# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/1/20

# Destined To Be Holy



…it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." —[1 Peter 1:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Peter+1%3A16)

We must continually remind ourselves of the purpose of life. We are not destined to happiness, nor to health, but to holiness. Today we have far too many desires and interests, and our lives are being consumed and wasted by them. Many of them may be right, noble, and good, and may later be fulfilled, but in the meantime God must cause their importance to us to decrease. The only thing that truly matters is whether a person will accept the God who will make him holy. At all costs, a person must have the right relationship with God.

Do I believe I need to be holy? Do I believe that God can come into me and make me holy? If through your preaching you convince me that I am unholy, I then resent your preaching. The preaching of the gospel awakens an intense resentment because it is designed to reveal my unholiness, but it also awakens an intense yearning and desire within me. God has only one intended destiny for mankind— holiness. His only goal is to produce saints. God is not some eternal blessing-machine for people to use, and He did not come to save us out of pity— He came to save us because He created us to be holy. Atonement through the Cross of Christ means that God can put me back into perfect oneness with Himself through the death of Jesus Christ, without a trace of anything coming between us any longer.

Never tolerate, because of sympathy for yourself or for others, any practice that is not in keeping with a holy God. Holiness means absolute purity of your walk before God, the words coming from your mouth, and every thought in your mind— placing every detail of your life under the scrutiny of God Himself. Holiness is not simply what God gives me, but what God has given me that is being exhibited in my life.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Jesus Christ can afford to be misunderstood; we cannot. Our weakness lies in always wanting to vindicate ourselves. The Place of Help

# CCEL – 9/1/20

**The fruit of the spirit is meekness.**—[GAL. 5:22,23.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.22)

The meek . . . shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.—Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.—The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, . . . is in the sight of God of great price.—Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

Follow after meekness.—Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.—He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he openeth not his mouth.—Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled reviled not again, . . . but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

[Isa. 29:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.29.html" \l "Isa.29.19). -[Matt. 18:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.18.html" \l "Matt.18.3). -[I Pet. 3:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.3.html" \l "iPet.3.4). -[I Cor. 13:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.13.html" \l "iCor.13.4).[I Tim. 6:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.6.html" \l "iTim.6.11). -[Matt. 11:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.11.html" \l "Matt.11.29). -[Isa. 53:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.7). -[I Pet. 2:21-23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.21).

“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” **[Psalm 73:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.73.html" \l "Ps.73.24)**

The Psalmist felt his need of divine guidance. He had just been discovering the foolishness of his own heart, and lest he should be constantly led astray by it, he resolved that God’s counsel should henceforth guide him. A sense of our own folly is a great step towards being wise, when it leads us to rely on the wisdom of the Lord. The blind man leans on his friend’s arm and reaches home in safety, and so would we give ourselves up implicitly to divine guidance, nothing doubting; assured that though we cannot see, it is always safe to trust the all-seeing God. “Thou shalt,” is a blessed expression of confidence. He was sure that the Lord would not decline the condescending task. There is a word for thee, O believer; rest thou in it. Be assured that thy God will be thy counsellor and friend; he shall guide thee; he will direct all thy ways. In his written Word thou hast this assurance in part fulfilled, for holy Scripture is his counsel to thee. Happy are we to have God’s Word always to guide us! What were the mariner without his compass? And what were the Christian without the Bible? This is the unerring chart, the map in which every shoal is described, and all the channels from the quicksands of destruction to the haven of salvation mapped and marked by one who knows all the way. Blessed be thou, O God, that we may trust thee to guide us now, and guide us even to the end! After this guidance through life, the Psalmist anticipates a divine reception at last—“and afterward receive me to glory.” What a thought for thee, believer! God himself will receive thee to glory—thee! Wandering, erring, straying, yet he will bring thee safe at last to glory! This is thy portion; live on it this day, and if perplexities should surround thee, go in the strength of this text straight to the throne.

# Word Live – 9/1/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/1/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 9/1/20

# https://www.todayintheword.org/siteassets/header-images/2020/september/titw_september_open-graph_1200x630.jpgThe God Who Hears

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 1:1–2:11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11)

### The Birth of Samuel

1 There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#fen-NIV-7214a)] from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. 2He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

3Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the Lord Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the Lord. 4Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. 5But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the Lord had closed her womb. 6Because the Lord had closed Hannah’s womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. 7This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. 8Her husband Elkanah would say to her, “Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don’t you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don’t I mean more to you than ten sons?”

9Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Lord’s house. 10In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. 11And she made a vow, saying, “Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”

12As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. 13Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk 14and said to her, “How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine.”

15“Not so, my lord,” Hannah replied, “I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. 16Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.”

17Eli answered, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.”

18She said, “May your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

19Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the Lord and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her. 20So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11" \l "fen-NIV-7233b" \o "See footnote b)] saying, “Because I asked the Lord for him.”

### Hannah Dedicates Samuel

21When her husband Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfill his vow, 22Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, “After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the Lord, and he will live there always.”[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#fen-NIV-7235c)]

23“Do what seems best to you,” her husband Elkanah told her. “Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the Lord make good his[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#fen-NIV-7236d)] word.” So the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

24After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull,[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11" \l "fen-NIV-7237e" \o "See footnote e)] an ephah[[f](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#fen-NIV-7237f)] of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. 25When the bull had been sacrificed, they brought the boy to Eli, 26and she said to him, “Pardon me, my lord. As surely as you live, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the Lord. 27I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. 28So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord.” And he worshiped the Lord there.

### Hannah’s Prayer

2 Then Hannah prayed and said:

“My heart rejoices in the Lord;  
    in the Lord my horn[[g](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#fen-NIV-7242g)] is lifted high.  
My mouth boasts over my enemies,  
    for I delight in your deliverance.

2“There is no one holy like the Lord;  
    there is no one besides you;  
    there is no Rock like our God.

3“Do not keep talking so proudly  
    or let your mouth speak such arrogance,  
for the Lord is a God who knows,  
    and by him deeds are weighed.

4“The bows of the warriors are broken,  
    but those who stumbled are armed with strength.  
5Those who were full hire themselves out for food,  
    but those who were hungry are hungry no more.  
She who was barren has borne seven children,  
    but she who has had many sons pines away.

6“The Lord brings death and makes alive;  
    he brings down to the grave and raises up.  
7The Lord sends poverty and wealth;  
    he humbles and he exalts.  
8He raises the poor from the dust  
    and lifts the needy from the ash heap;  
he seats them with princes  
    and has them inherit a throne of honor.

“For the foundations of the earth are the Lord’s;  
    on them he has set the world.  
9He will guard the feet of his faithful servants,  
    but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness.

“It is not by strength that one prevails;  
10    those who oppose the Lord will be broken.  
The Most High will thunder from heaven;  
    the Lord will judge the ends of the earth.

“He will give strength to his king  
    and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

11Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the Lord under Eli the priest.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 1:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#en-NIV-7214) See Septuagint and 1 Chron. 6:26-27,33-35; or from Ramathaim Zuphim.
2. [1 Samuel 1:20](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#en-NIV-7233) Samuel sounds like the Hebrew for heard by God.
3. [1 Samuel 1:22](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#en-NIV-7235) Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls always. I have dedicated him as a Nazirite—all the days of his life.”
4. [1 Samuel 1:23](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#en-NIV-7236) Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint and Syriac your
5. [1 Samuel 1:24](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#en-NIV-7237) Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint and Syriac; Masoretic Text with three bulls
6. [1 Samuel 1:24](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#en-NIV-7237) That is, probably about 36 pounds or about 16 kilograms
7. [1 Samuel 2:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+1%3a1%e2%80%932%3a11#en-NIV-7242) Horn here symbolizes strength; also in verse 10.

Do you believe God listens to your prayers? Do you listen for God’s voice? As a young boy, the prophet Samuel heard God calling to him in the middle of the night. This dramatic moment prompted our theme for this month’s study of the book of 1 Samuel: Listening for God’s Call. Although named for the prophet Samuel, this book focuses on David, Israel’s most famous king. For both men, listening to God’s voice would play an important part of directing their path.

There is no one holy like the LORD; There is no one besides you. 1 Samuel 2:2

Samuel’s mother, Hannah, was one of two wives to Elkanah, an Ephraimite priest from the hill country of Ephraim. Hannah was probably Elkanah’s first wife. Elkanah may have taken Peninnah as a second wife, an accepted practice in those days, to ensure that he would produce an heir. Peninnah’s ability to have children, combined with Elkanah’s obvious preference for Hannah, resulted in a painful rivalry between the two women. Hannah was subjected to daily torment, not only because of her situation but also because of Peninnah’s cruel words. Elkanah’s blundering attempt to offer comfort did not make Hannah feel any better because it was the Lord who had closed her womb (v. 6). Even Eli, the old priest who sat outside the tabernacle in Shiloh, added insult to injury when he mistook Hannah’s agonized prayer for drunken mumbling (v. 14). When Hannah explained her actions, Eli’s harsh criticism changed to blessing.

The only one who had nothing to say in this narrative was God. He was not talking; He was listening (vv. 19–20). Hannah acknowledged this in the name she gave to her son, which may be understood as a pun on a Hebrew phrase meaning “asked of God.”

**Apply the Word**

In this account, Hannah speaks to God more than anyone else. He is a God who speaks to His servants. But the first glimpse we have of Him in this book is of the God who hears. Be assured that God hears your prayers, and He is listening.

### Pray with Us

As we begin this month’s devotional journey through the book of 1 Samuel, our prayer is that God will encourage you. We pray this study will show you that our God not only speaks but also listens attentively to our prayers.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/1/20

# Suffering Together

 **Read:** [**1 Corinthians 12:14–26**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%2012.14%E2%80%9326)

14Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. [1 Corinthians 12:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%2012.26)

In 2013, seventy-year-old James McConnell, a British Royal Marine veteran, died. McConnell had no family, and staff from his nursing home feared no one would attend his funeral. A man tapped to officiate McConnell’s memorial service posted a Facebook message: “In this day and age it is tragic enough that anyone has to leave this world with no one to mourn their passing, but this man was family. . . . If you can make it to the graveside . . . to pay your respects to a former brother in arms, then please try to be there.” Two hundred Royal Marines packed the pews!

These British compatriots exhibited a biblical truth: we’re tied to one another. “The body is not made up of one part, but of many,” Paul says ([1 Corinthians 12:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%2012.14)). We’re not isolated. Just the opposite: we’re bound in Jesus. Scripture reveals organic interconnection: “If one member suffers, all the members suffer” (v. 26 nasb). As believers in Jesus, members of God’s new family, we move toward one another into the pain, into the sorrow, into those murky places where we would fear to go alone. But thankfully we do not go alone.

Perhaps the worst part of suffering is when we feel we’re drowning in the dark all by ourselves. God, however, creates a new community that suffers together. A new community where no one should be left in the dark.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

When have you felt most alone? How does God’s grace, kindness, and friendship help you deal with loneliness?

Is it true, God? Have You really placed me in a new community that knows and loves me in my suffering? Help me to believe this.

To learn more about suffering, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/CA211](https://ChristianUniversity.org/CA211).

#### Insight

In [1 Corinthians 12:14–26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%2012.14%E2%80%9326), Paul uses the imagery of the human body as a picture of the family of believers, the church. In [Ephesians 1:22–23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%201.22%E2%80%9323), the apostle again uses the body to portray the church, but this time with an important addition. Jesus Himself is the Head of that body. The illustration that works so beautifully in [1 Corinthians 12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%2012) takes on added clarity with the reminder that the body works, moves, and functions under the leadership and guidance of the Head.

# God Calling – 9/1/20

# How Rich You Are

**I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.  -Hebrews 13:5**

My children, that word is unfailingly true.  Down the centuries thousands have proved My constancy, My untiringness, My unfailing Love.  "Never leave."  "Never forsake." Not just a Presence is meant by this, but ...

My Love will never leave you, My Understanding will never leave you, My Strength will never leave you.  Think of all that I am:

Love - then forever you are sure of Love.

Strength - then forever, in every difficulty and danger, you are sure of strength.

Patience - then always there is One who can never tire.

Understanding - then always you will be understood.

Can you fear the future when it holds so much for you?  Beloved, "set your affections on things above" (the higher, spiritual things), "and not on things on the earth" (the lower, temporal things), and you will see how rich you are.

Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. - Isaiah 48:12

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/2/20

# Life of Pure and Holy Sacrifice

He who believes in Me…out of his heart will flow… —[John 7:38](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+7%3A38)

Jesus did not say, “He who believes in Me will realize all the blessings of the fullness of God,” but, in essence, “He who believes in Me will have everything he receives escape out of him.” Our Lord’s teaching was always anti-self-realization. His purpose is not the development of a person— His purpose is to make a person exactly like Himself, and the Son of God is characterized by self-expenditure. If we believe in Jesus, it is not what we gain but what He pours through us that really counts. God’s purpose is not simply to make us beautiful, plump grapes, but to make us grapes so that He may squeeze the sweetness out of us. Our spiritual life cannot be measured by success as the world measures it, but only by what God pours through us— and we cannot measure that at all.

When Mary of Bethany “broke the flask…of very costly oil…and poured it on [Jesus’] head,” it was an act for which no one else saw any special occasion; in fact, “…there were some who…said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil wasted?’ ” ([Mark 14:3-4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+14:3-4)). But Jesus commended Mary for her extravagant act of devotion, and said, “…wherever this gospel is preached…what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her” ([Mark 14:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+14:9)). Our Lord is filled with overflowing joy whenever He sees any of us doing what Mary did— not being bound by a particular set of rules, but being totally surrendered to Him. God poured out the life of His Son “that the world through Him might be saved” ([John 3:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3:17)). Are we prepared to pour out our lives for Him?

“He who believes in Me…out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”— and hundreds of other lives will be continually refreshed. Now is the time for us to break “the flask” of our lives, to stop seeking our own satisfaction, and to pour out our lives before Him. Our Lord is asking who of us will do it for Him?

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 9/2/20

**Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.**—[PSA. 27:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.27.html" \l "Ps.27.14)

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.—Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.—Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

The trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.—Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

[Isa. 40:28,29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.40.html" \l "Isa.40.28). -[Isa. 41:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.41.html" \l "Isa.41.10). -[Isa. 25:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.25.html" \l "Isa.25.4).[Jas. 1:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.3). -[Heb. 10:35,36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.35).

“But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.” **[Mark 1:30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.1.html" \l "Mark.1.30)**

Very interesting is this little peep into the house of the Apostolic Fisherman. We see at once that household joys and cares are no hindrance to the full exercise of ministry, nay, that since they furnish an opportunity for personally witnessing the Lord’s gracious work upon one’s own flesh and blood, they may even instruct the teacher better than any other earthly discipline. Papists and other sectaries may decry marriage, but true Christianity and household life agree well together. Peter’s house was probably a poor fisherman’s hut, but the Lord of Glory entered it, lodged in it, and wrought a miracle in it. Should our little book be read this morning in some very humble cottage, let this fact encourage the inmates to seek the company of King Jesus. God is oftener in little huts than in rich palaces. Jesus is looking round your room now, and is waiting to be gracious to you. Into Simon’s house sickness had entered, fever in a deadly form had prostrated his mother-in-law, and as soon as Jesus came they told him of the sad affliction, and he hastened to the patient’s bed. Have you any sickness in the house this morning? You will find Jesus by far the best physician, go to him at once and tell him all about the matter. Immediately lay the case before him. It concerns one of his people, and therefore will not be trivial to him. Observe, that at once the Saviour restored the sick woman; none can heal as he does. We may not make sure that the Lord will at once remove all disease from those we love, but we may know that believing prayer for the sick is far more likely to be followed by restoration than anything else in the world; and where this avails not, we must meekly bow to his will by whom life and death are determined. The tender heart of Jesus waits to hear our griefs, let us pour them into his patient ear.

# Word Live – 9/2/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/2/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 9/2/20

# Two Kinds of Service

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 2:12–36**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+2%3a12%e2%80%9336)

### Eli’s Wicked Sons

12Eli’s sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the Lord. 13Now it was the practice of the priests that, whenever any of the people offered a sacrifice, the priest’s servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand while the meat was being boiled 14and would plunge the fork into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot. Whatever the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. 15But even before the fat was burned, the priest’s servant would come and say to the person who was sacrificing, “Give the priest some meat to roast; he won’t accept boiled meat from you, but only raw.”

16If the person said to him, “Let the fat be burned first, and then take whatever you want,” the servant would answer, “No, hand it over now; if you don’t, I’ll take it by force.”

17This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord’s sight, for they[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+2%3a12%e2%80%9336#fen-NIV-7258a)] were treating the Lord’s offering with contempt.

18But Samuel was ministering before the Lord—a boy wearing a linen ephod. 19Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. 20Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, “May the Lord give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+2%3a12%e2%80%9336#fen-NIV-7261b)] the Lord.” Then they would go home. 21And the Lord was gracious to Hannah; she gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord.

22Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 23So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. 24No, my sons; the report I hear spreading among the Lord’s people is not good. 25If one person sins against another, God[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+2%3a12%e2%80%9336#fen-NIV-7266c)] may mediate for the offender; but if anyone sins against the Lord, who will intercede for them?” His sons, however, did not listen to their father’s rebuke, for it was the Lord’s will to put them to death.

26And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with people.

### Prophecy Against the House of Eli

27Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, “This is what the Lord says: ‘Did I not clearly reveal myself to your ancestor’s family when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? 28I chose your ancestor out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your ancestor’s family all the food offerings presented by the Israelites. 29Why do you[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+2%3a12%e2%80%9336#fen-NIV-7270d)] scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?’

30“Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that members of your family would minister before me forever.’ But now the Lord declares: ‘Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained. 31The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your priestly house, so that no one in it will reach old age, 32and you will see distress in my dwelling. Although good will be done to Israel, no one in your family line will ever reach old age. 33Every one of you that I do not cut off from serving at my altar I will spare only to destroy your sight and sap your strength, and all your descendants will die in the prime of life.

34“‘And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you—they will both die on the same day. 35I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his priestly house, and they will minister before my anointed one always. 36Then everyone left in your family line will come and bow down before him for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread and plead, “Appoint me to some priestly office so I can have food to eat.”’”

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 2:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+2%3a12%e2%80%9336#en-NIV-7258) Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint; Masoretic Text people
2. [1 Samuel 2:20](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+2%3a12%e2%80%9336#en-NIV-7261) Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text and asked from
3. [1 Samuel 2:25](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+2%3a12%e2%80%9336#en-NIV-7266) Or the judges
4. [1 Samuel 2:29](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+2%3a12%e2%80%9336#en-NIV-7270) The Hebrew is plural.

In recent days it seems as if news headlines are filled with stories about church leaders whose behavior has shocked believers and unbelievers alike. Unfortunately, these kinds of failures are not new. Today’s text contrasts the scandal caused by Eli’s sons with the simple obedience of Samuel, who “was ministering before the Lord—a boy wearing a linen ephod” (v. 18). Eli, a priest, was aware of what his sons were doing, treating each sacrifice as if it were their personal possession, and sleeping with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting (vv. 12–16, 22).

And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with people. 1 Samuel 2:26

Eli confronted his sons, but it was too little too late. The rebuke of the unnamed prophet in verse 27 suggests that Eli was complicit in their behavior. Eli did not confront them until he was “very old” (v. 22). He also seems to have profited from their sins (v. 29). Today we might call this sort of complicity “enabling.” God’s decision to send Eli a prophet in an age when “the word of the Lord was rare” further highlighted the gravity of their sin (1 Sam. 3:1).

The chilling statement of verse 25 that Eli’s sons refused to listen to their father’s rebuke because “it was the Lord’s will to put them to death” is a solemn reminder of how seriously God takes sin. We are much more nonchalant about it. We often miss the point of the Bible’s assertion that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). We mistake this diagnosis as permission, instead of allowing it to show us our need for a righteousness that can come only through faith in Christ.

**Apply the Word**

Luke 2:52 is very similar to today’s key verse, 1 Samuel 2:26. It says that Jesus also “grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” Jesus is more than just an example of admirable behavior; He is the solution to our sin. Trust Him today.

### Pray with Us

As you read today’s passage from 1 Samuel 2, pray that the Lord will show you how seriously He takes sin. Praise Him that the righteousness of Christ is available to us as a solution to our sin!

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/2/20

# The Whispering Gallery

### Today's Devotional Read: [Psalm 18:1–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018.1%E2%80%936) [[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18%3A1%E2%80%936+%2C+16%E2%80%9319&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14120a)]

#### For the director of music. Of David the servant of the Lord. He 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. He said:

1I love you, Lord, my strength.

2The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;  
    my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
    my shield[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18%3A1%E2%80%936+%2C+16%E2%80%9319&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14121b)] and the horn[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18%3A1%E2%80%936+%2C+16%E2%80%9319&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14121c)] of my salvation, my stronghold.

3I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise,  
    and I have been saved from my enemies.  
4The cords of death entangled me;  
    the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.  
5The cords of the grave coiled around me;  
    the snares of death confronted me.

6In my distress I called to the Lord;  
    I cried to my God for help.  
From his temple he heard my voice;  
    my cry came before him, into his ears.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Psalm 18:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18%3A1%E2%80%936+%2C+16%E2%80%9319&version=NIV#en-NIV-14120) In Hebrew texts 18:1-50 is numbered 18:2-51.
2. [Psalm 18:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18%3A1%E2%80%936+%2C+16%E2%80%9319&version=NIV#en-NIV-14121) Or sovereign
3. [Psalm 18:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18%3A1%E2%80%936+%2C+16%E2%80%9319&version=NIV#en-NIV-14121) Horn here symbolizes strength.

**Read:** [**Psalm 18:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018.1%E2%80%936)[**16–19**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalm%2018.16%E2%80%9319)

16He reached down from on high and took hold of me;  
    he drew me out of deep waters.  
17He rescued me from my powerful enemy,  
    from my foes, who were too strong for me.  
18They confronted me in the day of my disaster,  
    but the Lord was my support.  
19He brought me out into a spacious place;  
    he rescued me because he delighted in me.

In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. [Psalm 18:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018.6)

In the towering dome of London’s St. Paul’s Cathedral, visitors can climb 259 steps to access The Whispering Gallery. There you can whisper and be heard by another person anywhere along the circular walkway, even across the enormous abyss nearly one hundred feet away. Engineers explain this anomaly as a result of the spherical shape of the dome and the low intensity sound waves of a whisper.

How we long to be confident that God hears our agonized whispers! The Psalms are filled with testimonies that He hears us—our cries, prayers, and whispers. David writes, “In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help” ([Psalm 18:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018.6)). Over and over again, he and other psalmists plead, “Hear my prayer” (4:1), my voice (5:3), my groans (102:20). Sometimes the expression is more of a whispered, “Hear me” (77:1), where the “heart meditated and [the] spirit asked” (77:6).

In answer to these pleas, the psalmists—like David in [Psalm 18:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018.6)—reveal that God is listening: “From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.” Since the actual temple wasn’t yet built, might David have been referring to God listening in His heavenly dwelling?

From His very own “whispering gallery” in the dome of the heavens above the earth, God bends to our deepest murmurs, even our whispers . . . and listens.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What do you long to whisper to God today? How can you know that He hears?

Dear God, give me courage to whisper to You today, trusting You to hear and respond.

#### Insight

The introduction to [Psalm 18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018) tells us David wrote it “when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.” At fifty verses, it’s the first lengthy psalm in the Bible. Interestingly, it also occurs (with variations) in [2 Samuel 22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022). Here David expresses his overwhelming gratitude for God’s hand in defeating his many enemies. Yet a reading of the entire psalm reveals it to be messianic; that is, the song points to Christ. In [Romans 15:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2015.9) the apostle Paul quotes [Psalm 18:49](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018.49) as referring to Jesus: “I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name.” We might dismiss this statement as being solely about David, but [Psalm 18:50](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018.50) says, “[God] shows unfailing love to his anointed, to David and to his descendants forever.” Such a promise can be literally fulfilled only by Jesus Himself.

# God Calling – 9/2/20

# I Must Provide

I am your Lord. Enough. Then I can command your obedient service, your loyalty. But I am bound by My Lordship to give you protection.

I am bound to fight for you, to plan for you, to secure you a sufficiency of all within My Power to provide. Think how vast that provision can be. Never doubt.  Such marvels are unfolding. Wonders beyond your dreams. They only need the watering of a grateful spirit and a loving heart to yield abundantly.

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.  John 20:28

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/3/20

# Pouring Out the Water of Satisfaction



He would not drink it, but poured it out to the Lord. —[2 Samuel 23:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Samuel+23%3A16)

What has been like “water from the well of Bethlehem” to you recently— love, friendship, or maybe some spiritual blessing ([2 Samuel 23:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+23:16))? Have you taken whatever it may be, even at the risk of damaging your own soul, simply to satisfy yourself? If you have, then you cannot pour it out “to the Lord.” You can never set apart for God something that you desire for yourself to achieve your own satisfaction. If you try to satisfy yourself with a blessing from God, it will corrupt you. You must sacrifice it, pouring it out to God— something that your common sense says is an absurd waste.

How can I pour out “to the Lord” natural love and spiritual blessings? There is only one way— I must make a determination in my mind to do so. There are certain things other people do that could never be received by someone who does not know God, because it is humanly impossible to repay them. As soon as I realize that something is too wonderful for me, that I am not worthy to receive it, and that it is not meant for a human being at all, I must pour it out “to the Lord.” Then these very things that have come to me will be poured out as “rivers of living water” all around me ([John 7:38](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+7:38)). And until I pour these things out to God, they actually endanger those I love, as well as myself, because they will be turned into lust. Yes, we can be lustful in things that are not sordid and vile. Even love must be transformed by being poured out “to the Lord.”

If you have become bitter and sour, it is because when God gave you a blessing you hoarded it. Yet if you had poured it out to Him, you would have been the sweetest person on earth. If you are always keeping blessings to yourself and never learning to pour out anything “to the Lord,” other people will never have their vision of God expanded through you.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The place for the comforter is not that of one who preaches, but of the comrade who says nothing, but prays to God about the matter. The biggest thing you can do for those who are suffering is not to talk platitudes, not to ask questions, but to get into contact with God, and the “greater works” will be done by prayer (see John 14:12–13). Baffled to Fight Better, 56 R

# CCEL – 9/3/20

**Neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.**—[EXO. 13:7.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.13.html" \l "Exod.13.7)

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.—Abhor that which is evil.—Abstain from all appearance of evil.—Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.—Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.—In him is no sin.

[Prov. 8:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.8.html" \l "Prov.8.13). -[Rom. 12:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.9). -[I Thes. 5:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.5.html" \l "iThess.5.22). -[Heb. 12:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.15).[Psa. 66:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.66.html" \l "Ps.66.18).[I Cor. 5:6-8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.5.html" \l "iCor.5.6). -[I Cor. 11:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.11.html" \l "iCor.11.28).[II Tim. 2:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.2.html" \l "iiTim.2.19). -[Heb. 7:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.7.html" \l "Heb.7.26). -[I John 3:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.5).

“Thou whom my soul loveth.” **[Song of Solomon 1:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.1.html" \l "Song.1.7)**

It is well to be able, without any “if” or “but,” to say of the Lord Jesus—“Thou whom my soul loveth.” Many can only say of Jesus that they hope they love him; they trust they love him; but only a poor and shallow experience will be content to stay here. No one ought to give any rest to his spirit till he feels quite sure about a matter of such vital importance. We ought not to be satisfied with a superficial hope that Jesus loves us, and with a bare trust that we love him. The old saints did not generally speak with “buts,” and “ifs,” and “hopes,” and “trusts,” but they spoke positively and plainly. “I know whom I have believed,” saith Paul. “I know that my Redeemer liveth,” saith Job. Get positive knowledge of your love of Jesus, and be not satisfied till you can speak of your interest in him as a reality, which you have made sure by having received the witness of the Holy Spirit, and his seal upon your soul by faith.

True love to Christ is in every case the Holy Spirit’s work, and must be wrought in the heart by him. He is the efficient cause of it; but the logical reason why we love Jesus lies in himself. Why do we love Jesus? Because he first loved us. Why do we love Jesus? Because he “gave himself for us.” We have life through his death; we have peace through his blood. Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor. Why do we love Jesus? Because of the excellency of his person. We are filled with a sense of his beauty! an admiration of his charms! a consciousness of his infinite perfection! His greatness, goodness, and loveliness, in one resplendent ray, combine to enchant the soul till it is so ravished that it exclaims, “Yea, he is altogether lovely.” Blessed love this—a love which binds the heart with chains more soft than silk, and yet more firm than adamant!

# Word Live – 9/3/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/3/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 9/3/20

# The God Who Speaks

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 3:1–21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+3%3a1%e2%80%9321)

### The Lord Calls Samuel

3 The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

2One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. 3The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, “Here I am.” 5And he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.”

But Eli said, “I did not call; go back and lie down.” So he went and lay down.

6Again the Lord called, “Samuel!” And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.”

“My son,” Eli said, “I did not call; go back and lie down.”

7Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

8A third time the Lord called, “Samuel!” And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.”

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. 9So Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, “Samuel! Samuel!”

Then Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

11And the Lord said to Samuel: “See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. 12At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. 13For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+3%3a1%e2%80%9321" \l "fen-NIV-7290a" \o "See footnote a)] and he failed to restrain them. 14Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, ‘The guilt of Eli’s house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.’”

15Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the Lord. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, 16but Eli called him and said, “Samuel, my son.”

Samuel answered, “Here I am.”

17“What was it he said to you?” Eli asked. “Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you.” 18So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, “He is the Lord; let him do what is good in his eyes.”

19The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel’s words fall to the ground. 20And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord. 21The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 3:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+3%3a1%e2%80%9321#en-NIV-7290) An ancient Hebrew scribal tradition (see also Septuagint); Masoretic Text sons made themselves contemptible

When one-year-old Ayla Esler was able to hear for the very first time, she burst into a big smile, putting her hand to her ear and wiggling with glee. She was born deaf, but a device called a cochlear implant, which stimulates the auditory nerve directly, enabled her to hear.

Then Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”1 Samuel 3:10

First Samuel 3:1–21 describes what it was like for Samuel to hear God speak to him for the first time. This was not because Samuel was deaf, but because “the word of the Lord was rare” (v. 1). The call came while Samuel was “lying down in the house of the Lord,” probably referring to a larger structure that housed the tabernacle (v. 3). God’s voice was so unexpected that Samuel at first mistook it for Eli, the elderly priest with whom he served. It took three attempts and some coaching from Eli before Samuel understood what was happening. When verse 7 says that Samuel did not yet “know” the Lord, it does not mean that he was an unbeliever, only that he did not recognize God’s voice speaking to him.

The message which inaugurated Samuel’s prophetic ministry was a fearful warning of impending judgment on Eli’s household. The boy prophet was initially reluctant to deliver it until Eli urged him with these strong words: “May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you” (v. 17). Samuel learned that those who receive God’s words must be faithful in sharing them, even when they are hard to say. Those to whom God has made known His word must always speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

**Apply the Word**

God still speaks to us today through His written Word. Why not make Samuel’s prayer your own? The next time you open the Bible, begin your study of God’s Word by saying, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

### Pray with Us

The Lord who speaks to His people is the focus of today’s Scripture passage. During your prayer time, repeat Samuel’s words, “Speak, Lord,” and be ready to listen.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/3/20

# Irrational Fears

 **Read:** [**Isaiah 49:14–19**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2049.14%E2%80%9319)

14But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me,  
    the Lord has forgotten me.”

15“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast  
    and have no compassion on the child she has borne?  
Though she may forget,  
    I will not forget you!  
16See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;  
    your walls are ever before me.  
17Your children hasten back,  
    and those who laid you waste depart from you.  
18Lift up your eyes and look around;  
    all your children gather and come to you.  
As surely as I live,” declares the Lord,  
    “you will wear them all as ornaments;  
    you will put them on, like a bride.

19“Though you were ruined and made desolate  
    and your land laid waste,  
now you will be too small for your people,  
    and those who devoured you will be far away.

I will not forget you! [Isaiah 49:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2049.15)

It makes no logical sense, but when my parents died within a three-month period, I feared they would forget me. Of course they were no longer on earth, but that left me with a large uncertainty. I was a young, unmarried adult and wondered how to navigate life without them. Feeling really single and alone, I sought God.

One morning I told Him about my irrational fear and the sadness it brought (even though He knew it already). The Scripture passage that came from the devotional I read that day was [Isaiah 49](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2049): “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast . . . ? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!” (v. 15). God reassured His people through Isaiah that He had not forgotten them and later promised to restore them to Himself through sending His Son Jesus. But the words ministered to my heart too. It’s rare for a mother or a father to forget their child, yet it’s possible. But God? No way. “I have engraved you on the palms of my hands,” He said.

God’s answer to me could have brought more fear. But the peace He gave because of His own remembrance of me was exactly what I needed. It was the start of discovering that God is even closer than a parent or anyone else, and He knows the way to help us with everything—even our irrational fears.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What fears do you face? How might you seek God’s help to address them?

Father, my emotions and fears can be overwhelming and controlling. Thank You for being kind by helping me with them.

#### Insight

The prophet Isaiah’s name means “Salvation is of the Lord,” which summarizes his emphasis in the book on prophecies about Christ. Isaiah also portrays God as the God of comfort. We see this theme particularly throughout the later chapters of Isaiah (chs. 40–66). In today’s passage (49:14–19), we see God’s assurance that He won’t forget or abandon His people (Israel and the church). In 43:1–2, God says He walks with us through our trials and gives us this assurance: “I have summoned you by name; you are mine.” In 44:21–24, God declares, “I will not forget you” and reminds us He “formed [us] in the womb.” In 46:4, He promises, “Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you.” And finally, in 66:13, He assures us, “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you.”

# God Calling – 9/3/20

# Live in the Unseen

**Our Lord, the God of the troubled and the weary, come and save us.**

I am your Savior. Not only from the weight of sin, but from the weight of care, from misery, and depression, from want and woe, from faintness and heartache. Your Savior.

Remember that you are living really in the Unseen - that is the Real Life.

Lift up your heads from earth's troubles, and view the glories of the Kingdom. Higher and higher each day see more of Heaven. Speak to Me. Long for Me. Rest in Me. Abide in Me. No restless bringing Me your burdens, and then feverishly lifting them again and bearing them away.

No! Abide in Me. Not for one moment losing the consciousness of My Strength and Protection.

As a child in its mother's arms, stay sheltered and at rest.

The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.  Proverbs 20:27

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/4/20

# His!



They were Yours, You gave them to Me… —[John 17:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+17%3A6)

A missionary is someone in whom the Holy Spirit has brought about this realization: “You are not your own” ([1 Corinthians 6:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6:19)). To say, “I am not my own,” is to have reached a high point in my spiritual stature. The true nature of that life in actual everyday confusion is evidenced by the deliberate giving up of myself to another Person through a sovereign decision, and that Person is Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit interprets and explains the nature of Jesus to me to make me one with my Lord, not that I might simply become a trophy for His showcase. Our Lord never sent any of His disciples out on the basis of what He had done for them. It was not until after the resurrection, when the disciples had perceived through the power of the Holy Spirit who Jesus really was, that He said, “Go” (Matthew 28:19; also see [Luke 24:49](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24:49) and [Acts 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:8)).

“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” ([Luke 14:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14:26)). He was not saying that this person cannot be good and upright, but that he cannot be someone over whom Jesus can write the word Mine. Any one of the relationships our Lord mentions in this verse can compete with our relationship with Him. I may prefer to belong to my mother, or to my wife, or to myself, but if that is the case, then, Jesus said, “[You] cannot be My disciple.” This does not mean that I will not be saved, but it does mean that I cannot be entirely His.

Our Lord makes His disciple His very own possession, becoming responsible for him. “…you shall be witnesses to Me…” ([Acts 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:8)). The desire that comes into a disciple is not one of doing anything for Jesus, but of being a perfect delight to Him. The missionary’s secret is truly being able to say, “I am His, and He is accomplishing His work and His purposes through me.”

Be entirely His!

**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 – 9/4/20

**Sit still, my daughter.**—[RUTH 3:18.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ruth.3.html" \l "Ruth.3.18)

Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted.—Be still, and know that I am God.—Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?—The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

Mary . . . sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.—Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.—In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.—Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

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

He that believeth shall not make haste.

[Isa. 7:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.7.html" \l "Isa.7.4). -[Psa. 46:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.46.html" \l "Ps.46.10). -[John 11:40](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.11.html" \l "John.11.40). -[Isa. 2:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.2.html" \l "Isa.2.17).[Luke 10:39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.10.html" \l "Luke.10.39). -[Luke 10:42](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.10.html" \l "Luke.10.42). -[Isa. 30:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.30.html" \l "Isa.30.15). -[Psa. 4:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.4.html" \l "Ps.4.4).[Psa. 37:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.7).[Psa. 112:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.112.html" \l "Ps.112.7).[Isa. 28:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.28.html" \l "Isa.28.16).

“I will; be thou clean.” **[Mark 1:41](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.1.html" \l "Mark.1.41)**

Primeval darkness heard the Almighty fiat, “light be,” and straightway light was, and the word of the Lord Jesus is equal in majesty to that ancient word of power. Redemption like Creation has its word of might. Jesus speaks and it is done. Leprosy yielded to no human remedies, but it fled at once at the Lord’s “I will.” The disease exhibited no hopeful signs or tokens of recovery, nature contributed nothing to its own healing, but the unaided word effected the entire work on the spot and forever. The sinner is in a plight more miserable than the leper; let him imitate his example and go to Jesus, “beseeching him and kneeling down to him.” Let him exercise what little faith he has, even though it should go no further than “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;” and there need be no doubt as to the result of the application. Jesus heals all who come, and casts out none. In reading the narrative in which our morning’s text occurs, it is worthy of devout notice that Jesus touched the leper. This unclean person had broken through the regulations of the ceremonial law and pressed into the house, but Jesus so far from chiding him broke through the law himself in order to meet him. He made an interchange with the leper, for while he cleansed him, he contracted by that touch a Levitical defilement. Even so Jesus Christ was made sin for us, although in himself he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. O that poor sinners would go to Jesus, believing in the power of his blessed substitutionary work, and they would soon learn the power of his gracious touch. That hand which multiplied the loaves, which saved sinking Peter, which upholds afflicted saints, which crowns believers, that same hand will touch every seeking sinner, and in a moment make him clean. The love of Jesus is the source of salvation. He loves, he looks, he touches us, we live.

# Word Live – 9/4/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/4/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 9/4/20

# Using God

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 4:1–22**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+4%3a1%e2%80%9322)

4 And Samuel’s word came to all Israel.

### The Philistines Capture the Ark

Now the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines at Aphek. 2The Philistines deployed their forces to meet Israel, and as the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield. 3When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, “Why did the Lord bring defeat on us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the Lord’s covenant from Shiloh, so that he may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies.”

4So the people sent men to Shiloh, and they brought back the ark of the covenant of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim. And Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5When the ark of the Lord’s covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook. 6Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, “What’s all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?”

When they learned that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp, 7the Philistines were afraid. “A god has[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+4%3a1%e2%80%9322#fen-NIV-7305a)] come into the camp,” they said. “Oh no! Nothing like this has happened before. 8We’re doomed! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? They are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. 9Be strong, Philistines! Be men, or you will be subject to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Be men, and fight!”

10So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers. 11The ark of God was captured, and Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

### Death of Eli

12That same day a Benjamite ran from the battle line and went to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dust on his head. 13When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on his chair by the side of the road, watching, because his heart feared for the ark of God. When the man entered the town and told what had happened, the whole town sent up a cry.

14Eli heard the outcry and asked, “What is the meaning of this uproar?”

The man hurried over to Eli, 15who was ninety-eight years old and whose eyes had failed so that he could not see. 16He told Eli, “I have just come from the battle line; I fled from it this very day.”

Eli asked, “What happened, my son?”

17The man who brought the news replied, “Israel fled before the Philistines, and the army has suffered heavy losses. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.”

18When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man, and he was heavy. He had led[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+4%3a1%e2%80%9322#fen-NIV-7316b)] Israel forty years.

19His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and near the time of delivery. When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth, but was overcome by her labor pains. 20As she was dying, the women attending her said, “Don’t despair; you have given birth to a son.” But she did not respond or pay any attention.

21She named the boy Ichabod,[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+4%3a1%e2%80%9322" \l "fen-NIV-7319c" \o "See footnote c)] saying, “The Glory has departed from Israel”—because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. 22She said, “The Glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.”

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 4:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+4%3a1%e2%80%9322#en-NIV-7305) Or “Gods have (see Septuagint)
2. [1 Samuel 4:18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+4%3a1%e2%80%9322#en-NIV-7316) Traditionally judged
3. [1 Samuel 4:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+4%3a1%e2%80%9322#en-NIV-7319) Ichabod means no glory.

Humans can sometimes fool them-selves in believing that they can control God. Israel knew better. In his book The Divine Commodity, author Skye Jethani observes, “Rather than a religion of superstition or divination, attempting to control and manipulate God, the Hebrew Scriptures called them to ‘love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.’”

Come near to God and he will come near to you. James 4:8

Israel’s attempt to defeat the Philistines by carrying the ark of the covenant into battle was not an act of faith. It was a desperate attempt to force God to do what they wanted (v. 4). Their behavior was more pagan than believing. For one thing, it showed that they misunderstood the nature of the ark. The ark symbolized God’s presence but it was not a container for God. By carrying the ark into battle, Israel treated the ark like a talisman or even worse like an idol (v. 7). Their behavior also showed a callous disregard for God’s will. The elders asked the right question in verse 3, but their actions proved that they were not interested in the answer. They only wanted God to do what they had decided in advance that He should do. The results were devastating: “The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers. The ark of God was captured, and Eli’s two songs, Hophni and Phinehas, died” (vv. 10–11).

In His message to Samuel, the Lord had already revealed the answer to the elders’ question. Why had defeat come to Israel at the hands of the Philistines? Because the Lord had determined “to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle” (1 Sam. 3:11).

**Apply the Word**

Jesus warned His disciples not to pray like the pagans who “think they will be heard because of their many words” (Matt. 6:7). You can’t manipulate God. Ask what you want, but trust the Father’s answer (Matt. 6:8).

### Pray with Us

Are you willing to trust the Father’s answer to your prayer? Ask Him to increase your faith, grow your desire for the truth of His Word, and make you a more devoted prayer warrior.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/4/20

# Speak Up!

 **Read:** [**Colossians 4:2–6**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%204.2%E2%80%936)

### Further Instructions

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Pray . . . that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ. [Colossians 4:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%204.3)

Brittany exclaimed to her coworker at the restaurant, “There’s that man! There’s that man!” She was referring to Melvin, who first encountered her under different circumstances. While he was tending to the lawn of his church, the Spirit prompted him to start a conversation with a woman who appeared to be a prostitute. Her reply when he invited her to church was: “Do you know what I do? They wouldn’t want me in there.” As Melvin told her about the love of Jesus and assured her of His power to change her life, tears streamed down her face. Now, some weeks later, Brittany was working in a new environment, living proof of the power of Jesus to change lives.

In the context of encouraging believers to be devoted to prayer, the apostle Paul made a twofold request: “Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should” ([Colossians 4:3–4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%204.3%E2%80%934)).

Have you prayed for opportunities to speak boldly and clearly for Jesus? What a fitting prayer! Such prayers can lead believers, like Melvin, to speak about Him in unexpected places and to unexpected people. Speaking up for Jesus can seem uncomfortable, but the rewards—changed lives—have a way of compensating for our discomforts.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

When did you share the love of Jesus with someone even though it was unexpected and uncomfortable? What role does prayer play in our preparation to boldly speak up for Him?

Jesus, help me to see opportunities and step through the doors You open to speak boldly and clearly about You!

Read Pray First! The Power of Prayer in Sharing the Gospel at [DiscoverySeries.org/Q0219](https://DiscoverySeries.org/q0219).

#### Insight

The word translated “devote” in [Colossians 4:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%204.2) is from the Greek word proskartereō, which has the root meaning “to be strong.” Devote yourselves to prayer means “to be strong toward, to persist in, to persevere, to endure.” The object of the verb here is prayer. [Colossians 4:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%204.2) isn’t the only place in the New Testament where these two words appear together. In the book of Acts, before and after Pentecost, believers in Jesus are described as being constantly in prayer (1:14) and devoted to prayer (2:42). In 6:4, believers in Christ are urged to give attention to prayer, and in [Romans 12:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.12) believers in Jesus are exhorted to be faithful in prayer. Believers in Jesus in Colossae had a good prayer example in their minister Epaphras: “Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus . . . is always wrestling in prayer for you” ([Colossians 4:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%204.12); see also 1:7).

To learn more about the practice of prayer, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/SF120.](https://ChristianUniversity.org/SF120.)

# God Calling – 9/4/20

# Drop Those Burdens

**Our God is our supply.**

Look to Me for all ... Rely on Me for all.  Drop those burdens, and then, singing and free, you can go on your way rejoicing. Encumbered with them you will fall.

Drop them at My Feet, knowing surely that I will lift them and deal with each one as is truly best.

When he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he ... blessed, and brake the loaves ... and they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.  Mark 6:41-44

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/5/20

# Watching With Jesus

Stay here and watch with Me. — **Read:** [**Matthew 26:38**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+26%3A38)

“Watch with Me.” Jesus was saying, in effect, “Watch with no private point of view at all, but watch solely and entirely with Me.” In the early stages of our Christian life, we do not watch with Jesus, we watch for Him. We do not watch with Him through the revealed truth of the Bible even in the circumstances of our own lives. Our Lord is trying to introduce us to identification with Himself through a particular “Gethsemane” experience of our own. But we refuse to go, saying, “No, Lord, I can’t see the meaning of this, and besides, it’s very painful.” And how can we possibly watch with Someone who is so incomprehensible? How are we going to understand Jesus sufficiently to watch with Him in His Gethsemane, when we don’t even know why He is suffering? We don’t know how to watch with Him— we are only used to the idea of Jesus watching with us.

The disciples loved Jesus Christ to the limit of their natural capacity, but they did not fully understand His purpose. In the Garden of Gethsemane they slept as a result of their own sorrow, and at the end of three years of the closest and most intimate relationship of their lives they “all…forsook Him and fled” ([Matthew 26:56](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26:56)).

“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit…” ([Acts 2:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2:4)). “They” refers to the same people, but something wonderful has happened between these two events— our Lord’s death, resurrection, and ascension— and the disciples have now been invaded and “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Our Lord had said, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you…” ([Acts 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:8)). This meant that they learned to watch with Him the rest of their lives.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

We never enter into the Kingdom of God by having our head questions answered, but only by commitment. [The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption](http://www.dhp.org/Products/Quotable-Oswald-Chambers--The__BW382.aspx?affid=RBCHAMB)

# CCEL – 9/5/20

**As the body is one, and hath many members, . . . so also is Christ.**—[I COR. 12:12.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.12.html" \l "iCor.12.12)

He is the head of the body, the church.—The head over things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.—We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

A body hast thou prepared me.—Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.—He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.—Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.

Grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth . . . maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

[Col. 1:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.18). -[Eph. 1:22,23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.22). -[Eph. 5:30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.30).[Heb. 10:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.5). -[Psa. 139:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.16).[John 17:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.6). -[Eph. 1:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.4). -[Rom. 8:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.29).[Eph. 4:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.15).

“Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.” **[Psalm 120:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.120.html" \l "Ps.120.5)**

As a Christian you have to live in the midst of an ungodly world, and it is of little use for you to cry “Woe is me.” Jesus did not pray that you should be taken out of the world, and what he did not pray for, you need not desire. Better far in the Lord’s strength to meet the difficulty, and glorify him in it. The enemy is ever on the watch to detect inconsistency in your conduct; be therefore very holy. Remember that the eyes of all are upon you, and that more is expected from you than from other men. Strive to give no occasion for blame. Let your goodness be the only fault they can discover in you. Like Daniel, compel them to say of you, “We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.” Seek to be useful as well as consistent. Perhaps you think, “If I were in a more favourable position I might serve the Lord’s cause, but I cannot do any good where I am”; but the worse the people are among whom you live, the more need have they of your exertions; if they be crooked, the more necessity that you should set them straight; and if they be perverse, the more need have you to turn their proud hearts to the truth. Where should the physician be but where there are many sick? Where is honour to be won by the soldier but in the hottest fire of the battle? And when weary of the strife and sin that meets you on every hand, consider that all the saints have endured the same trial. They were not carried on beds of down to heaven, and you must not expect to travel more easily than they. They had to hazard their lives unto the death in the high places of the field, and you will not be crowned till you also have endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Therefore, “stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

# Word Live – 9/5/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/5/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 9/5/20

# God Among the Idols

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 5:1–12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+5%3a1%e2%80%9312)

### The Ark in Ashdod and Ekron

5 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2Then they carried the ark into Dagon’s temple and set it beside Dagon. 3When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. 4But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. 5That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter Dagon’s temple at Ashdod step on the threshold.

6The Lord’s hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation on them and afflicted them with tumors.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+5%3a1%e2%80%9312" \l "fen-NIV-7326a" \o "See footnote a)] 7When the people of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, “The ark of the god of Israel must not stay here with us, because his hand is heavy on us and on Dagon our god.” 8So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and asked them, “What shall we do with the ark of the god of Israel?”

They answered, “Have the ark of the god of Israel moved to Gath.” So they moved the ark of the God of Israel.

9But after they had moved it, the Lord’s hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumors.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+5%3a1%e2%80%9312" \l "fen-NIV-7329b" \o "See footnote b)] 10So they sent the ark of God to Ekron.

As the ark of God was entering Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, “They have brought the ark of the god of Israel around to us to kill us and our people.” 11So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and said, “Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+5%3a1%e2%80%9312#fen-NIV-7331c)] will kill us and our people.” For death had filled the city with panic; God’s hand was very heavy on it. 12Those who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 5:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+5%3a1%e2%80%9312#en-NIV-7326) Hebrew; Septuagint and Vulgate tumors. And rats appeared in their land, and there was death and destruction throughout the city
2. [1 Samuel 5:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+5%3a1%e2%80%9312#en-NIV-7329) Or with tumors in the groin (see Septuagint)
3. [1 Samuel 5:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+5%3a1%e2%80%9312#en-NIV-7331) Or he

“My dad is stronger than your dad,” said a little boy to his friend. This childish competition mirrors the way people in the ancient world thought about their gods. The Philistines placed the captured ark inside the temple of Dagon as a spoil of war, the way a conquering ruler might keep a defeated king as a slave. But the next day the people of Ashdod awoke to find their idol fallen on his face in a posture of worship before the ark.

For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. Psalm 96:4

The people of Ashdod returned the idol to its place but the same thing happened the next day. Only this time Dagon’s head and hands were broken off, a fate often suffered by prisoners taken in battle in the ancient Near East (v. 4). The Philistines would have viewed this as especially humiliating for their warrior god. Also, the Lord afflicted the people in that region with a plague, similar to what the Egyptians faced during the Exodus.

After consulting with the people of Ashdod, the Philistine rulers decided to relocate the ark to Gath, another of Philistia’s great cities. The move had devastating consequences. When the people of Gath suffered the same fate as the residents of Ashdod, the Philistine rulers sent the ark to Ekron but with no better results. By the time the ark entered the city, God’s hand was already “very heavy on it,” and the residents were in a state of panic: “let it go back to its own place, or it will kill us and our people” (v. 11). What should have been a victory lap for the Philistine army, turned into a counterattack by the God of Israel that revealed the impotence of their idols.

**Apply the Word**

While you may not worship at a carved statue, we slip into idolatry when we offer the devotion which belongs to God alone to “created things rather than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25). Reserve that devotion for God alone.

### Pray with Us

Today’s Scripture reading is a somber reminder of the dangers of following false gods. Pray that nothing will distract you from your devotion to the one true God, that nothing will take the place of your Creator.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/5/20

# God Understands

 **Read:** [**Psalm 147:1–11**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20147.1%E2%80%9311)

1Praise the Lord.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+147%3A1%E2%80%9311&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-16353a" \o "See footnote a)]

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

2The Lord builds up Jerusalem;  
    he gathers the exiles of Israel.  
3He heals the brokenhearted  
    and binds up their wounds.  
4He determines the number of the stars  
    and calls them each by name.  
5Great is our Lord and mighty in power;  
    his understanding has no limit.  
6The Lord sustains the humble  
    but casts the wicked to the ground.

7Sing to the Lord with grateful praise;  
    make music to our God on the harp.

8He covers the sky with clouds;  
    he supplies the earth with rain  
    and makes grass grow on the hills.  
9He provides food for the cattle  
    and for the young ravens when they call.

10His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse,  
    nor his delight in the legs of the warrior;  
11the Lord delights in those who fear him,  
    who put their hope in his unfailing love.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Psalm 147:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+147%3A1%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#en-NIV-16353) Hebrew Hallelu Yah; also in verse 20

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

After a recent move, Mabel’s seven-year-old son, Ryan, fussed as he prepared to attend a summer camp at his new school. Mabel encouraged him, assuring him that she understood change was hard. But one morning, Ryan’s out-of-character grumpiness seemed excessive. With compassion, Mabel asked, “What’s bothering you, Son?”

Staring out of the window, Ryan shrugged. “I don’t know, Mom. I just have too many feelings.”

Mabel’s heart ached as she comforted him. Desperate for a way to help him, she shared that the move was hard for her too. She assured Ryan that God would stay close, that He knows everything, even when they couldn’t understand or voice their frustrations. “Let’s set up a visit with your friends before school starts,” she said. They made plans, grateful that God understands even when His children have “too many feelings.”

The writer of [Psalm 147](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20147) experienced overwhelming emotions throughout his faith journey and recognized the benefits of praising the all-knowing Maker and Sustainer of all, the Healer of physical and emotional wounds (vv. 1–6). He praised God for the ways He provides and “delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love” (v. 11).

When we’re struggling to make sense of our emotions, we don’t have to feel alone or discouraged. We can rest in the unlimited understanding of our unchanging, loving God.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How does knowing God understands your most intimate needs help you trust Him while you process your emotions? What emotions seem most difficult for you to place into God’s mighty and merciful hands?

Sovereign God, thank You for assuring me that You understand and care about my emotional and physical needs.

#### Insight

The book of Psalms is the hymnal of the Bible, a collection of prayers and praises that express the hearts of broken people experiencing life in a broken world. In the final section of the Psalms ([Psalms 145–150](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20145%E2%80%93150)), however, such concerns are secondary. Here we experience pure praise to God. The Bible Knowledge Commentary has this to say about [Psalm 145](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20145), which begins this section: “This psalm of David is titled ‘A psalm of praise’—the only one in the Psalter with that title. Here begins the grand doxology of the entire collection, for praise plays a greater part of [Psalms 145–150](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20145%E2%80%93150) than in most of the others. The word praise occurs forty-six times in these six psalms.” [Psalm 147](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20147) lies at the core of this sweeping crescendo of praise to God, using the word praise or praises six times, and starting and concluding with a dramatic hallelujah—“Praise the Lord”!

# God Calling – 9/5/20

# Progress

Progress is the Law of Heaven. Higher, ever higher, rise to Life and Beauty, Knowledge and Power. Higher and higher.

Tomorrow be stronger, braver, more loving than you have been today.

The Law of Progress gives a meaning, a purpose to life.

And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.  Romans 12:2

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/6/20

# The Far-Reaching Rivers of Life

He who believes in Me…out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. —[John 7:38](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+7%3A38)

A river reaches places which its source never knows. And Jesus said that, if we have received His fullness, “rivers of living water” will flow out of us, reaching in blessing even “to the end of the earth” ([Acts 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:8)) regardless of how small the visible effects of our lives may appear to be. We have nothing to do with the outflow— “This is the work of God, that you believe…” ([John 6:29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+6:29)). God rarely allows a person to see how great a blessing he is to others.

A river is victoriously persistent, overcoming all barriers. For a while it goes steadily on its course, but then comes to an obstacle. And for a while it is blocked, yet it soon makes a pathway around the obstacle. Or a river will drop out of sight for miles, only later to emerge again even broader and greater than ever. Do you see God using the lives of others, but an obstacle has come into your life and you do not seem to be of any use to God? Then keep paying attention to the Source, and God will either take you around the obstacle or remove it. The river of the Spirit of God overcomes all obstacles. Never focus your eyes on the obstacle or the difficulty. The obstacle will be a matter of total indifference to the river that will flow steadily through you if you will simply remember to stay focused on the Source. Never allow anything to come between you and Jesus Christ— not emotion nor experience— nothing must keep you from the one great sovereign Source.

Think of the healing and far-reaching rivers developing and nourishing themselves in our souls! God has been opening up wonderful truths to our minds, and every point He has opened up is another indication of the wider power of the river that He will flow through us. If you believe in Jesus, you will find that God has developed and nourished in you mighty, rushing rivers of blessing for others.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else. “Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord”;…  The Highest Good—The Pilgrim’s Song Book, 537 L

# CCEL – 9/6/20

**Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.**—[LAM. 3:41.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.41)

Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!—Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.—I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear thy loving kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.—Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.

[Psa. 113:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.113.html" \l "Ps.113.5). -[Psa. 25:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.25.html" \l "Ps.25.1). -[Psa. 143:6-8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.143.html" \l "Ps.143.6).[Psa. 63:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.63.html" \l "Ps.63.3). -[Psa. 86:4.5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.86.html" \l "Ps.86.4).[John 14:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.13).

“In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” **[Philippians 2:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.15)**

We use lights to make manifest. A Christian man should so shine in his life, that a person could not live with him a week without knowing the gospel. His conversation should be such that all who are about him should clearly perceive whose he is, and whom he serves; and should see the image of Jesus reflected in his daily actions. Lights are intended for guidance. We are to help those around us who are in the dark. We are to hold forth to them the Word of life. We are to point sinners to the Saviour, and the weary to a divine resting-place. Men sometimes read their Bibles, and fail to understand them; we should be ready, like Philip, to instruct the inquirer in the meaning of God’s Word, the way of salvation, and the life of godliness. Lights are also used for warning. On our rocks and shoals a light-house is sure to be erected. Christian men should know that there are many false lights shown everywhere in the world, and therefore the right light is needed. The wreckers of Satan are always abroad, tempting the ungodly to sin under the name of pleasure; they hoist the wrong light, be it ours to put up the true light upon every dangerous rock, to point out every sin, and tell what it leads to, that so we may be clear of the blood of all men, shining as lights in the world. Lights also have a very cheering influence, and so have Christians. A Christian ought to be a comforter, with kind words on his lips, and sympathy in his heart; he should carry sunshine wherever he goes, and diffuse happiness around him.

Gracious Spirit dwell with me;

I myself would gracious be,

And with words that help and heal

Would thy life in mine reveal,

And with actions bold and meek

Would for Christ my Saviour speak.

# Word Live – 9/6/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/6/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 9/6/20

# Holy is the Lord

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 6:1–21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+6%3a1%e2%80%9321)

### The Ark Returned to Israel

6 When the ark of the Lord had been in Philistine territory seven months, 2the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us how we should send it back to its place.”

3They answered, “If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it back to him without a gift; by all means send a guilt offering to him. Then you will be healed, and you will know why his hand has not been lifted from you.”

4The Philistines asked, “What guilt offering should we send to him?”

They replied, “Five gold tumors and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine rulers, because the same plague has struck both you and your rulers. 5Make models of the tumors and of the rats that are destroying the country, and give glory to Israel’s god. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you and your gods and your land. 6Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When Israel’s god dealt harshly with them, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way?

7“Now then, get a new cart ready, with two cows that have calved and have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen them up. 8Take the ark of the Lord and put it on the cart, and in a chest beside it put the gold objects you are sending back to him as a guilt offering. Send it on its way, 9but keep watching it. If it goes up to its own territory, toward Beth Shemesh, then the Lord has brought this great disaster on us. But if it does not, then we will know that it was not his hand that struck us but that it happened to us by chance.”

10So they did this. They took two such cows and hitched them to the cart and penned up their calves. 11They placed the ark of the Lord on the cart and along with it the chest containing the gold rats and the models of the tumors. 12Then the cows went straight up toward Beth Shemesh, keeping on the road and lowing all the way; they did not turn to the right or to the left. The rulers of the Philistines followed them as far as the border of Beth Shemesh.

13Now the people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight. 14The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and there it stopped beside a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. 15The Levites took down the ark of the Lord, together with the chest containing the gold objects, and placed them on the large rock. On that day the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the Lord. 16The five rulers of the Philistines saw all this and then returned that same day to Ekron.

17These are the gold tumors the Philistines sent as a guilt offering to the Lord—one each for Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. 18And the number of the gold rats was according to the number of Philistine towns belonging to the five rulers—the fortified towns with their country villages. The large rock on which the Levites set the ark of the Lord is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

19But God struck down some of the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+6%3a1%e2%80%9321#fen-NIV-7351a)] of them to death because they looked into the ark of the Lord. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the Lord had dealt them. 20And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, “Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?”

21Then they sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim, saying, “The Philistines have returned the ark of the Lord. Come down and take it up to your town.”

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 6:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+6%3a1%e2%80%9321#en-NIV-7351) A few Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint 50,070

Every child has experienced that uncomfortable moment when they realize they have crossed the line with a parent. The first clue may be their dad’s stern tone of voice or that pinched look their mom gets. The result is usually a feeling of fear that combines the child’s awareness of transgression with a recognition that they deserve punishment.

Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God? 1 Samuel 6:20

After suffering judgments by the hand of God for seven months, the Philistine rulers debated how to rid themselves of the ark. Afraid of making matters worse, they sought the advice of their priests and soothsayers. The religious leaders advised the Philistines to send the ark out with a guilt offering consisting of gold images that represented the plagues the Lord had sent (vv. 4–5). They also chided the Philistines for their reluctance, pointing to Pharaoh’s experience during the Exodus as a warning (v. 6).

The conditions described in verses 7–9 served two purposes. They attempted to solve their problem by combining magic with paganized devotion. And it was also a test to prove the source of the plagues. The new cart and cows that were previously untouched by the yoke speak of a kind of recognition of purity. However, the golden images showed animals that were considered unclean by the Mosaic law (Lev. 11:29).

When the people of Beth Shemesh, a town in Judah near the Philistine border, saw the ark returning of its own accord, they rejoiced. But their joy was short-lived when several were struck down after peeking inside the ark (vv. 19–20).

**Apply the Word**

Those who fear the Lord value what God values. They let Him draw the boundaries that shape their behavior. As 2 Corinthians 7:1 urges, we should “purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”

### Pray with Us

Today, we thank God for His holiness. Praise Him that He changes us into the image of Christ, making us holy as He is holy. May we submit to His will, allowing Him to shape our behavior and purify us.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/6/20

# Failed Again

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

### Faith or Works of the Law

3 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. 2I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? 3Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+3%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29106a)] 4Have you experienced[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+3%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29107b)] so much in vain—if it really was in vain? 5So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? 6So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+3%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29109c)]

#### Footnotes:

1. [Galatians 3:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+3%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#en-NIV-29106) In contexts like this, the Greek word for flesh (sarx) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.
2. [Galatians 3:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+3%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#en-NIV-29107) Or suffered
3. [Galatians 3:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+3%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#en-NIV-29109) Gen. 15:6

After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? [Galatians 3:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%203.3)

Back in my sermon-making days I approached some Sunday mornings feeling like a lowly worm. During the week before, I had not been the best husband, father, or friend. I felt that before God could use me again I had to establish a track record of right living. So I vowed to get through the sermon as best I could and try to live better the coming week.

That was not the right approach. In [Galatians 3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%203) it’s said that God continually supplies us with His Spirit and works powerfully through us as a free gift—not because we’ve done anything or deserve it.

Abraham’s life demonstrates this. At times he failed as a husband. For example, he twice put Sarah’s life in jeopardy by lying to save his own skin ([Genesis 12:10–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2012.10%E2%80%9320); [20:1–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Genesis%2020.1%E2%80%9318)). Yet his faith “was credited to him as righteousness” ([Galatians 3:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%203.6)). Abraham put himself in God’s hands despite his failures, and God used him to bring salvation to the world through his lineage.

There’s no justification for behaving badly. Jesus has asked us to follow Him in obedience, and He supplies the means to do so. A hard, unrepentant heart will always hinder His purposes for us, but His ability to use us doesn’t depend on a lengthy pattern of good behavior. It’s based solely on God’s willingness to work through us as we are: saved and growing by grace. You don’t have to work for His grace—it’s free.

By:  [David H. Roper](https://odb.org/author/davidhroper/)

#### Reflect & Pray

Think of those situations in which you’ve felt disqualified. How does God look at those occasions? How do you?

I’m thankful, God, that You bless me and use me in spite of my failures. Your grace is amazing!

#### Insight

Writing to the believers in Galatia, a Roman province located in the western half of what is now modern-day Turkey, Paul confronted the teachings of a group known as the Judaizers. They were Jews who embraced Jesus as the Messiah but also required adherence to certain Jewish religious customs in order to be saved. This meant they pushed gentiles (non-Jewish people) to become Jews in order to follow Jesus. Chief among the requirements was circumcision.

At the Council at Jerusalem, the church leaders discussed the issue of which Jewish practices to require of gentile believers ([Acts 15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2015)). By saying that “unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved” (v. 1), the Judaizers were teaching a gospel of works instead of grace ([Galatians 2–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%202%E2%80%933); [6:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Galatians%206.15)).

# God Calling – 9/6/20

# Your Loved Ones

Your loved ones are very safe in My Keeping. Learning and loving and working, theirs is a life of happiness and progress.  They live to serve, and serve they truly do. They serve Me and those they love. Ceaselessly they serve.

But their ministrations, so many, so diverse, you see no more than those in my time on earth in human form could have seen the angels who ministered unto Me in the wilderness.

How often mortals rush to earthly friends who can serve them in so limited a way, when the friends who are freed from the limitations of humanity can serve them so much better, understand them better, protect better, plan better, and even plead better their cause with Me.

You do well to remember your friends in the Unseen. Companying with them the more you live in this Unseen World the gentler will be your passing when it comes. Earth's troubles and difficulties will seem, even now, less overwhelming as you look, not at the things that are seen but at the real, the Eternal Life.

"And this is Life Eternal that we may know Thee, the Only True God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent."

Learning to know Me draws that Kingdom very near, and in Me, and through Knowledge of Me, the dear ones there become very near and dear.

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Acts 16:31

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/7/20

# Fountains of Blessings

The water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. —[John 4:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+4%3A14)

The picture our Lord described here is not that of a simple stream of water, but an overflowing fountain. Continue to “be filled” ([Ephesians 5:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+5:18)) and the sweetness of your vital relationship to Jesus will flow as generously out of you as it has been given to you. If you find that His life is not springing up as it should, you are to blame— something is obstructing the flow. Was Jesus saying to stay focused on the Source so that you may be blessed personally? No, you are to focus on the Source so that out of you “will flow rivers of living water”— irrepressible life ([John 7:38](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+7:38)).

We are to be fountains through which Jesus can flow as “rivers of living water” in blessing to everyone. Yet some of us are like the Dead Sea, always receiving but never giving, because our relationship is not right with the Lord Jesus. As surely as we receive blessings from Him, He will pour out blessings through us. But whenever the blessings are not being poured out in the same measure they are received, there is a defect in our relationship with Him. Is there anything between you and Jesus Christ? Is there anything hindering your faith in Him? If not, then Jesus says that out of you “will flow rivers of living water.” It is not a blessing that you pass on, or an experience that you share with others, but a river that continually flows through you. Stay at the Source, closely guarding your faith in Jesus Christ and your relationship to Him, and there will be a steady flow into the lives of others with no dryness or deadness whatsoever.

Is it excessive to say that rivers will flow out of one individual believer? Do you look at yourself and say, “But I don’t see the rivers”? Through the history of God’s work you will usually find that He has started with the obscure, the unknown, the ignored, but those who have been steadfastly true to Jesus Christ.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 9/7/20

**Rejoicing in hope.**—[ROM. 12:12.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.12)

The hope which is laid up for you in heaven.—If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.—We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.—Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me cannot be my disciple.—No man should be moved by these afflictions, for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.—The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.—Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.—By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

[Col. 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.5). -[I Cor. 15:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.19). -[Acts. 14:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.14.html" \l "Acts.14.22). -[Luke 14:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.14.html" \l "Luke.14.27). -[I Thes. 3:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.3.html" \l "iThess.3.3).[Phi. 4:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.4). -[Rom. 15:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.15.html" \l "Rom.15.13). -[I Pet. 1:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.3). -[I Pet. 1:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.8). -[Rom. 5:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.2).

“And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.” **[Mark 2:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.2.html" \l "Mark.2.4)**

Faith is full of inventions. The house was full, a crowd blocked up the door, but faith found a way of getting at the Lord and placing the palsied man before him. If we cannot get sinners where Jesus is by ordinary methods we must use extraordinary ones. It seems, according to [Luke 5:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.5.html" \l "Luke.5.19), that a tiling had to be removed, which would make dust and cause a measure of danger to those below, but where the case is very urgent we must not mind running some risks and shocking some proprieties. Jesus was there to heal, and therefore fall what might, faith ventured all so that her poor paralysed charge might have his sins forgiven. O that we had more daring faith among us! Cannot we, dear reader, seek it this morning for ourselves and for our fellow-workers, and will we not try today to perform some gallant act for the love of souls and the glory of the Lord.

The world is constantly inventing; genius serves all the purposes of human desire: cannot faith invent too, and reach by some new means the outcasts who lie perishing around us? It was the presence of Jesus which excited victorious courage in the four bearers of the palsied man: is not the Lord among us now? Have we seen his face for ourselves this morning? Have we felt his healing power in our own souls? If so, then through door, through window, or through roof, let us, breaking through all impediments, labour to bring poor souls to Jesus. All means are good and decorous when faith and love are truly set on winning souls. If hunger for bread can break through stone walls, surely hunger for souls is not to be hindered in its efforts. O Lord, make us quick to suggest methods of reaching thy poor sin-sick ones, and bold to carry them out at all hazards.

# Word Live – 9/7/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/7/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 9/7/20

# Return to the Lord

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 7:1–17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+7%3a1%e2%80%9317)

7 1So the men of Kiriath Jearim came and took up the ark of the Lord. They brought it to Abinadab’s house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the Lord. 2The ark remained at Kiriath Jearim a long time—twenty years in all.

### Samuel Subdues the Philistines at Mizpah

Then all the people of Israel turned back to the Lord. 3So Samuel said to all the Israelites, “If you are returning to the Lord with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” 4So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the Lord only.

5Then Samuel said, “Assemble all Israel at Mizpah, and I will intercede with the Lord for you.” 6When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the Lord. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, “We have sinned against the Lord.” Now Samuel was serving as leader[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+7%3a1%e2%80%9317#fen-NIV-7359a)] of Israel at Mizpah.

7When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. When the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. 8They said to Samuel, “Do not stop crying out to the Lord our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines.” 9Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. He cried out to the Lord on Israel’s behalf, and the Lord answered him.

10While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the Lord thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. 11The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Kar.

12Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+7%3a1%e2%80%9317" \l "fen-NIV-7365b" \o "See footnote b)] saying, “Thus far the Lord has helped us.”

13So the Philistines were subdued and they stopped invading Israel’s territory. Throughout Samuel’s lifetime, the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines. 14The towns from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured from Israel were restored to Israel, and Israel delivered the neighboring territory from the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15Samuel continued as Israel’s leader all the days of his life. 16From year to year he went on a circuit from Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah, judging Israel in all those places. 17But he always went back to Ramah, where his home was, and there he also held court for Israel. And he built an altar there to the Lord.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 7:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+7%3a1%e2%80%9317#en-NIV-7359) Traditionally judge; also in verse 15
2. [1 Samuel 7:12](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+7%3a1%e2%80%9317#en-NIV-7365) Ebenezer means stone of help.

The hymn “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” written by Robert Robinson, celebrates God’s protection and grace. But did you ever wonder about this puzzling phrase: “Here I raise my Ebenezer. . . .”? The line refers to the name of a monument made of stones that was set up by Samuel after the Lord defeated Philistines. Samuel wanted to remember what the Lord had done on their behalf. The name, Ebenezer, meant “stone of help.”

Thus far the LORD has helped us. Samuel 7:12

The events in today’s text took place twenty years after the ark returned to Israel. The decades that followed the ark’s relocation to Kiriath Jearim were marked by spiritual revival. Israel “turned back to the Lord” by destroying images of the Canaanite fertility goddess Ashtoreth and her male counterpart Baal (vv. 2–4). God’s people sealed this commitment with a solemn assembly where they confessed their sin and poured water out before the Lord. This was a symbolic gesture of devotion. They may also have denied themselves water for a time to show their sincerity.

During this ceremony, the Philistines attacked, viewing the gathering as either an opportunity or a threat. The terrified Israelites asked Samuel to intercede with God, and he did so by sacrificing a lamb as a “whole burnt offering” (v. 9). The Philistines chose this moment to attack, perhaps thinking that Israelites would be most vulnerable while worshiping. Notice that God’s answer to Samuel’s prayer was immediate. As the enemy attacked, God responded with “loud thunder” that sent the Philistines into a panicked retreat (v. 10). Samuel commemorated the victory by setting up a stone to remind them that God was the source of their victory.

**Apply the Word**

Do you have a reminder of what God has done for you? It does not have to be elaborate. Think of a way you can pay tribute to God’s work in your life. It can be as simple as a verse from Scripture posted where you can see it.

### Pray with Us

Prayerfully consider the lessons in today’s dramatic account of the Israelites’ victory over the Philistines. God is always in control and His will always prevails! Thank Him for His victories in your life.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/7/20

# Now, then Next

**Read:** [**Proverbs 2:1–11**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%202.1%E2%80%9311)

### Moral Benefits of Wisdom

2 My son, if you accept my words  
    and store up my commands within you,  
2turning your ear to wisdom  
    and applying your heart to understanding—  
3indeed, if you call out for insight  
    and cry aloud for understanding,  
4and if you look for it as for silver  
    and search for it as for hidden treasure,  
5then you will understand the fear of the Lord  
    and find the knowledge of God.  
6For the Lord gives wisdom;  
    from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.  
7He holds success in store for the upright,  
    he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,  
8for he guards the course of the just  
    and protects the way of his faithful ones.

9Then you will understand what is right and just  
    and fair—every good path.  
10For wisdom will enter your heart,  
    and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.  
11Discretion will protect you,  
    and understanding will guard you.

He holds success in store for the upright. [Proverbs 2:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%202.7)

I recently attended a high school graduation during which the speaker provided a needed challenge for the young adults awaiting their diplomas. He mentioned that this was a time in their lives when everyone was asking them, “What’s next?” What career would they be pursuing next? Where would they be going to school or working next? Then he said that the more important question was what were they doing now?

In the context of their faith journey, what daily decisions would they be making that would guide them to live for Jesus and not for themselves?

His words reminded me of the book of Proverbs, which makes many pointed statements about how to live—now. For instance: practicing honesty, now (11:1); choosing the right friends, now (12:26); living with integrity, now (13:6); having good judgment, now (13:15); speaking wisely, now (14:3).

Living for God now, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, makes the decisions about what is next much easier. “The Lord gives wisdom; . . . He holds success in store for the upright, . . . he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones” (2:6–8). May God supply what we need for us to live by His guidelines now, and may He guide us into what’s next for His honor.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What changes in direction do you need to make now to honor God? How can you seek God’s guidance and empowerment in doing so?

Thank You, heavenly Father, for Your guidance in my life today. Protect me and give me wisdom to live in a way that both pleases You and reveals who You are.

To learn more about the spiritual life, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/SF212.](https://ChristianUniversity.org/SF212.)

#### Insight

The book of Proverbs contains general wisdom applicable to people everywhere. No one has a corner on sayings like “walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble” ([Proverbs 13:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2013.20) nlt) and “Ill-gotten treasures have no lasting value” (10:2). But what isn’t common to people everywhere is the attribution of everyday wisdom to the God of gods. The name of the Lord (Yahweh) is used eighty-seven times in Proverbs to give source, story, spirit, and context to the wisdom of these proverbs. The Lord of Israel’s exodus, wilderness, exile, and Messianic hope wants us to know that He’s the beginning and end of all true wisdom and knowledge (2:6). It’s the God of Solomon’s insight who can be trusted to turn even common sense into timely perspective and actions that help us while giving honor to Him (3:5–7).

# God Calling – 9/7/20

# Everlasting Arms

**The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.   -   Deuteronomy 33:27**

Arms, sheltering Arms, express the loving tenderness of your Father (My Father) in Heaven.  Man, in his trouble and difficulty, needs nothing so much as a refuge.  A place to hide in. A place where none and nothing can touch him.

Say to yourself, "He is our Refuge." Say it until the truth sinks into your very soul. Say it until you know it - are so sure of it, that nothing can make you afraid.

Feel this not only until fear goes, but until Joy ripples through in its place. Refuge. Everlasting Arms so untiring, so safe - so sure.

I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. Psalm 71:7