of God are to praise Him for the provision of His Word (vv. 19–20). No wonder the psalmist says that it’s both “pleasant and fitting to praise him!” (v. 1).

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

## God Calling – 5/11/23

## 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

## My Utmost for His Highest – 5/12/23

## The Habit of Having No Habits



If these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful… —[2 Peter 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Peter+1%3A8)

When we first begin to form a habit, we are fully aware of it. There are times when we are aware of becoming virtuous and godly, but this awareness should only be a stage we quickly pass through as we grow spiritually. If we stop at this stage, we will develop a sense of spiritual pride. The right thing to do with godly habits is to immerse them in the life of the Lord until they become such a spontaneous expression of our lives that we are no longer aware of them. Our spiritual life continually causes us to focus our attention inwardly for the determined purpose of self-examination, because each of us has some qualities we have not yet added to our lives.

Your god may be your little Christian habit— the habit of prayer or Bible reading at certain times of your day. Watch how your Father will upset your schedule if you begin to worship your habit instead of what the habit symbolizes. We say, “I can’t do that right now; this is my time alone with God.” No, this is your time alone with your habit. There is a quality that is still lacking in you. Identify your shortcoming and then look for opportunities to work into your life that missing quality.

Love means that there are no visible habits— that your habits are so immersed in the Lord that you practice them without realizing it. If you are consciously aware of your own holiness, you place limitations on yourself from doing certain things— things God is not restricting you from at all. This means there is a missing quality that needs to be added to your life. The only supernatural life is the life the Lord Jesus lived, and He was at home with God anywhere. Is there someplace where you are not at home with God? Then allow God to work through whatever that particular circumstance may be until you increase in Him, adding His qualities. Your life will then become the simple life of a child.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Both nations and individuals have tried Christianity and abandoned it, because it has been found too difficult; but no man has ever gone through the crisis of deliberately making Jesus Lord and found Him to be a failure. The Love of God—The Making of a Christian, 680 R

## CCEL – 5/12/23

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.—[I JOHN 4:7.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.7)

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.—Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.—He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.—In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.—That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

[Rom. 5:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.5). -[Rom. 8:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.15). -[I John 5:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html" \l "iJohn.5.10).[I John 4:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.9). -[Eph. 1:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.7). -[Eph. 2:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.7).[I John 4:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.11).

“And will manifest myself to him.” **[John 14:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.21)**

The Lord Jesus gives special revelations of himself to his people. Even if Scripture did not declare this, there are many of the children of God who could testify the truth of it from their own experience. They have had manifestations of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in a peculiar manner, such as no mere reading or hearing could afford. In the biographies of eminent saints, you will find many instances recorded in which Jesus has been pleased, in a very special manner to speak to their souls, and to unfold the wonders of his person; yea, so have their souls been steeped in happiness that they have thought themselves to be in heaven, whereas they were not there, though they were well nigh on the threshold of it—for when Jesus manifests himself to his people, it is heaven on earth; it is paradise in embryo; it is bliss begun. Especial manifestations of Christ exercise a holy influence on the believer’s heart. One effect will be humility. If a man says, “I have had such-and-such spiritual communications, I am a great man,” he has never had any communion with Jesus at all; for “God hath respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.” He does not need to come near them to know them, and will never give them any visits of love. Another effect will be happiness; for in God’s presence there are pleasures for evermore. Holiness will be sure to follow. A man who has no holiness has never had this manifestation. Some men profess a great deal; but we must not believe any one unless we see that his deeds answer to what he says. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked.” He will not bestow his favours upon the wicked: for while he will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he respect an evil doer. Thus there will be three effects of nearness to Jesus—humility, happiness, and holiness. May God give them to thee, Christian!

## Word Live – 5/12/23

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## Scripture Union – 5/12/23

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## Today in the Word – 5/12/23

## Your Golden Ticket

**Read:** [**1 Kings 12:25–33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12%3a25%e2%80%9333)

### **Golden Calves at Bethel and Dan**

25Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12%3A25%E2%80%9333+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9177a)]

26Jeroboam thought to himself, “The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. 27If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.”

28After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” 29One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. 30And this thing became a sin; the people came to worship the one at Bethel and went as far as Dan to worship the other.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12%3A25%E2%80%9333+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9182b)]

31Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. 32He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made. 33On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of his own choosing, he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [1 Kings 12:25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12%3A25%E2%80%9333+&version=NIV#en-NIV-9177) Hebrew Penuel, a variant of Peniel
2. [1 Kings 12:30](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12%3A25%E2%80%9333+&version=NIV#en-NIV-9182) Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text people went to the one as far as Dan

Jeroboam had been given a golden ticket! He had been chosen by God to lead the ten tribes of Israel. Confronted by a prophet in chapter 11, Jeroboam was informed that if he obeyed, God would be with him and build him a house like He did for David. What an amazing opportunity!

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. Psalm 20:7

Now, with the ten tribes under his control, Jeroboam’s heart would be tested. The test would not be war, famine, or crisis. Rather, it would be a test of faith. Would Jeroboam believe what God told him or would he give into fear and try to guarantee his future on his own?

In chapter 12 we find Jeroboam pondering a question. What would happen if year after year the citizens of his country traveled to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem? He suspected that sooner, rather than later, he would be pushed off the throne as the kingdoms rejoined (v. 27). The ingredient Jeroboam failed to include in his recipe of doubt, was God’s promise! The kingdom was his. His to enjoy, or his to lose. All he had to do was obey.

So, it is disappointing to see Jeroboam choose to protect his throne in a way that disobeyed God and led his people astray (vv. 28 30). Jeroboam decided to build two shrines in his kingdom, one at Dan at the northern border of his kingdom and one at Bethel near the southern border. Their purpose? To create an opportunity for Israelites to worship without going to Jerusalem. At these shrines Jeroboam installed idols, golden calves, and invited his people to worship. In his fear-driven effort to protect himself, he led his kingdom into the very sins that led to Solomon’s downfall.

**Apply the Word**

It seems sensible to do everything we can to protect our own interests. But we must be mindful that God is the only One who can guarantee our future. What are you afraid of that is causing you to secure your life in a way that dishonors God?

## Pray with Us

We know fear is not from You, but we don’t know how to let it go. Give us courage and strength to obey You, even when we feel trapped, abandoned, or under pressure. Alert us when we allow ourselves to be driven by doubt.

### BY Dr. Steven H. Sanchez

## Our Daily Bread – 5/12/23

## How’s My Driving?

 **Read:** [**James 1:19–26**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%201.19%E2%80%9326)

### **Listening and Doing**

19My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. 21Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

22Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

26Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. [James 1:19–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%201.19%E2%80%9320)

“ARRRGH!” I yelled as the repair truck cut in front of me.

That’s when I saw the message: “How’s My Driving?” And a phone number. I picked up my phone and dialed. A woman asked me why I was calling, and I vented my frustration. She took down the truck’s number. Then she said, wearily, “You know, you can always call to report someone who’s driving nicely.”

Ouch. Her tired words instantly punctured my smug self-righteousness. Embarrassment flooded me. In my zeal for “justice,” I hadn’t paused to consider how my rage-filled tone could affect this woman in her difficult job. The disconnect between my faith and my fruitfulness—in that moment—was devastating.

The gap between our actions and our convictions is what the book of James focuses on. In [James 1:19–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%201.19%E2%80%9320), we read, “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.” Later, he adds, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (v. 22).

None of us is perfect. Sometimes our “driving” in life needs help, the kind that starts with confession and asks for God’s help—trusting Him to keep filing the rough edges of our character.

By:  [Adam Holz](https://odb.org/author/adamholz/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Why can words spoken quickly and in anger be problematic? How can you better live out what you truly believe?

Father, sometimes my anger wins out and I say hurtful things. Please help me to grow in this area.

#### **Insight**

The book of James is deeply concerned about justice, especially in the relationships between the rich and poor (2:6; 5:1–6). In fact, the Greek word often translated “righteousness” in [James 1:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%201.20) (dikaiosynē) can also be translated “justice,” a plausible translation of this verse in the context. Because strained and unjust relationships between rich and poor is such a core issue in this book, some scholars have suggested that in 1:19–20 the author feels the need to urgently emphasize that human anger won’t result in the justice the poor long for. Instead, James emphasizes being “quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” In [James 4:1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%204.1%E2%80%932), the author again warns against allowing unmet desires to turn into anger and even violence. Believers in Jesus are called to live in humble dependence on God (1:21) and to be devoted to serving others (v. 27).

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

## God Calling – 5/12/23

## Thrill of Protection

Turn out all thoughts of doubt and of trouble. Never tolerate them for one second. Bar the windows and doors of your souls against them as you would bar your home against a thief who would steal in to take your treasures.

What greater treasures can you have than Peace and Rest and Joy? And these are all stolen from you by doubt and fear and despair.

Face each day with Love and Laughter. Face the storm.

Joy, Peace, Love, My great gifts.  Follow Me to find all three. I want you to feel the thrill of protection and safety Now. Any soul can feel this in a harbor, but real joy and victory come to those alone who sense these when they ride a storm.

Say, "all is well." Say it not as a vain repetition. Use it as you use a healing balm for cut or wound, until the poison is drawn out; then, until the sore is healed, then until the thrill of fresh life floods your being.

All is well.

O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?  Matthew 14:31

## My Utmost for His Highest – 5/13/23

## The Habit of Keeping a Clear Conscience



…strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men. —[Acts 24:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+24%3A16)

God’s commands to us are actually given to the life of His Son in us. Consequently, to our human nature in which God’s Son has been formed (see [Galatians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+4:19)), His commands are difficult. But they become divinely easy once we obey.

Conscience is that ability within me that attaches itself to the highest standard I know, and then continually reminds me of what that standard demands that I do. It is the eye of the soul which looks out either toward God or toward what we regard as the highest standard. This explains why conscience is different in different people. If I am in the habit of continually holding God’s standard in front of me, my conscience will always direct me to God’s perfect law and indicate what I should do. The question is, will I obey? I have to make an effort to keep my conscience so sensitive that I can live without any offense toward anyone. I should be living in such perfect harmony with God’s Son that the spirit of my mind is being renewed through every circumstance of life, and that I may be able to quickly “prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” ([Romans 12:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12:2) ; also see [Ephesians 4:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+4:23)).

God always instructs us down to the last detail. Is my ear sensitive enough to hear even the softest whisper of the Spirit, so that I know what I should do? “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God…” ([Ephesians 4:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+4:30)). He does not speak with a voice like thunder— His voice is so gentle that it is easy for us to ignore. And the only thing that keeps our conscience sensitive to Him is the habit of being open to God on the inside. When you begin to debate, stop immediately. Don’t ask, “Why can’t I do this?” You are on the wrong track. There is no debating possible once your conscience speaks. Whatever it is— drop it, and see that you keep your inner vision clear.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We all have the trick of saying—If only I were not where I am!—If only I had not got the kind of people I have to live with! If our faith or our religion does not help us in the conditions we are in, we have either a further struggle to go through, or we had better abandon that faith and religion.  The Shadow of an Agony, 1178 L

## CCEL – 5/13/23

Pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.—[I TIM. 2:8.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.2.html" \l "iTim.2.8)

The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.—Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.—When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any.

Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.—Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.—My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.

[John 4:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.4.html" \l "John.4.23). -[Isa. 58:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.58.html" \l "Isa.58.9). -[Mark 11:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.11.html" \l "Mark.11.25).[Heb. 11:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.11.html" \l "Heb.11.6). -[Jas. 1:6,7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.6).[Psa. 66:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.66.html" \l "Ps.66.18). -[I John 2:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.1).

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” **[Psalm 30:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.30.html" \l "Ps.30.5)**

Christian! If thou art in a night of trial, think of the morrow; cheer up thy heart with the thought of the coming of thy Lord. Be patient, for

“Lo! He comes with clouds descending.”

Be patient! The Husbandman waits until he reaps his harvest. Be patient; for you know who has said, “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be.” If you are never so wretched now, remember

“A few more rolling suns, at most, Will land thee on fair Canaan’s coast.”

Thy head may be crowned with thorny troubles now, but it shall wear a starry crown ere long; thy hand may be filled with cares—it shall sweep the strings of the harp of heaven soon. Thy garments may be soiled with dust now; they shall be white by-and-by. Wait a little longer. Ah! how despicable our troubles and trials will seem when we look back upon them! Looking at them here in the prospect, they seem immense; but when we get to heaven we shall then

“With transporting joys recount, The labours of our feet.”

Our trials will then seem light and momentary afflictions. Let us go on boldly; if the night be never so dark, the morning cometh, which is more than they can say who are shut up in the darkness of hell. Do you know what it is thus to live on the future—to live on expectation—to antedate heaven? Happy believer, to have so sure, so comforting a hope. It may be all dark now, but it will soon be light; it may be all trial now, but it will soon be all happiness. What matters it though “weeping may endure for a night,” when “joy cometh in the morning?”

## Word Live – 5/13/23

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

## Scripture Union – 5/13/23

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## Today in the Word – 5/13/23

## He Took Everything!

**Read:** [**1 Kings 14:21–31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+14%3a21%e2%80%9331)

### **Rehoboam King of Judah**

21Rehoboam son of Solomon was king in Judah. He was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel in which to put his Name. His mother’s name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite.

22Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord. By the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than those who were before them had done. 23They also set up for themselves high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. 24There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites.

25In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. 26He carried off the treasures of the temple of the Lord and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. 27So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and assigned these to the commanders of the guard on duty at the entrance to the royal palace. 28Whenever the king went to the Lord’s temple, the guards bore the shields, and afterward they returned them to the guardroom.

29As for the other events of Rehoboam’s reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? 30There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. 31And Rehoboam rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. His mother’s name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite. And Abijah[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+14%3A21%E2%80%9331+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9250a)] his son succeeded him as king.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [1 Kings 14:31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+14%3A21%E2%80%9331+&version=NIV#en-NIV-9250) Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 2 Chron. 12:16); most Hebrew manuscripts Abijam

Parents will often discipline their children by temporarily taking away something they love. For example, a child might not be allowed to play a favorite video game or go to a friend’s house after school. The loss is intended to teach an important lesson. In 1 Kings 14, we see God’s discipline of a king and his kingdom.

The Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.Hebrews 12:6

Under Rehoboam’s rule the nation followed in the footsteps of his father and violated the first commandment, worshiping other gods. It is important to note that this behavior characterized the nation, not just the king. Rehoboam set an example and his people followed. But they didn’t need to be led astray, they were already prepared to disobey.

Punishment came quickly. Five years after Rehoboam took the throne, Shishak, king of Egypt, attacked Jerusalem and raided the Temple. “He took everything” (1 Kings 14:26). It didn’t have to be this way. Rehoboam could have made a different choice. He responded poorly to the discipline of the Lord. The division of the kingdom was part of God’s plan, but he rejected it. Instead of letting the punishment turn him back to God, he allowed it to drive him further away.

This is the first of many times that the Temple in Jerusalem would be raided, before it was finally destroyed in 586 BC. Why would God allow His “house” to be desecrated this way? Wouldn’t He want to defend His honor? Does this scene say anything about God’s character? Yes, it does! It says that He does not dwell in a house made with hands. Although a Temple was a source of national pride, it was entirely expendable if it prevented people from being faithful to God. The point of this discipline was to make the nation wake up from its idolatrous stupor.

**Apply the Word**

Sometimes things are removed from our lives, perhaps a job or a friendship. The loss jolts us out of complacency. What might God be teaching us through this loss? Perhaps it reminds us that our first allegiance is only to Him.

## Pray with Us

Not every loss is a judgment but each loss is an opportunity to draw nearer to You. In our pain and soul-searching, show us anything we need to repent of. Reveal Your goodness to us and grant us peace in Your loving forgiveness.

### BY Dr. Steven H. Sanchez

## Our Daily Bread – 5/13/23

## For Love’s Sake

 **Read:** [**Romans 12:9–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.9%E2%80%9318)

### **Love in Action**

9Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

14Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28262a)] Do not be conceited.

17Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Romans 12:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-28262) Or willing to do menial work

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. [Romans 12:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.10)

Running a marathon is about pushing yourself, physically and mentally. For one high school runner, however, competing in a cross-country race is all about pushing someone else. In every practice and meet, fourteen-year-old Susan Bergeman pushes older brother, Jeffrey, in his wheelchair. When Jeffrey was twenty-two months old, he went into cardiac arrest—leaving him with severe brain damage and cerebral palsy. Today, Susan sacrifices personal running goals so Jeffrey might compete with her. What love and sacrifice!

The apostle Paul had love and sacrifice in mind when he encouraged his readers to be “devoted to one another” ([Romans 12:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.10)). He knew that the believers in Rome were struggling with jealousy, anger, and sharp disagreements (v. 18). So, he encouraged them to let divine love rule their hearts. This kind of love, rooted in Christ’s love, would fight for the highest possible good of others. It would be sincere, and it would lead to generous sharing (v. 13). Those who love this way are eager to consider others more worthy of honor than themselves (v. 16).

As believers in Jesus, we’re running a race of love while helping others finish the race too. Though it can be difficult, it brings honor to Jesus. So, for love’s sake, let’s rely on Him to empower us to love and serve others.

By:  [Marvin Williams](https://odb.org/author/marvinwilliams/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What does it mean for you to love others as God loves them? How does Jesus reveal that love is more than emotion?

God of love, for love’s sake and Your glory, help me to consider others before I consider myself.

#### **Insight**

In many of Paul’s letters, he follows a simple pattern. He begins with a section of doctrine or teaching, then finishes with a section of application. We see this in Ephesians, where chapters 1–3 provide doctrine (what we believe) and chapters 4–6 offer practical ideas for living out that truth (how we behave). In Romans, chapters 1–11 offer a robust defense and explanation of the gospel of God’s grace and chapters 12–16 provide application for living gospel-based lives. [Romans 12:9–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.9%E2%80%9318) is a classic example of this practical counsel. It’s noteworthy that most of this counsel pertains to how we treat one another as humans, both inside and outside the family of faith (vv. 10–18), for we live out the gospel in relationship with others.

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

## God Calling – 5/13/23

## Never Judge

What Joy follows self-conquest!  You cannot conquer and control others, either of you, until you have completely conquered yourself.

Can you see yourselves absolutely unmoved? Think of Me before the mocking soldiers, being struck, spat upon, and answering never a word - never a word.  Try to see that as Divine Power. Remember by that Power of perfect silence, perfect self-control, you can alone prove your right to govern.

Never judge. The heart of man is so delicate, so complex, only its Maker can know it. Each heart is so different, actuated by different motives, controlled by different circumstances, influenced by different sufferings.

How can one judge of another? Leave to Me the unraveling of the puzzles of life. Leave to Me the teaching of understanding. Bring each heart to Me, its Maker, and leave it with Me. Secure in the certainty that all that is wrong I can set right.

Judge not, that ye be not judged.  Matthew 7:1

## My Utmost for His Highest – 5/14/23

## The Habit of Enjoying Adversity



…that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. —[2 Corinthians 4:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+4%3A10)

We have to develop godly habits to express what God’s grace has done in us. It is not just a question of being saved from hell, but of being saved so that “the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.” And it is adversity that makes us exhibit His life in our mortal flesh. Is my life exhibiting the essence of the sweetness of the Son of God, or just the basic irritation of “myself” that I would have apart from Him? The only thing that will enable me to enjoy adversity is the acute sense of eagerness of allowing the life of the Son of God to evidence itself in me. No matter how difficult something may be, I must say, “Lord, I am delighted to obey You in this.” Instantly, the Son of God will move to the forefront of my life, and will manifest in my body that which glorifies Him.

You must not debate. The moment you obey the light of God, His Son shines through you in that very adversity; but if you debate with God, you grieve His Spirit (see [Ephesians 4:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+4:30)). You must keep yourself in the proper condition to allow the life of the Son of God to be manifested in you, and you cannot keep yourself fit if you give way to self-pity. Our circumstances are the means God uses to exhibit just how wonderfully perfect and extraordinarily pure His Son is. Discovering a new way of manifesting the Son of God should make our heart beat with renewed excitement. It is one thing to choose adversity, and quite another to enter into adversity through the orchestrating of our circumstances by God’s sovereignty. And if God puts you into adversity, He is adequately sufficient to “supply all your need” ([Philippians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+4:19)).

Keep your soul properly conditioned to manifest the life of the Son of God. Never live on your memories of past experiences, but let the Word of God always be living and active in you.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Is He going to help Himself to your life, or are you taken up with your conception of what you are going to do? God is responsible for our lives, and the one great keynote is reckless reliance upon Him. Approved Unto God, 10 R

## CCEL – 5/14/23

The fellowship of His sufferings.—[PHI. 3:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.10)

It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.—In the world ye shall have tribulation.—Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

I looked for some to take pity, but there was none.—At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.—Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

[Matt. 10:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.10.html" \l "Matt.10.25).[Isa. 53:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.3). -[John 16:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.33). -[John 15:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.19).[Psa. 69:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.69.html" \l "Ps.69.20). -[II Tim. 4:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.4.html" \l "iiTim.4.16).[Matt. 8:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.8.html" \l "Matt.8.20). -[Heb. 13:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.14).[Heb. 12:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.1).

“Joint heirs with Christ.” **[Romans 8:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.17)**

The boundless realms of his Father’s universe are Christ’s by prescriptive right. As “heir of all things,” he is the sole proprietor of the vast creation of God, and he has admitted us to claim the whole as ours, by virtue of that deed of joint-heirship which the Lord hath ratified with his chosen people. The golden streets of paradise, the pearly gates, the river of life, the transcendent bliss, and the unutterable glory, are, by our blessed Lord, made over to us for our everlasting possession. All that he has he shares with his people. The crown royal he has placed upon the head of his Church, appointing her a kingdom, and calling her sons a royal priesthood, a generation of priests and kings. He uncrowned himself that we might have a coronation of glory; he would not sit upon his own throne until he had procured a place upon it for all who overcome by his blood. Crown the head and the whole body shares the honour. Behold here the reward of every Christian conqueror! Christ’s throne, crown, sceptre, palace, treasure, robes, heritage, are yours. Far superior to the jealousy, selfishness, and greed, which admit of no participation of their advantages, Christ deems his happiness completed by his people sharing it. “The glory which thou gavest me have I given them.” “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” The smiles of his Father are all the sweeter to him, because his people share them. The honours of his kingdom are more pleasing, because his people appear with him in glory. More valuable to him are his conquests, since they have taught his people to overcome. He delights in his throne, because on it there is a place for them. He rejoices in his royal robes, since over them his skirts are spread. He delights the more in his joy, because he calls them to enter into it.

## Word Live – 5/14/23

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## Scripture Union – 5/14/23

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

## Today in the Word – 5/14/23

## Like Father, Like Son

**Read:** [**1 Kings 15:1–8**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+15%3a1%e2%80%938)

### **Abijah King of Judah**

15 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam son of Nebat, Abijah[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+15%3A1%E2%80%938+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9251a)] became king of Judah, 2and he reigned in Jerusalem three years. His mother’s name was Maakah daughter of Abishalom.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+15%3A1%E2%80%938+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9252b)]

3He committed all the sins his father had done before him; his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his forefather had been. 4Nevertheless, for David’s sake the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up a son to succeed him and by making Jerusalem strong. 5For David had done what was right in the eyes of the Lord and had not failed to keep any of the Lord’s commands all the days of his life—except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.

6There was war between Abijah[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+15%3A1%E2%80%938+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9256c)] and Jeroboam throughout Abijah’s lifetime. 7As for the other events of Abijah’s reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 8And Abijah rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. And Asa his son succeeded him as king.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [1 Kings 15:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+15%3A1%E2%80%938+&version=NIV#en-NIV-9251) Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 2 Chron. 12:16); most Hebrew manuscripts Abijam; also in verses 7 and 8
2. [1 Kings 15:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+15%3A1%E2%80%938+&version=NIV#en-NIV-9252) A variant of Absalom; also in verse 10
3. [1 Kings 15:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+15%3A1%E2%80%938+&version=NIV#en-NIV-9256) Some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac Abijam (that is, Abijah); most Hebrew manuscripts Rehoboam

When someone says you take after your father (or your mother), it is usually a compliment. That was not the case for King Abijah. He gets just eight verses to describe his three- year reign over Judah in Jerusalem. He is characterized as a wicked king who followed his father Rehoboam’s example. As a result, he did not enjoy peace; he experienced war with the kingdom of Israel.

The righteous lead blameless lives; blessed are their children after them. Proverbs 20:7

While we might have expected God to punish Abijah, he is protected by David’s legacy. While Abijah and the nation were worthy of severe judgment for breaking the first and second commandments, God withheld extreme punishment because of David’s faithfulness! (v. 4). David wasn’t perfect; this chapter acknowledges that explicitly. But the writer describes him as not failing to “keep any of the LORD’s commands all the days of his life” (v. 5).

Because of this wonderful legacy, even though David’s descendants were often wicked, God showed them mercy. In the northern kingdom, on the other hand, Jeroboam’s sin brought the immediate promise of exile (1 Kings 14:15). Why this special treatment for Judah? It was a result of God’s commitment to David as expressed in the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7).

It is true that David left a wonderful legacy of obedience, but, more importantly, God made David a promise, “your house and your kingdom will be made sure forever before me. Your throne will be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:16). God kept His promises, despite the sin of David’s successors. What did that commitment look like? When Abijah died, his son Asa inherited the throne, and he, like his great, great, great grandfather David, was a righteous king! Behold the mercy of the God.

**Apply the Word**

On this Mother’s Day, we give thanks for the important women in our lives. We thank God for mothers who have shown us the Lord’s love and guided us in His truth. May they feel especially loved and appreciated!

## Pray with Us

Our parents shape us profoundly—in both good and bad ways. Give us truthful eyes to discern between the two so we can follow their example in the good and depart from the bad. In all this, conform us to You.

### BY Dr. Steven H. Sanchez

## Our Daily Bread – 5/14/23

## Loving Leadership

 **Read:** [**1 Thessalonians 2:7–12**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thess%202.7%E2%80%9312)

7Instead, we were like young children[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+2%3A7%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29578a)] among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, 8so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. 9Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. 10You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 11For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [1 Thessalonians 2:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+2%3A7%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#en-NIV-29578) Some manuscripts were gentle

We dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children. [1 Thessalonians 2:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thess%202.11)

A viral video of a mama bear trying to get her four energetic little cubs across a busy street brought a knowing smile to my face. It was delightfully relatable to watch her pick up her cubs one-by-one and carry them across the road—only to have the cubs wander back to the other side. After many seemingly frustrating attempts, the mama bear finally corralled all four of her cubs, and they made it safely across the road.

The tireless work of parenting symbolized in the video matches imagery used by Paul to describe his care for the people in the church of Thessalonica. Instead of emphasizing his authority, the apostle compared his work among them to a mother and father caring for young children ([1 Thessalonians 2:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thess%202.7), [11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thessalonians%202.11)). It was deep love for the Thessalonians (v. 8) that motivated Paul’s ongoing efforts to encourage, comfort, and urge them “to live lives worthy of God” (v. 12). This impassioned call to godly living was borne out of his loving desire to see them honor God in all areas of their lives.

Paul’s example can serve as a guide for us in all our leadership opportunities—especially when the responsibilities make us weary. Empowered by God’s Spirit, we can gently and persistently love those under our care as we encourage and guide them toward Jesus.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How have you experienced leadership motivated by love? How might you encourage those under your care?

Heavenly Father, help me to extend to others the loving care You graciously show to me.

#### **Insight**

As both a Jew and a Roman citizen, Paul understood how to live in different cultural environments, taking the message of Jesus to as many people as possible. In 1 Thessalonians, he mentioned how careful he and his partners in ministry were to avoid becoming entangled in cultural obligations that might hurt their ministry or the fledgling church. They didn’t take advantage of the people by putting the new believers in an awkward debt to Paul (2:3–5). But neither did they ask the congregation to financially support them (v. 9), which, in those days, would have put the burden of debt on Paul instead.

In both situations, Paul made every effort to preserve the freedom of the new church to grow unhindered while also preserving his own freedom in ministry. Likewise, we do well to focus our efforts—personally and corporately—on the expansion of Jesus’ mission.

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

## God Calling – 5/14/23

## The Love of a Lover

Remember that a loving Master delights in the intimacy of demands made, as much as He desires His followers and friends to delight in the tender intimacy of His demands.

The wonder of family life is expressed in the freedom with which a child makes demands and claims, quite as much as in the loving demands the parent makes upon all the Love and Joy of the children.  Only as the result of frequent converse with Me, of much prayer to Me, of listening to and obedience to My behests comes that intimacy that makes My followers dare to approach Me as friend to friend.

Yield in all things to My tender insistence but remember I yield too to yours.  Ask not only the big things I have told you, but ask the little tender signs of Love.  Remember that I came as the world's Great Lover.  Never think of My Love as only a tender compassion and forgiveness.  It is that, but it is also the Love of a Lover, who shows His Love by countless words and actions and by tender thought.

In each of you, too, remember there is God. That God I reverence and submit to, though I and My Father are one. So as man grows more and more like My Father in Heaven I bring to our friendship a reverent, tender Love. I see as no man can see the God in you.”

It is always given to man to see in his fellow man those aspirations and qualities he himself possesses.  So only I, being really God, can recognize the God in man.  Remember this, too, in your relation to others.

Your motives and aspirations can only be understood by those who have attained the same spiritual level.  So do not vainly, foolishly, expect from others understanding.  Do not misjudge them for not giving it. Yours is a foreign language to them.

Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon.  Song of Solomon 1:7

## My Utmost for His Highest – 5/15/23

## The Habit of Rising to the Occasion



…that you may know what is the hope of His calling… —[Ephesians 1:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Ephesians+1%3A18)

Remember that you have been saved so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in your body (see [2 Corinthians 4:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+4:10)). Direct the total energy of your powers so that you may achieve everything your election as a child of God provides; rise every time to whatever occasion may come your way.

You did not do anything to achieve your salvation, but you must do something to exhibit it. You must “work out your own salvation” which God has worked in you already ([Philippians 2:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2:12)). Are your speech, your thinking, and your emotions evidence that you are working it “out”? If you are still the same miserable, grouchy person, set on having your own way, then it is a lie to say that God has saved and sanctified you.

God is the Master Designer, and He allows adversities into your life to see if you can jump over them properly— “By my God I can leap over a wall” ([Psalm 18:29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18:29)). God will never shield you from the requirements of being His son or daughter. [First Peter 4:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+4:12)  says, “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you….” Rise to the occasion— do what the trial demands of you. It does not matter how much it hurts as long as it gives God the opportunity to manifest the life of Jesus in your body.

May God not find complaints in us anymore, but spiritual vitality— a readiness to face anything He brings our way. The only proper goal of life is that we manifest the Son of God; and when this occurs, all of our dictating of our demands to God disappears. Our Lord never dictated demands to His Father, and neither are we to make demands on God. We are here to submit to His will so that He may work through us what He wants. Once we realize this, He will make us broken bread and poured-out wine with which to feed and nourish others.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Awe is the condition of a man’s spirit realizing Who God is and what He has done for him personally. Our Lord emphasizes the attitude of a child; no attitude can express such solemn awe and familiarity as that of a child.  Not Knowing Whither, 882 L

## CCEL – 5/15/23

God shall wipe away all tears: . . . there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, . . . for the former things are passed away.—[REV. 21:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.21.html" \l "Rev.21.4)

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.—Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.—The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.—The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.—Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.—The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

The things which are not seen are eternal.

[Isa. 25:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.25.html" \l "Isa.25.8). -[Isa. 60:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.60.html" \l "Isa.60.20). -[Isa. 33:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.33.html" \l "Isa.33.24). -[Isa. 65:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.65.html" \l "Isa.65.19). -[Isa. 35:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.35.html" \l "Isa.35.10).[Hos. 13:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.13.html" \l "Hos.13.14). -[I Cor. 15:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.26),[54](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.54).[II Cor. 4:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html" \l "iiCor.4.18).

“All that believe are justified.” **[Acts 13:39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.13.html" \l "Acts.13.39)**

The believer in Christ receives a present justification. Faith does not produce this fruit by-and-by, but now. So far as justification is the result of faith, it is given to the soul in the moment when it closes with Christ, and accepts him as its all in all. Are they who stand before the throne of God justified now?—so are we, as truly and as clearly justified as they who walk in white and sing melodious praises to celestial harps. The thief upon the cross was justified the moment that he turned the eye of faith to Jesus; and Paul, the aged, after years of service, was not more justified than was the thief with no service at all. We are today accepted in the Beloved, today absolved from sin, today acquitted at the bar of God. Oh! soul-transporting thought! There are some clusters of Eshcol’s vine which we shall not be able to gather till we enter heaven; but this is a bough which runneth over the wall. This is not as the corn of the land, which we can never eat till we cross the Jordan; but this is part of the manna in the wilderness, a portion of our daily nutriment with which God supplies us in our journeying to and fro. We are now—even now pardoned; even now are our sins put away; even now we stand in the sight of God accepted, as though we had never been guilty. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” There is not a sin in the Book of God, even now, against one of his people. Who dareth to lay anything to their charge? There is neither speck, nor spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing remaining upon any one believer in the matter of justification in the sight of the Judge of all the earth. Let present privilege awaken us to present duty, and now, while life lasts, let us spend and be spent for our sweet Lord Jesus.

## Word Live – 5/15/23

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

## Scripture Union – 5/15/23

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

## Today in the Word – 5/15/23

## All by Myself

**Read:** [**1 Kings 15:9–24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+15%3a9%e2%80%9324)

### **Asa King of Judah**

9In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king of Judah, 10and he reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years. His grandmother’s name was Maakah daughter of Abishalom.

11Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his father David had done. 12He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his ancestors had made. 13He even deposed his grandmother Maakah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive image for the worship of Asherah. Asa cut it down and burned it in the Kidron Valley. 14Although he did not remove the high places, Asa’s heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life. 15He brought into the temple of the Lord the silver and gold and the articles that he and his father had dedicated.

16There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their reigns. 17Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the territory of Asa king of Judah.

18Asa then took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the Lord’s temple and of his own palace. He entrusted it to his officials and sent them to Ben-Hadad son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, the king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus. 19“Let there be a treaty between me and you,” he said, “as there was between my father and your father. See, I am sending you a gift of silver and gold. Now break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so he will withdraw from me.”

20Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the commanders of his forces against the towns of Israel. He conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maakah and all Kinnereth in addition to Naphtali. 21When Baasha heard this, he stopped building Ramah and withdrew to Tirzah. 22Then King Asa issued an order to all Judah—no one was exempt—and they carried away from Ramah the stones and timber Baasha had been using there. With them King Asa built up Geba in Benjamin, and also Mizpah.

23As for all the other events of Asa’s reign, all his achievements, all he did and the cities he built, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? In his old age, however, his feet became diseased. 24Then Asa rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the city of his father David. And Jehoshaphat his son succeeded him as king.

Little children will sometimes reject help, insisting, “I can do this all by myself.” While a desire for independence can be admirable, it became a problem for King Asa. Asa had taken over for Abijah as King of Judah, and we may sigh with relief that he was a righteous ruler! His zeal to follow the Lord led to religious reform for the whole nation. He disciplined his own mother because she was worshiping an idol and reestablished Temple worship.

My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

While Asa did not eradicate every single high place, he never drifted into idolatry himself. So it is a bit of a surprise when we read that “there was war between Asa and Baasha all their days” (v. 16). War is usually a sign something is wrong.

Baasha, king of the northern tribe of Israel, had invaded the southern territory, blocking the roads in and out of Jerusalem. King Asa had two options. One: Cry out to God and ask for help. Or two: Look for a political solution. Asa chose option 2. He used all the treasures from the Temple and his storehouses to buy a treaty with the wicked king of Syria. Syria would attack Baasha creating a two-front war and Baasha would be forced to leave Jerusalem alone.

The plan worked! Or did it? In 2 Chronicles 16, we read that the Lord was not pleased with Asa’s decision. Why? Because he trusted in the strength of a foreign king rather than in God Himself (2 Chron. 16:7). By using his wealth to secure peace, Asa was not relying on God’s help. Paying off his enemy to defend him betrayed a lack of faith in God and a reliance on his own wealth (Deut. 17:14–20).

**Apply the Word**

Doing it ourselves isn’t always the best option. Sometimes we forget that the first place to turn to is God. Asa gave in to the temptation to trust himself and his riches. Where have you placed your trust for your security?

## Pray with Us

It is hard for us, physical beings with senses designed for this tangible world, to trust in Your intangible power and love. When life tempts us to flee or fight, Jesus, teach us not to seek security in this world, but in You.

### BY Dr. Steven H. Sanchez

## Our Daily Bread – 5/15/23

## Exploring the Stars

### Today's Devotional**Read:** [**Psalm 19:1–6**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2019.1%E2%80%936)**[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+19%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14170a)**]**

#### **For the director of music. A psalm of David.**

1The heavens declare the glory of God;  
    the skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
2Day after day they pour forth speech;  
    night after night they reveal knowledge.  
3They have no speech, they use no words;  
    no sound is heard from them.  
4Yet their voice[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+19%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14173b)] goes out into all the earth,  
    their words to the ends of the world.  
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.  
5    It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
    like a champion rejoicing to run his course.  
6It rises at one end of the heavens  
    and makes its circuit to the other;  
    nothing is deprived of its warmth.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Psalm 19:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+19%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#en-NIV-14170) In Hebrew texts 19:1-14 is numbered 19:2-15.
2. [Psalm 19:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+19%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#en-NIV-14173) Septuagint, Jerome and Syriac; Hebrew measuring line

Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one. [Isaiah 40:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2040.26)

In 2021, a multination effort led to the launch of the James Webb Space Telescope—deployed nearly a million miles from Earth to better investigate the universe. This marvel will peer into deep space and examine the stars and other celestial wonders.

This is indeed a fascinating astronomical piece of technology, and if everything works, it will provide us with amazing photos and information. But its mission isn’t new. In fact, the prophet Isaiah described searching the stars when he said, “Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one” ([Isaiah 40:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2040.26)). “Night after night” they speak of our Creator who hurled this imperceptibly immense universe into existence ([Psalm 19:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2019.2))—and with it the countless luminous bodies that silently grace our night sky (v. 3).

And it’s God Himself who decided how many of the shining objects there are: “He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name” ([Psalm 147:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20147.4)). When mankind sends complicated, fascinating probes to explore the universe, we can enjoy with spellbound wonder the discoveries they make, because each observation points back to the One who made the solar system and everything beyond it. Yes, the “heavens declare the glory of God” (19:1)—stars and all.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How do the stars and the entire universe speak of God and His creative ways? What thoughts and emotions strike you as you think about His power?

Heavenly Father, thank You for creating such an amazing universe for me to enjoy.

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2019) speaks to ancient Israel of Yahweh’s power and serves as a defense of their monotheistic beliefs. The psalmist presents God as creator and controller of the would-be gods of the nations that surrounded them. The psalms weren’t simply songs of worship but were teaching tools that helped Israel (and us) solidify her beliefs in the power and presence of God. Commentator Tremper Longman states: “The psalmist calls our attention specifically to the sun, the most dominant of the heavenly bodies. Using poetic personification, the poet points out that the sun lives in the sky. That is where God has placed its tent. Verse 5 then uses two similes to emphasize the passionate energy of the sun as it races across the sky. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.”

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

## God Calling – 5/15/23

## First The Spiritual

What can I say to you?  Your heart is torn.  Then remember "He bindeth up the broken hearts."  Just feel the tenderness of My Hands as I bind up your wounds.

You are very privileged, both of you.  I share My plans and secrets with you and make known to you My Purposes, while so many have to grope on.

Try to rest on these words.  "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."  Then strive not for them, but untiringly, for the things of My Kingdom.

It is so strange to you mortals, you would think the material things first and then grow into the knowledge of Spiritual things. Not so in My Kingdom.  It is spiritual things first and then material. So to attain the material redouble your efforts to acquire the Spiritual.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, ... to  set at liberty them that are bruised.  Luke 4:18