# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/12/20

# 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 – 5/12/20

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 – 5/12/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/12/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/12/20

# Set a Godly Example

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 4:11–16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+4%3a11%e2%80%9316)

11Command and teach these things. 12Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. 13Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. 14Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

15Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. 16Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Leadership guru Ronald Heifetz once advised parents to “worry not that your child listens to you; worry most that they watch you.” Children learn by watching their parents! The apostle Paul also recognized the power of being a role model. He encouraged the Corinthians to “follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).

Watch your life and your doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16

In today’s reading, Paul applies this teaching to Timothy. He encourages him to “set an example” even though he was young (v. 12). Timothy could be a godly model both in his speech and his conduct. This covers every area of observable life which should give a clear testimony to the power of the gospel. Timothy should also be a model “in love, in faith, and in purity” (v. 12). That is, he should have a relationship with Christ that results in genuine love for others.

In addition, Timothy should set the example in his dedication to Scripture. “Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture,” Paul commands (v. 13). Unlike the false teachers who “devoted themselves to myths and endless genealogies” (1:4), Timothy should remain grounded in God’s truth. This task was especially vital because most believers in the ancient world would not have had a copy of the Bible, so hearing it read publicly was their main access to it.

Paul recognized that Timothy had been given a spiritual gift to serve the church. By faithfully exercising that gift, Timothy could “save both [himself] and your hearers” (v. 16). Biblically, the word “salvation” can serve as a shorthand for the entire process of conversion, sanctification, and ultimate glorification. Timothy served a vital role by teaching Scripture to help people grow in their walk with Christ.

>> As a parent, I have become acutely aware that my children are influenced by my example. Each of us has the opportunity to be an example of faith to those around us. Consider today the people who are watching you. How can you model godliness to them?

### **Pray with Us**

Are you an example to somebody? You may be, without even realizing it. That’s why it’s important to follow Paul’s admonition to Timothy: “Watch your life and your doctrine closely” (1 Tim. 4:16). Lord, help us to be a godly example.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/12/20

# Open Arms

 **Read:** [**2 Samuel 22:1–7**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022.1%E2%80%937)

**David’s Song of Praise**

22 David sang to the Lord the words of this song when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. 2He said:

“The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;  
3    my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
    my shield[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+22%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+17%E2%80%9320&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8606a)] and the horn[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+22%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+17%E2%80%9320&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8606b)] of my salvation.  
He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior—  
    from violent people you save me.

4“I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise,  
    and have been saved from my enemies.  
5The waves of death swirled about me;  
    the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.  
6The cords of the grave coiled around me;  
    the snares of death confronted me.

7“In my distress I called to the Lord;  
    I called out to my God.  
From his temple he heard my voice;  
    my cry came to his ears.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [2 Samuel 22:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+22%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+17%E2%80%9320&version=NIV#en-NIV-8606) Or sovereign
2. [2 Samuel 22:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+22%3A1%E2%80%937+%2C+17%E2%80%9320&version=NIV#en-NIV-8606) Horn here symbolizes strength.

**Read:** [**2 Samuel 22:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022.1%E2%80%937)[**17–20**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Samuel%2022.17%E2%80%9320)

17“He reached down from on high and took hold of me;  
    he drew me out of deep waters.  
18He rescued me from my powerful enemy,  
    from my foes, who were too strong for me.  
19They confronted me in the day of my disaster,  
    but the Lord was my support.  
20He brought me out into a spacious place;  
    he rescued me because he delighted in me.

In my distress I called to the Lord . . . . My cry came to his ears. [2 Samuel 22:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022.7)

Saydee and his family have an “open arms and open home” philosophy. People are always welcome in their home, “especially those who are in distress,” he says. That’s the kind of household he had growing up in Liberia with his nine siblings. Their parents always welcomed others into their family. He says, “We grew up as a community. We loved one another. Everybody was responsible for everybody. My dad taught us to love each other, care for each other, protect each other.”

When King David was in need, he found this type of loving care in God. [Second Samuel 22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022) (and [Psalm 18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018)) records his song of praise to God for the ways He had been a refuge for him throughout his life. He recalled, “In my distress I called to the Lord; I called out to my God. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came to his ears” ([2 Samuel 22:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022.7)). God had delivered him from his enemies, including King Saul, many times. He praised God for being his fortress and deliverer in whom he took refuge (vv. 2–3).

While our distresses may be small in comparison to David’s, God welcomes us to run to Him to find the shelter we long for. His arms are always open. Therefore we “sing the praises of [His] name” (v. 50).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When has God been your refuge? How can you help someone else run to Him?

God, I’m grateful You’ve always been and will always be my secure place to land.

#### **Insight**

[Second Samuel 22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022) is nearly identical to [Psalm 18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018). This psalm celebrates David’s deliverance and military victories, giving God all the credit, and may also have been used more generally to celebrate other military victories. [Psalm 18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018) is one of a group of psalms often labeled “royal psalms” (others include [Psalms 2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%202); [20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2020); [21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2021); [45](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2045); [72](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2072); [89](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2089); [101](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%20101); [110](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%20110); [132](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%20132)), each of which draws a connection between an earthly king’s reign and God’s own reign over the universe.

# God Calling – 5/12/20

# 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 – 5/13/20

# 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 – 5/13/20

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 – 5/13/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/13/20

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# Today in the Word – 5/13/20

# Support Those in Need

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 5:1–16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+5%3a1%e2%80%9316)

### **Widows, Elders and Slaves**

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

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

9No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, 10and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord’s people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

11As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. 12Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. 13Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to. 14So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. 15Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

16If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

Imagine living in a country without Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid, or any other government program that serves as a social safety net. That is what life was like in the ancient world. Throughout the Old Testament, God had commanded His people to care for those in need (see Deut. 10:18; 14:29; 24:17; 24:19).

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done. Proverbs 19:17

Today’s passage takes that instruction a step further. In Paul’s day, widows were among those who were especially vulnerable. Here, Paul provides guidelines for how to distribute help to widows in a way that stewarded limited resources and corrected ongoing abuses. It seems that the church in Ephesus had an official program that provided lifelong support to widows. The question was, who should qualify for that program?

Paul put the primary responsibility for the care of widows on family. If a widow has children, or grandchildren, they should be the first source of support (v. 4). Paul has strong words for those who neglect to care for their own, “Anyone who does not provide for their relatives . . . has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (v. 8). Clearly, the gospel should impact how we treat our family.

However, if a widow does not have family, has lived a godly life, and is at the age where she is not going to remarry, she should receive this support (vv. 9–10). Paul does not command, but counsels younger widows to remarry for two reasons: (1) physical desire (see also 1 Cor. 7:8–9) and (2) the temptation to fall into idle gossip and embracing false teaching, a real problem in the Ephesian church (vv. 13–15).

>> The needs around us can feel overwhelming! How do we begin to extend godly care to people in our lives? This passage encourages us not to grow weary in doing good. Consider how you can help someone you know who is in need or support an organization in your community that is providing food or services to the needy.

### **Pray with Us**

Paul’s detailed instructions on family and church life are a blessing for us! Let’s heed exhortations in 1 Timothy 5 and ask God to make us the people who take good care of our poor, our widows, and our elderly.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/13/20

# Photobombing Jesus



**Read:** [**John 3:26–36**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%203.26%E2%80%9336)

26They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.”

27To this John replied, “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. 28You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ 29The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. 30He must become greater; I must become less.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A26%E2%80%9336&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26151a)]

31The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. 32He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. 33Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. 34For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A26%E2%80%9336&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26155b)] gives the Spirit without limit. 35The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. 36Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 3:30](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A26%E2%80%9336&version=NIV#en-NIV-26151) Some interpreters end the quotation with verse 36.
2. [John 3:34](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A26%E2%80%9336&version=NIV#en-NIV-26155) Greek he

He must become greater; I must become less. [John 3:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%203.30)

When my pastor asked our class a difficult question about the life of Jesus, my hand shot up. I had just read the story, so I knew this one. And I wanted the others in the room to know that I knew it too. After all, I’m a Bible teacher. How embarrassing it would be to be stumped in front of them! Now I was embarrassed by my fear of embarrassment. So I lowered my hand. Am I this insecure?

John the Baptist shows a better way. When his disciples complained that people were beginning to leave him and follow Jesus, John said he was glad to hear it. He was merely the messenger. “I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him. . . . He must become greater; I must become less” (3:28–30). John realized the point of his existence was Jesus. He is “the one who comes from heaven” and “is above all” (v. 31)—the divine Son who gave His life for us. He must receive all the glory and fame.

Any attention drawn to ourselves distracts from God. And since He is our only Savior and the only hope for the world, any credit we steal from Him ends up hurting us.

Let’s resolve to step out of the picture—to stop photobombing Jesus. It’s best for Him, for the world, and for us.

By:  [Mike Wittmer](https://odb.org/author/mwittmer/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When are you tempted to share the spotlight with Jesus? How can you turn the attention to where it belongs?

Heavenly Father, help us understand that our task is to direct everyone’s attention to Your Son, so that He increasingly fills up the frame. Help us see that we must decrease and He must increase.

#### **Insight**

In [John 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201), John the Baptist announced that it was another, not himself, who would be the sent one—emphasizing this by saying he wasn’t even worthy to untie Jesus’ sandals! (v. 27). Then, the day after baptizing Jesus, John pointed two of his own disciples to Jesus, the Lamb of God. These two (Andrew and, apparently, John the beloved) immediately left John and followed Jesus. These clear examples of John deferring to Jesus display his commitment that “[Jesus] must become greater; I must become less” (3:30).

# God Calling – 5/13/20

# 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 – 5/14/20

# 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 – 5/14/20

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 – 5/14/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/14/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/14/20

# When Leadership Fails

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 5:17–6:2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+5%3a17%e2%80%936%3a2)

17The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 18For Scripture says, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+5%3a17%e2%80%936%3a2" \l "fen-NIV-29782a" \o "See footnote a)] and “The worker deserves his wages.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+5%3a17%e2%80%936%3a2#fen-NIV-29782b)] 19Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. 20But those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning. 21I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

22Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

23Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

24The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. 25In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever.

6 All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God’s name and our teaching may not be slandered. 2Those who have believing masters should not show them disrespect just because they are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve them even better because their masters are dear to them as fellow believers and are devoted to the welfare[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+5%3a17%e2%80%936%3a2#fen-NIV-29791c)] of their slaves.

### **False Teachers and the Love of Money**

These are the things you are to teach and insist on.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Timothy 5:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+5%3a17%e2%80%936%3a2#en-NIV-29782) Deut. 25:4
2. [1 Timothy 5:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+5%3a17%e2%80%936%3a2#en-NIV-29782) Luke 10:7
3. [1 Timothy 6:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+5%3a17%e2%80%936%3a2#en-NIV-29791) Or and benefit from the service

While the precise causes of the French Revolution are complex, one major contributing factor was the corruption and oppression of the ruling class. The backlash against the aristocracy was so severe that during the “Reign of Terror” (1793–94), over 16,000 members of the aristocracy were executed without a trial.

For where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them. Matthew 18:20

When leadership fails, it is often tempting to throw out the good with the bad. In Ephesus, some of the elders were responsible for the problems Timothy was facing. In today’s reading, Paul outlines a healthy way for the church to restore trust in their leadership.

Paul notes that good leaders need to be honored and supported. Elders who faithfully teach, preach, and administrate the church are worthy of financial support (v. 17). Paul grounds this teaching both in the Old Testament law (Deut. 25:4) and in the teaching of Jesus (Luke 10:7).

But what should happen when elders are wrong? Charges against an elder must be supported by two or three people. Elders who are “sinning” should be reproved publicly (v. 20). While this may seem harsh, the entire church is impacted when leadership falls into sin. A public rebuke serves as a warning to others and helps heal the damage that has occurred (v. 20).

Because of elders who had sinned, Timothy needed to add replacements. Paul encourages him to take time to ensure the right people are selected (v. 22). He reminds Timothy that he is living “in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and elect angels” (v. 21). This should prevent him from making decisions for the sake of expediency or out of favoritism (v. 21).

>> Many churches today have had the difficult experience of having a leader who has fallen into sin. Paul’s advice gives guidelines on how to deal with sin in an appropriate way. And, this is a good reminder to honor and support faithful leaders. As for us, we should speak and act as if we are living “in the sight of God” (v. 21).

### **Pray with Us**

Paul’s teaching on leadership is a reminder to praise the Lord for godly leaders and also ask Him to cleanse the church of sin and ungodliness. May we “keep these instructions without partiality” (1 Tim. 5:21).

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/14/20

# Under Construction



**Read:** [**Hebrews 10:11–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2010.11%E2%80%9318)

11Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. 14For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

15The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

16“This is the covenant I will make with them  
    after that time, says the Lord.  
I will put my laws in their hearts,  
    and I will write them on their minds.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A11%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30150a)]

17Then he adds:

“Their sins and lawless acts  
    I will remember no more.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A11%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30151b)]

18And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Hebrews 10:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A11%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-30150) Jer. 31:33
2. [Hebrews 10:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A11%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-30151) Jer. 31:34

For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. [Hebrews 10:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2010.14)

They just repaved this road, I thought to myself as the traffic slowed. Now they’re tearing it up again! Then I wondered, Why is road construction never done? I mean, I’ve never seen a sign proclaiming, “The paving company is finished. Please enjoy this perfect road.”

But something similar is true in my spiritual life. Early in my faith, I imagined reaching a moment of maturity when I’d have it all figured out, when I’d be “smoothly paved.” Thirty years later, I confess I’m still “under construction.” Just like the perpetually potholed roads I drive, I never seem to be “finished” either. Sometimes that can feel equally frustrating.

But [Hebrews 10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2010) contains an amazing promise. Verse 14 says, “For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” Jesus’ work on the cross has already saved us. Completely. Perfectly. In God’s eyes, we are whole and finished. But paradoxically, that process isn’t done yet while we’re still on earth. We’re still being shaped into His likeness, still “being made holy.”

One day, we’ll see Him face-to-face, and we shall be like him ([1 John 3:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.2)). But until then, we’re still “under construction,” people who anxiously await the glorious day when the work in us is truly complete.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Do you ever get frustrated that spiritual progress seems slower than you expected? How does this passage from Hebrews encourage you to think about your spiritual growth?

Faithful God, sometimes I get frustrated that my spiritual progress seems slow. Help me to remember that You’re still at work in my life, shaping me and helping me to become more and more like You.

#### **Insight**

Because of severe persecution, Jewish believers in Jesus felt pressured to abandon their faith and revert to Judaism ([Hebrews 10:32–36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2010.32%E2%80%9336)). The unnamed writer of the book of Hebrews encourages them to persevere, and affirms the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus as Savior. He’s superior to the angels (chs. 1–2), to Moses (chs. 3–4), and to the Aaronic priesthood (chs. 5–7).

Chapters 8–10 describe Him as the perfect High Priest. The backdrop for this is the annual blood sacrifices offered by the high priest on the Day of Atonement ([Leviticus 16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2016)). The writer compares the old covenant initiated by Moses requiring animal sacrifices ([Hebrews 9:1–23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%209.1%E2%80%9323)) with the new covenant initiated by Jesus (v. 15; 9:24–10:18). As the perfect High Priest, Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice for sin—Himself (9:12–14; 10:11–12). “For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” (10:14).

# God Calling – 5/14/20

# 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 – 5/15/20

# 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 – 5/15/20

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 – 5/15/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/15/20

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# Today in the Word – 5/15/20

# The Joy of Contentment

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 6:3–10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+6%3a3%e2%80%9310)

3If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, 4they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions 5and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

6But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

How many minutes have gone by since you saw your last advertisement? These appeals have become so much a part of our life that we barely notice them. They appear on television, our phones, and our emails, encouraging us to buy more than we can afford. How can we practice the joy of contentment?

But godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Timothy 6:6

In today’s reading, Paul gives some final warning against false teachers. These people, who do not “agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ,” are arrogant, ignorant, and create controversy resulting in “envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people” (vv. 3–4). But even worse, these false teachers had a false view of wealth and money.

Paul encourages Christians to view wealth differently. We must recognize that godliness does not lead to financial gain, but to contentment (v. 6). Paul reminds us that “we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it” (v. 7). In other words, material wealth does not have eternal value. This raises the question for a Christian: How much is enough?

Paul’s standard for contentment was pretty low: food and clothing (v. 8). It is likely that Paul looked to Jesus as his model (Matt. 6:25–34). Paul was not saying that every Christian should only have the bare minimum. What he was saying is that wealth beyond the basic necessities does not lead to more contentment. In fact, a desire for wealth can lead to a ruined life (v. 9). There is a real danger in the pursuit of more. Paul closes this section with the warning that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (v. 10). It can lead us down a road that ends in “many griefs” (v. 10).

>> Christians are not immune to pursuing a life motivated by greed. Take a moment and evaluate your own life. What is your attitude toward money and wealth? What are you living for? How can you learn to be content with what you have?

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, show us what true contentment looks like and how to be content with what we have. Make us a generous people and keep us from pursuing a life motivated by greed.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/15/20

# In Tune with the Spirit



**Read:** [**Galatians 5:16–26**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.16%E2%80%9326)

16So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A16%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29180a)] you want. 18But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Galatians 5:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A16%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#en-NIV-29180) Or you do not do what

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. [Galatians 5:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.25)

As I listened to the piano tuner work on the elegant grand piano, I thought about the times when I’d heard that very same piano pour out the incredible sound of the “Warsaw Concerto” and the rich melody of “How Great Thou Art.” But now the instrument desperately needed to be tuned. While some notes were right on pitch, others were sharp or flat, creating an unpleasant sound. The piano tuner’s responsibility wasn’t to make each of the keys play the same sound but to assure that each note’s unique sound combined with others to create a pleasing harmonious whole.

Even within the church, we can observe notes of discord. People with unique ambitions or talents can create a jarring dissonance when they’re joined together. In [Galatians 5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205), Paul pleaded with believers to do away with “discord, jealousy, fits of rage, [and] selfish ambition,” which would destroy fellowship with God or relationships with others. Paul went on to encourage us to embrace the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (vv. 20, 22–23).

When we live by the Spirit, we’ll find it easier to avoid unnecessary conflict on nonessential matters. Our shared sense of purpose can be greater than our differences. And with God’s help, each of us can grow in grace and unity as we keep our hearts in tune with Him.

By:  [Cindy Hess Kasper](https://odb.org/author/cindyhesskasper/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In what ways might I be causing discord among the body of believers? How can I spread harmony?

Gracious God, teach me how to “get in tune” with the Spirit’s leading and live in harmony with others.

#### **Insight**

Paul’s letter to the Galatian church is one of his most strident and forceful. Why? Having responded to the message of the good news of Jesus, the people were now being steered away from God’s grace by Judaizers—those who were trying to enforce Jewish religious law upon the new believers in Jesus. Paul’s primary concern for them is expressed in the letter’s opening chapter where he wrote, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ” ([Galatians 1:6–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%201.6%E2%80%937)). Sometimes called Paul’s “angry letter,” the letter to the Galatians is actually a passionate expression of his concern for the spiritual welfare of his friends there.

To learn more about the book of Galatians, visit [bit.ly/2J08Jzx.](https://bit.ly/2J08Jzx.)

# God Calling – 5/15/20

# 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

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/16/20

# The Habit of Recognizing God’s Provision



…you may be partakers of the divine nature… —[2 Peter 1:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Peter+1%3A4)

We are made “partakers of the divine nature,” receiving and sharing God’s own nature through His promises. Then we have to work that divine nature into our human nature by developing godly habits. The first habit to develop is the habit of recognizing God’s provision for us. We say, however, “Oh, I can’t afford it.” One of the worst lies is wrapped up in that statement. We talk as if our heavenly Father has cut us off without a penny! We think it is a sign of true humility to say at the end of the day, “Well, I just barely got by today, but it was a severe struggle.” And yet all of Almighty God is ours in the Lord Jesus! And He will reach to the last grain of sand and the remotest star to bless us if we will only obey Him. Does it really matter that our circumstances are difficult? Why shouldn’t they be! If we give way to self-pity and indulge in the luxury of misery, we remove God’s riches from our lives and hinder others from entering into His provision. No sin is worse than the sin of self-pity, because it removes God from the throne of our lives, replacing Him with our own self-interests. It causes us to open our mouths only to complain, and we simply become spiritual sponges— always absorbing, never giving, and never being satisfied. And there is nothing lovely or generous about our lives.

Before God becomes satisfied with us, He will take everything of our so-called wealth, until we learn that He is our Source; as the psalmist said, “All my springs are in You” ([Psalm 87:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+87:7)). If the majesty, grace, and power of God are not being exhibited in us, God holds us responsible. “God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you…may have an abundance…” ([2 Corinthians 9:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+9:8))— then learn to lavish the grace of God on others, generously giving of yourself. Be marked and identified with God’s nature, and His blessing will flow through you all the time.

###### Wisdom From Oswald Chambers

Seeing is never believing: we interpret what we see in the light of what we believe. Faith is confidence in God before you see God emerging; therefore the nature of faith is that it must be tried.  He Shall Glorify Me, 494 R

# CCEL – 5/16/20

A servant of Jesus Christ.—[ROM. 1:1.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.1.html#Rom.1.1)

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.—If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.—Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.—Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.—Thou art no more a servant, but a son.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.

[John 13:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.13.html#John.13.13). -[John 12:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.12.html#John.12.26). -[Matt. 11:29,30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.11.html#Matt.11.29).[Phi. 3:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html#Phil.3.7). -[Rom. 6:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html#Rom.6.22).[John 15:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html#John.15.15). -[Gal. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.4.html#Gal.4.7).[Gal. 5:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html#Gal.5.1),[13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.13).

“Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” [1 Timothy 6:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.6.html#iTim.6.17)

Our Lord Jesus is ever giving, and does not for a solitary instant withdraw his hand. As long as there is a vessel of grace not yet full to the brim, the oil shall not be stayed. He is a sun ever-shining; he is manna always falling round the camp; he is a rock in the desert, ever sending out streams of life from his smitten side; the rain of his grace is always dropping; the river of his bounty is ever-flowing, and the well-spring of his love is constantly overflowing. As the King can never die, so his grace can never fail. Daily we pluck his fruit, and daily his branches bend down to our hand with a fresh store of mercy. There are seven feast-days in his weeks, and as many as are the days, so many are the banquets in his years. Who has ever returned from his door unblessed? Who has ever risen from his table unsatisfied, or from his bosom un-emparadised? His mercies are new every morning and fresh every evening. Who can know the number of his benefits, or recount the list of his bounties? Every sand which drops from the glass of time is but the tardy follower of a myriad of mercies. The wings of our hours are covered with the silver of his kindness, and with the yellow gold of his affection. The river of time bears from the mountains of eternity the golden sands of his favour. The countless stars are but as the standard bearers of a more innumerable host of blessings. Who can count the dust of the benefits which he bestows on Jacob, or tell the number of the fourth part of his mercies towards Israel? How shall my soul extol him who daily loadeth us with benefits, and who crowneth us with loving-kindness? O that my praise could be as ceaseless as his bounty! O miserable tongue, how canst thou be silent? Wake up, I pray thee, lest I call thee no more my glory, but my shame. “Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake right early.”

# Word Live – 5/16/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/16/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/16/20

# Fight the Good Fight

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 6:11–16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+6%3a11%e2%80%9316)

### **Final Charge to Timothy**

11But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you 14to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

“In the sight of God and these witnesses, I now pronounce you husband and wife!” These words often spoken at the end of a marriage ceremony communicate an important idea. The couple has publicly proclaimed that they will live in a lifelong covenant relationship with one another. When times get difficult, they remember the vows they made before God and their friends and family as an encouragement to faithfulness.

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.1 Timothy 6:11

As Paul draws his first letter to a close, he reminds Timothy of a similar commitment he made before God and others. At his baptism, Timothy made a public confession of faith in Christ (v. 12). He also carried out his ministry “in the sight of God . . . and of Christ Jesus” (v. 13). Not only was Jesus a witness to Timothy’s ministry, He provided the model for it. Even in the most difficult circumstances, Jesus remained faithful “while testifying before Pontius Pilate” (v. 13). If Jesus was faithful, even with the imminent threat of crucifixion, Timothy could persevere as well. Additionally, Timothy was encouraged to persevere by looking to the future. One day, Jesus will return in triumph and glory (v. 14). This return is guaranteed by the promise of God (v. 15).

It is a mark of how difficult Timothy’s circumstances must have been that Paul felt it necessary to provide him with all these reasons to pursue “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness” and to “fight the good fight of the faith (vv. 11–12). Perseverance in ministry can be difficult. Paul understood that we often need to be reminded of who God is, what He has done, and what our future holds to maintain the perspective we need for faithfulness.

>> Are you losing your eternal perspective? Are there difficulties in your life or ministry that you are facing? We must never forget that we serve and worship a God who is in control. In Him, our future is secure.

### **Pray with Us**

As Moody graduates celebrate Commencement, we pray over them the words from today’s reading: “[P]ursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness . . . Fight the good fight of the faith” (1 Tim. 6:11).

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/16/20

# Tell Me a Story

 **Read:** [**Mark 4:26–34**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%204.26%E2%80%9334)

### **The Parable of the Growing Seed**

26He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. 27Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. 28All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. 29As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

### **The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

30Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? 31It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. 32Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

33With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. 34He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

He did not say anything to them without using a parable. [Mark 4:34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%204.34)

Once upon a time. Those four words just might be among the most powerful in the entire world. Some of my earliest memories as a boy contain a variation on that potent phrase. My mother came home one day with a large, hardcover illustrated edition of biblical stories—My Good Shepherd Bible Story Book. Every evening before lights-out, my brother and I would sit expectantly as she read to us of a time long ago filled with interesting people and the God who loved them. Those stories became a lens for how we looked at the great big world.

The undisputed greatest storyteller ever? Jesus of Nazareth. He knew we all carry inside us an innate love for stories, so that was the medium He consistently used to communicate His good news: Once upon a time there was a man who scattered “seed on the ground” ([Mark 4:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%204.26)). Once upon a time there was “a mustard seed” (v. 31), and on and on. Mark’s gospel clearly indicates that Jesus used stories in His interactions with everyday people (v. 34) as a way to help them see the world more clearly and understand more thoroughly the God who loved them.

That’s wise to remember as we desire to share with others God’s good news of mercy and grace. The use of story is almost impossible to resist.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How could you weave a story or parable into your conversations this week? Maybe something like, “Once upon a time, God answered my prayer in a surprising way . . . .”

Jesus, You’re the Wonderful Counselor and the Great and Mighty God. Give us creativity in the ways in which we share Your love with a world that still slows down to hear a story.

#### **Insight**

The word parable comes from the Greek words para and bolḗ, which mean “placing side by side.” Parables are illustrations taken from common things, or day-to-day life situations, which compare a known truth with an unknown truth. The four gospels contain more than forty parables.

Jesus often used the sower-seed metaphor to illustrate the kingdom of God. In [Mark 4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%204), Jesus taught three parables—the parables of the sower (vv. 3–20), the growing seed (vv. 26–29), and the mustard seed (vv. 30–33). The seed is the Word of God (v. 14; [Luke 8:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%208.11)). When planted on “good soil,” or the receptive heart ([Mark 4:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%204.20); [Matthew 13:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2013.23)), the life-bearing seed grows steadily and produces grain without any human effort ([Mark 4:28–29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%204.28%E2%80%9329)). This is the unseen work of God—a work of grace. Only God makes the seed grow ([1 Corinthians 3:6–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%203.6%E2%80%937)).

# God Calling – 5/16/20

# Pray and Praise

I will be much entreated because I know that only in that earnest supplication, and the calm trust that results, does man learn strength and gain peace.  Therefore I have laid that incessant, persistent pleading as a duty upon My disciples.

Never weary in prayer.  When one day man sees how marvelously his prayer has been answered, then he will deeply, so deeply, regret that he prayed so little.

Prayer changes all. Prayer re-creates.  Prayer is irresistible.  So pray, literally without ceasing.

Pray until you almost cease to pray, because trust has become so rock-like, and then pray on because it has become so much a habit that you cannot resist it.

And always pray until Prayer merges into Praise.  That is the only note on which true prayer should end.  It is the Love and Laughter of your attitude towards man interpreted in the Pray and Praise of your attitude towards God.

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.  Luke 18:1

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/17/20

# His Ascension and Our Access



It came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. —[Luke 24:51](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+24%3A51)

We have no experiences in our lives that correspond to the events in our Lord’s life after the transfiguration. From that moment forward His life was altogether substitutionary. Up to the time of the transfiguration, He had exhibited the normal, perfect life of a man. But from the transfiguration forward— Gethsemane, the Cross, the resurrection— everything is unfamiliar to us. His Cross is the door by which every member of the human race can enter into the life of God; by His resurrection He has the right to give eternal life to anyone, and by His ascension our Lord entered heaven, keeping the door open for humanity.

The transfiguration was completed on the Mount of Ascension. If Jesus had gone to heaven directly from the Mount of Transfiguration, He would have gone alone. He would have been nothing more to us than a glorious Figure. But He turned His back on the glory, and came down from the mountain to identify Himself with fallen humanity.

The ascension is the complete fulfillment of the transfiguration. Our Lord returned to His original glory, but not simply as the Son of God— He returned to His father as the Son of Man as well. There is now freedom of access for anyone straight to the very throne of God because of the ascension of the Son of Man. As the Son of Man, Jesus Christ deliberately limited His omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. But now they are His in absolute, full power. As the Son of Man, Jesus Christ now has all the power at the throne of God. From His ascension forward He is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

###### Wisdom From Oswald Chambers

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

# CCEL – 5/17/20

I am the Lord your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them.—[EZEK. 20:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.20.html#Ezek.20.19)

As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.—He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.—Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.—Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.—Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.—The God of peace, . . . make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.

[I Pet. 1:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html#iPet.1.15). -[I John 2:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html#iJohn.2.6),[29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.29). -[I Cor. 7:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.7.html#iCor.7.19). -[Jas. 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.2.html#Jas.2.10).[II Cor. 3:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.3.html#iiCor.3.5). -[Psa. 119:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html#Ps.119.33).[Phi. 2:12,13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html#Phil.2.12). -[Heb. 13:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html#Heb.13.20).

“So to walk even as he walked.” [1 John 2:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html#iJohn.2.6)

Why should Christians imitate Christ? They should do it for their own sakes. If they desire to be in a healthy state of soul—if they would escape the sickness of sin, and enjoy the vigour of growing grace, let Jesus be their model. For their own happiness’ sake, if they would drink wine on the lees, well refined; if they would enjoy holy and happy communion with Jesus; if they would be lifted up above the cares and troubles of this world, let them walk even as he walked. There is nothing which can so assist you to walk towards heaven with good speed, as wearing the image of Jesus on your heart to rule all its motions. It is when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you are enabled to walk with Jesus in his very footsteps, that you are most happy, and most known to be the sons of God. Peter afar off is both unsafe and uneasy. Next, for religion’s sake, strive to be like Jesus. Ah! poor religion, thou hast been sorely shot at by cruel foes, but thou hast not been wounded one-half so dangerously by thy foes as by thy friends. Who made those wounds in the fair hand of Godliness? The professor who used the dagger of hypocrisy. The man who with pretences, enters the fold, being nought but a wolf in sheep’s clothing, worries the flock more than the lion outside. There is no weapon half so deadly as a Judas-kiss. Inconsistent professors injure the gospel more than the sneering critic or the infidel. But, especially for Christ’s own sake, imitate his example. Christian, lovest thou thy Saviour? Is his name precious to thee? Is his cause dear to thee? Wouldst thou see the kingdoms of the world become his? Is it thy desire that he should be glorified? Art thou longing that souls should be won to him? If so, imitate Jesus; be an “epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.”

# Word Live – 5/17/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/17/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/17/20

# Live Generously

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 6:17–21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+6%3a17%e2%80%9321)

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

20Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, 21which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.

Grace be with you all.

Do you suffer from affluenza? Social scientists coined this term for our modern-day relationship with money and wealth. They define it as “a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety, and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more.”

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. Matthew 6:19

Paul had already warned Timothy about the danger of a love of money (6:10). Now, at the end of this letter, he addresses a question his previous teaching may have raised. What about people who are already rich? What should they do with their wealth? Paul gives three commands that address this question. First, he warns the rich “not to be arrogant” (v. 17). Wealth can lead to a puffed-up sense of security and importance. The world looks up to and respects the wealthy, a respect they can easily believe that they deserve. Second, Paul encourages the rich to put their hope in God, not in their wealth. In contrast to our faith in God, wealth is uncertain (v. 17). It can be here today and gone tomorrow, while God generously provides us with what we need (v. 17). Finally, Paul urges the rich to be generous and to use their wealth to “lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age” (v. 19). We should invest in ministry that has eternal value. Wealth is not to be rejected, but should be viewed from the proper perspective. As a good gift from God, it should be used to honor Him, not replace Him.

Paul ends the letter rather abruptly by giving Timothy a final encouragement not to be influenced by false teaching, but to guard the gospel, which has been entrusted to him (v. 20).

>> Think about your own “money story.” How do you relate to money? How do you use your money to glorify God? In this world, enmeshed in materialism, we should regularly evaluate our own giving practices and our personal relationship with wealth.

### **Pray with Us**

Praise the Lord for the truths we have learned so far this month. May these truths and the lessons we learned shape our lives and relationships at home, in the church, and at the workplace.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/17/20

# What’s in a Name?

 **Read:** [**Luke 3:31**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%203.31)

31the son of Melea, the son of Menna,

the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan,

the son of David,

**Read:** [**1 Chronicles 3:4–9**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%203.4%E2%80%939)

4These six were born to David in Hebron, where he reigned seven years and six months.

David reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years, 5and these were the children born to him there:

Shammua,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+3%3A31+%3B+1+Chronicles+3%3A4%E2%80%939&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-10367a" \o "See footnote a)] Shobab, Nathan and Solomon. These four were by Bathsheba[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+3%3A31+%3B+1+Chronicles+3%3A4%E2%80%939&version=NIV#fen-NIV-10367b)] daughter of Ammiel. 6There were also Ibhar, Elishua,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+3%3A31+%3B+1+Chronicles+3%3A4%E2%80%939&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-10368c" \o "See footnote c)] Eliphelet, 7Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 8Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet—nine in all. 9All these were the sons of David, besides his sons by his concubines. And Tamar was their sister.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Chronicles 3:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+3%3A31+%3B+1+Chronicles+3%3A4%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-10367) Hebrew Shimea, a variant of Shammua
2. [1 Chronicles 3:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+3%3A31+%3B+1+Chronicles+3%3A4%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-10367) One Hebrew manuscript and Vulgate (see also Septuagint and 2 Samuel 11:3); most Hebrew manuscripts Bathshua
3. [1 Chronicles 3:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+3%3A31+%3B+1+Chronicles+3%3A4%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-10368) Two Hebrew manuscripts (see also 2 Samuel 5:15 and 1 Chron. 14:5); most Hebrew manuscripts Elishama

[Jesus] was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph. [Luke 3:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%203.23)

In God’s timing, our son Kofi was born on a Friday, which is exactly what his name means—boy born on Friday. We named him after a Ghanaian friend of ours, a pastor whose only son died. He prays for our Kofi constantly. We’re deeply honored.

It’s easy to miss the significance in a name if you don’t know the story behind it. In [Luke 3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%203), we find a fascinating detail about a name in the ancestry of Joseph. The genealogy traces Joseph’s line backward all the way to Adam and even to God (v. 38). In verse 31 we read: “the son of Nathan, the son of David.” Nathan? That’s interesting. In [1 Chronicles 3:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%203.5) we learn that Nathan was born to Bathsheba.

Is it coincidence that David named Bathsheba’s child Nathan? Recall the backstory. Bathsheba was never supposed to be David’s wife. Another Nathan—the prophet—bravely confronted the king for abusing his authority to exploit Bathsheba and murder her husband (see [2 Samuel 12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2012)).

David accepted the prophet’s point-blank rebuke and repented of his horrific offenses. With the healing passage of time, he would name his son Nathan. How appropriate that this was Bathsheba’s son, and that he would be one of the ancestors of Joseph, Jesus’ earthly dad ([Luke 3:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%203.23)).

In the Bible, we keep finding God’s grace woven into everything—even into an obscure name in a seldom-read genealogy. God’s grace is everywhere.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What unlikely places have you seen God’s grace showing up in your life? How can focusing on God’s big story help you find the grace in your part of that story?

Dear God, help us to find Your grace everywhere we look.

#### **Insight**

Gospel writers Matthew (1:1–16) and Luke (3:23–38) both include genealogies of Jesus. Several interesting genealogical gems are worth noting. Luke lists seventy-six generations; Matthew includes just forty-one. Each writer’s list is consistent with the purpose and emphases of their gospel. Matthew’s account begins with Abraham (v. 1) and ends with Jesus. Luke’s record begins with Jesus and is traced all the way back to Adam (v. 38). Matthew’s list highlights Jesus’ Abrahamic and Davidic roots. Luke, emphasizing Jesus as the Son of Man, takes his readers back to Adam, the father of mankind. It’s interesting that in Matthew’s account five women are listed among the names: Tamar (v. 3); gentiles Rahab and Ruth (v. 5); the wife of Uriah (v. 6), and Mary (v. 16).

# God Calling – 5/17/20

# Sorrow into Joy

“Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

My bravest are those who can anticipate the morning and feel in the night of sorrow that underlying Joy that tells of confident expectations of the morning.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep,  that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:11

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/18/20

# Living Simply— Yet Focused



Look at the birds of the air….Consider the lilies of the field… —[Matthew 6:26, 28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+6%3A26%2C+28)

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin”— they simply are! Think of the sea, the air, the sun, the stars, and the moon— all of these simply are as well— yet what a ministry and service they render on our behalf! So often we impair God’s designed influence, which He desires to exhibit through us, because of our own conscious efforts to be consistent and useful. Jesus said there is only one way to develop and grow spiritually, and that is through focusing and concentrating on God. In essence, Jesus was saying, “Do not worry about being of use to others; simply believe on Me.” In other words, pay attention to the Source, and out of you “will flow rivers of living water” ([John 7:38](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+7:38)). We cannot discover the source of our natural life through common sense and reasoning, and Jesus is teaching here that growth in our spiritual life comes not from focusing directly on it, but from concentrating on our Father in heaven. Our heavenly Father knows our circumstances, and if we will stay focused on Him, instead of our circumstances, we will grow spiritually— just as “the lilies of the field.”

The people who influence us the most are not those who detain us with their continual talk, but those who live their lives like the stars in the sky and “the lilies of the field”— simply and unaffectedly. Those are the lives that mold and shape us.

If you want to be of use to God, maintain the proper relationship with Jesus Christ by staying focused on Him, and He will make use of you every minute you live— yet you will be unaware, on the conscious level of your life, that you are being used of Him.

###### Wisdom From Oswald Chambers

There is no condition of life in which we cannot abide in Jesus. We have to learn to abide in Him wherever we are placed.  Our Brilliant Heritage, 946 R

# CCEL – 5/18/20

As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.—[JOHN 5:26.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.5.html#John.5.26)

Our Saviour Jesus Christ, . . . hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.—I am the resurrection, and the life.—Because I live, ye shall live also.—We are made partakers of Christ.—Partakers of the Holy Ghost.—Partakers of the divine nature.—The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.—Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.—Who liveth for ever and ever.—The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality.—Unto the King eternal, immortal, . . . be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[II Tim. 1:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.1.html#iiTim.1.10). -[John 11:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.11.html#John.11.25). -[John 14:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html#John.14.19). -[Heb. 3:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.3.html#Heb.3.14). -[Heb. 6:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.6.html#Heb.6.4). –[II Pet. 1:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.1.html#iiPet.1.4). -[I Cor. 15:45](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html#iCor.15.45),[51,52](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.51).[Rev. 4:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.4.html#Rev.4.8). -[Rev. 4:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.4.html#Rev.4.9). -[I Tim. 6:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.6.html#iTim.6.15). -[I Tim. 1:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.1.html#iTim.1.17).

“In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him.” [Colossians 2:9, 10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html#Col.2.9)

All the attributes of Christ, as God and man, are at our disposal. All the fulness of the Godhead, whatever that marvellous term may comprehend, is ours to make us complete. He cannot endow us with the attributes of Deity; but he has done all that can be done, for he has made even his divine power and Godhead subservient to our salvation. His omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability and infallibility, are all combined for our defence. Arise, believer, and behold the Lord Jesus yoking the whole of his divine Godhead to the chariot of salvation! How vast his grace, how firm his faithfulness, how unswerving his immutability, how infinite his power, how limitless his knowledge! All these are by the Lord Jesus made the pillars of the temple of salvation; and all, without diminution of their infinity, are covenanted to us as our perpetual inheritance. The fathomless love of the Saviour’s heart is every drop of it ours; every sinew in the arm of might, every jewel in the crown of majesty, the immensity of divine knowledge, and the sternness of divine justice, all are ours, and shall be employed for us. The whole of Christ, in his adorable character as the Son of God, is by himself made over to us most richly to enjoy. His wisdom is our direction, his knowledge our instruction, his power our protection, his justice our surety, his love our comfort, his mercy our solace, and his immutability our trust. He makes no reserve, but opens the recesses of the Mount of God and bids us dig in its mines for the hidden treasures. “All, all, all are yours,” saith he, “be ye satisfied with favour and full of the goodness of the Lord.” Oh! how sweet thus to behold Jesus, and to call upon him with the certain confidence that in seeking the interposition of his love or power, we are but asking for that which he has already faithfully promised.

# Word Live – 5/18/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/18/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/18/20

# Final Words

**Read:** [**2 Timothy 1:1–5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+1%3a1%e2%80%935)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

2To Timothy, my dear son:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **Thanksgiving**

3I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

A person’s last recorded words can be fascinating because they give a window into what people truly believe. The philosopher Karl Marx is purported to have ended his life by saying, “Last words are for fools who haven’t said enough.” Theoretical physicist Richard Feynman’s final statement was, “I’d hate to die twice. It’s so boring.” While composer Ludwig van Beethoven declared, “I will hear in heaven.”

I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. 2 Timothy 1:5

The book of 2 Timothy records Paul’s final words in Scripture. Some time had passed since he wrote 1 Timothy. Most scholars believe that Paul wrote 2 Timothy during his final imprisonment in Rome not recorded in the book of Acts. Church tradition indicates that Paul was arrested under the emperor Nero and was beheaded by him in AD 67.

It is clear throughout this letter that Paul sensed his death was near. This realization lends a gravity to his message. He opens by declaring that he is an apostle of “Christ Jesus . . . in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus” (v. 1). Throughout the letter, Paul encourages the next generation, and specifically Timothy, to remain steadfast in his commitment to the gospel. The deeply personal tone of the letter is seen in these opening verses. Paul remembers a poignant episode with Timothy, “recalling your tears, I long to see you” (v. 4). We do not know what event Paul is referring to, but it is a reminder of how close these two men were. Paul affirms Timothy’s “sincere faith,” which he inherited from his faithful grandmother and mother. Timothy’s conversion was not a cataclysmic event like Paul’s on the Damascus Road, but it was nevertheless a genuine faith that he had embraced as a young man.

>> Paul’s mention of Lois and Eunice by name highlights the importance of passing down our faith to the next generation. Who first shared the gospel with you? Consider the “Timothys” in your life, those who are your children in the faith.

### **Pray with Us**

As we begin our study of 2 Timothy today, will you pray for the “Timothys” in your life? If you don’t have any, ask the Lord if He wants you to start discipling believers who are young in the faith.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/18/20

# The Gift of Peace

 **Read:** [**Luke 2:25–35**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%202.25%E2%80%9335)

25Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. 26It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. 27Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

29“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
    you may now dismiss[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A25%E2%80%9335&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25003a)] your servant in peace.  
30For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
31    which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:  
32a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
    and the glory of your people Israel.”

33The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 34Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Luke 2:29](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A25%E2%80%9335&version=NIV#en-NIV-25003) Or promised, / now dismiss

You may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation. [Luke 2:29–30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%202.29%E2%80%9330)

“I believe in Jesus and He is my Savior, and I have no fear of death,” said Barbara Bush, the wife of former US President George H. W. Bush, to her son before she died. This incredible and confident statement suggests a strong and deep-rooted faith. She experienced God’s gift of peace that comes from knowing Jesus, even when faced with death.

Simeon, a resident of Jerusalem during the first century, also experienced profound peace because of Jesus. Moved by the Holy Spirit, Simeon went to the temple when Mary and Joseph brought baby Jesus to be circumcised as required by the law for a newborn boy. Although not much is known about Simeon, from Luke’s description one can tell he was a special man of God, just and devout, waiting faithfully for the coming Messiah, and “the Holy Spirit was on him” ([Luke 2:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%202.25)). Yet Simeon did not experience shalom (peace), a deep sense of completeness, until he saw Jesus.

While holding Jesus in his arms, Simeon broke into a song of praise, expressing full satisfaction in God: “You may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations” (vv. 29–31). He had peace because he foresaw the future hope of the whole world.

As we celebrate the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the promised Savior, may we rejoice in God’s gift of peace.

By:  [Estera Pirosca Escobar](https://odb.org/author/esteraescobar/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Have you experienced this deep sense of satisfaction and completeness that comes from knowing Jesus? How can you celebrate God’s gift of peace today?

Dear Father, thank You for Jesus, Your gift of peace.

#### **Insight**

Under Jewish law, after the birth of a son the mother was deemed ceremonially unclean for forty days ([Leviticus 12:1–5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2012.1%E2%80%935)), and the firstborn son of every womb was to be consecrated to God ([Exodus 13:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2013.2)). This requirement was rooted in the tenth plague when the Egyptians’ firstborn sons were killed and Israel’s firstborn sons were preserved (vv. 12–15). Israel’s firstborn sons must be redeemed ([Numbers 18:15–16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2018.15%E2%80%9316)).

After Jesus was born, Joseph brought Mary and Jesus to the temple to fulfill the purification of the mother and the redemption of the firstborn son ([Luke 2:22–24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%202.22%E2%80%9324)). In the temple, the elderly Simeon saw the forty-day-old Jesus. Luke says that “the Holy Spirit was on him” (v. 25), a description used of Old Testament prophets speaking for God ([Numbers 11:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2011.25); [1 Samuel 10:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2010.6), [10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Samuel%2010.10); [19:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Samuel%2019.20), [23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Samuel%2019.23)). Because Anna, who was also in the temple at that time, was “a prophet” ([Luke 2:36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%202.36)), scholars surmise that Simeon was a prophet as well.

# God Calling – 5/18/20

# New and Vital Power

“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”   Not for merit was salvation, the promise was to all who looked.

To look is surely within the Power of everyone.  One look suffices. Salvation follows.

Look and you are saved from despair.  Look and you are saved from care. Look and you are saved from worry. Look, and into you there flows a peace beyond all understanding, a Power new and vital, a Joy wonderful indeed.

Look and keep looking. Doubt flees, Joy reigns, and Hope conquers.

Life, Eternal Life, is yours – revitalizing, renewing.

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