# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/8/20

# Do It Yourself (1)



…casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God… —[2 Corinthians 10:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+10%3A5)

**Determinedly Demolish Some Things.**

Deliverance from sin is not the same as deliverance from human nature. There are things in human nature, such as prejudices, that the saint can only destroy through sheer neglect. But there are other things that have to be destroyed through violence, that is, through God’s divine strength imparted by His Spirit. There are some things over which we are not to fight, but only to “stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord…” (see [Exodus 14:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+14:13)). But every theory or thought that raises itself up as a fortified barrier “against the knowledge of God” is to be determinedly demolished by drawing on God’s power, not through human effort or by compromise (see [2 Corinthians 10:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+10:4)).

It is only when God has transformed our nature and we have entered into the experience of sanctification that the fight begins. The warfare is not against sin; we can never fight against sin— Jesus Christ conquered that in His redemption of us. The conflict is waged over turning our natural life into a spiritual life. This is never done easily, nor does God intend that it be so. It is accomplished only through a series of moral choices. God does not make us holy in the sense that He makes our character holy. He makes us holy in the sense that He has made us innocent before Him. And then we have to turn that innocence into holy character through the moral choices we make. These choices are continually opposed and hostile to the things of our natural life which have become so deeply entrenched— the very things that raise themselves up as fortified barriers “against the knowledge of God.” We can either turn back, making ourselves of no value to the kingdom of God, or we can determinedly demolish these things, allowing Jesus to bring another son to glory (see [Hebrews 2:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2:10)).

**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

# CCEL – 9/8/20

**Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.**—[DAN. 5:27.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Dan.5.html" \l "Dan.5.27)

The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him, actions are weighed.—That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.—The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.—Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.—Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing.

[I Sam. 2:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.2.html" \l "iSam.2.3). -[Luke 16:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.16.html" \l "Luke.16.15). -[I Sam. 16:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.16.html" \l "iSam.16.7). -[Gal. 6:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.7).[Matt. 16:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.16.html" \l "Matt.16.26). -[Phi. 3:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.7).[Psa. 51:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.51.html" \l "Ps.51.6). -[Psa. 17:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.17.html" \l "Ps.17.3).

“From me is thy fruit found.” [Hosea 14:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.14.html" \l "Hos.14.8)

Our fruit is found from our God as to union. The fruit of the branch is directly traceable to the root. Sever the connection, the branch dies, and no fruit is produced. By virtue of our union with Christ we bring forth fruit. Every bunch of grapes has been first in the root, it has passed through the stem, and flowed through the sap vessels, and fashioned itself externally into fruit, but it was first in the stem; so also every good work was first in Christ, and then is brought forth in us. O Christian, prize this precious union to Christ; for it must be the source of all the fruitfulness which thou canst hope to know. If thou wert not joined to Jesus Christ, thou wouldst be a barren bough indeed.

Our fruit comes from God as to spiritual providence. When the dew-drops fall from heaven, when the cloud looks down from on high, and is about to distil its liquid treasure, when the bright sun swells the berries of the cluster, each heavenly boon may whisper to the tree and say, “From me is thy fruit found.” The fruit owes much to the root—that is essential to fruitfulness—but it owes very much also to external influences. How much we owe to God’s grace-providence! in which he provides us constantly with quickening, teaching, consolation, strength, or whatever else we want. To this we owe our all of usefulness or virtue.

Our fruit comes from God as to wise husbandry. The gardener’s sharp-edged knife promotes the fruitfulness of the tree, by thinning the clusters, and by cutting off superfluous shoots. So is it, Christian, with that pruning which the Lord gives to thee. “My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” Since our God is the author of our spiritual graces, let us give to him all the glory of our salvation.

# Word Live – 9/8/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/8/20

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

# Today in the Word – 9/8/20

# The Quest for a King

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 8:1–22**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+8%3a1%e2%80%9322)

### Israel Asks for a King

8 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel’s leaders.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+8%3a1%e2%80%9322" \l "fen-NIV-7371a" \o "See footnote a)] 2The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. 3But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

4So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. 5They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+8%3a1%e2%80%9322#fen-NIV-7375b)] us, such as all the other nations have.”

6But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. 7And the Lord told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. 8As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. 9Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights.”

10Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. 11He said, “This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. 12Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. 15He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. 16Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+8%3a1%e2%80%9322#fen-NIV-7386c)] and donkeys he will take for his own use. 17He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. 18When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

19But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. 20Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

21When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the Lord. 22The Lord answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.”

Then Samuel said to the Israelites, “Everyone go back to your own town.”

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 8:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+8%3a1%e2%80%9322#en-NIV-7371) Traditionally judges
2. [1 Samuel 8:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+8%3a1%e2%80%9322#en-NIV-7375) Traditionally judge; also in verses 6 and

A vote of confidence is sometimes taken to indicate whether or not leaders continue to have support from those they serve. The term may be misleading. In most cases, such a vote occurs only when a significant number of people have expressed a lack of confidence in their leader.

The LORD is King for ever and ever. Psalm 10:16

As Samuel aged, the elders of Israel grew worried about the future. Samuel’s sons did not share their father’s faith or his values. The elders worried about the direction his sons’ leadership would take after Samuel was gone. Their solution was to demand that Samuel appoint a king, “such as all the other nations have” (v. 5).

Samuel’s displeasure over this turn of events may seem puzzling. It looks like these tribal leaders were only acting responsibly. Yet verse 7 reveals a more disturbing motive. The problems were real but their solution betrayed a lack of confidence in God. They were motivated by an unhealthy desire to follow the pattern of “all the other nations” (v. 5). God’s purpose lay in a different direction. He had called Israel to be “set apart” from the nations (Lev. 20:26). For Israel, the Lord alone was to be their ruler and provider.

Even more sobering was the Lord’s decision to grant Israel’s request (v. 9). This was not like informed consent when the doctor proposes a treatment with risks and advises the patient of the possible consequences. God’s response was a mixture of prophecy and warning. Israel had demanded a king like all the other nations and that is exactly what they would get. Israel’s first king would prove to be a disaster, as would many who would follow in his wake.

**Apply the Word**

Are you frustrated because God has not granted you an important request? It may only be a matter of timing. Or it could be a demonstration of His goodness. We are not always the best judges of what we need. Only God knows that!

### Pray with Us

What have you learned from the life of Samuel so far? Pray that you’ll trust the Lord’s judgment even in times of failure and discouragement, even when He seems to be silent when your requests are not granted.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/8/20

# Loving Others with Our Prayers

**Read:** [**2 Corinthians 1:8–11**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%201.8%E2%80%9311)

8We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+1%3A8%E2%80%9311&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28809a" \o "See footnote a)] about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. 9Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

#### Footnotes:

1. [2 Corinthians 1:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+1%3A8%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#en-NIV-28809) The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in 8:1; 13:11.

This happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. [2 Corinthians 1:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%201.9)

“Are people still praying for me?”

That was one of the first questions a missionary asked his wife whenever she was allowed to visit him in prison. He had been falsely accused and incarcerated for his faith for two years. His life was frequently in danger because of the conditions and hostility in the prison, and believers around the world were earnestly praying for him. He wanted to be assured they wouldn’t stop, because he believed God was using their prayers in a powerful way.

Our prayers for others—especially those who are persecuted for their faith—are a vital gift. Paul made this clear when he wrote the believers in Corinth about hardships he faced during his missionary journey. He “was under great pressure,” so much that he “despaired of life itself” ([2 Corinthians 1:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%201.8)). But then he told them God had delivered him and described the tool He’d used to do it: “We have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers” (vv. 10–11, emphasis added).

God moves through our prayers to accomplish great good in the lives of His people. One of the best ways to love others is to pray for them, because through our prayers we open the door to the help only God can provide. When we pray for others, we love them in His strength. There’s none greater or more loving than He.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How do you love others with your prayers? In what ways can you encourage prayer for those who are persecuted for their faith?

Loving and Almighty God, thank You for the amazing gift of prayer and the ways You move through it. Please help me to pray faithfully for others today!

For help in your prayer life, read Jesus’ Blueprint for Prayer at [DiscoverySeries.org/HJ891.](https://DiscoverySeries.org/HJ891.)

#### Insight

The apostle Paul clearly had an up-and-down relationship with the Corinthian believers. In the two letters to Corinth preserved in the Scriptures, he deals heavily in correction of their misconduct while responding to accusations against him and attacks on his position as an apostle. In spite of those conflicts, however, Paul opens 2 Corinthians with words of God’s encouragement for them (1:3–7). Later in the letter, he even speaks of how they’ve encouraged him in spite of his struggles with them! (7:13). Paul also shares the joy he felt when the church comforted Titus, who had been “refreshed” by them. Paul’s joy “was greater than ever” because of their longing, sorrow, and concern for him (vv. 7, 13). It’s encouraging to see how “the God of all comfort” (1:3) can use the most surprising vessels to bring His encouragement to us.

# God Calling – 9/8/20

# Walk In My Love

When supply seems to have failed you must know it has not done so.  But you must, at the same time, look around to see what you can give away. Give away something.

There is always a stagnation, a blockage, when supply seems short.  Your giving clears that away, and lets the Spirit of My Supply flow clear.

A consciousness of My Presence as Love makes all Life different.  The consciousness of Me means the opening of your whole nature to Me and that brings relief. Relief brings Peace. Peace brings Joy. The "Peace that passeth all understanding" and the "Joy no man taketh from you."

Beyond all words is My Love and Care for you. Be sure of it. Rejoice in it. Walk in My Love. These words mean much. There is a joy, a spring, a gladness in the walk of those who walk in My Love. That walk becomes a glad conquering and triumphant march. So walk.

Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you ...  Deuteronomy 5:33

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/9/20

# Do It Yourself (2)



…bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ… —[2 Corinthians 10:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+10%3A5)

**Determinedly Discipline Other Things.**

This is another difficult aspect of the strenuous nature of sainthood. Paul said, according to the Moffatt translation of this verse, “…I take every project prisoner to make it obey Christ….” So much Christian work today has never been disciplined, but has simply come into being by impulse! In our Lord’s life every project was disciplined to the will of His Father. There was never the slightest tendency to follow the impulse of His own will as distinct from His Father’s will— “the Son can do nothing of Himself…” ([John 5:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+5:19)). Then compare this with what we do— we take “every thought” or project that comes to us by impulse and jump into action immediately, instead of imprisoning and disciplining ourselves to obey Christ.

Practical work for Christians is greatly overemphasized today, and the saints who are “bringing every thought [and project] into captivity” are criticized and told that they are not determined, and that they lack zeal for God or zeal for the souls of others. But true determination and zeal are found in obeying God, not in the inclination to serve Him that arises from our own undisciplined human nature. It is inconceivable, but true nevertheless, that saints are not “bringing every thought [and project] into captivity,” but are simply doing work for God that has been instigated by their own human nature, and has not been made spiritual through determined discipline.

We have a tendency to forget that a person is not only committed to Jesus Christ for salvation, but is also committed, responsible, and accountable to Jesus Christ’s view of God, the world, and of sin and the devil. This means that each person must recognize the responsibility to “be transformed by the renewing of [his] mind….” ([Romans 12:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12:2)).

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 9/9/20

**He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.**—[LUKE 1:53.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.1.html" \l "Luke.1.53)

Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.—When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.—I am the Lord thy God . . . open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.—I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

[Rev. 3:17-19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.3.html" \l "Rev.3.17).[Matt. 5:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.6). -[Isa. 41:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.41.html" \l "Isa.41.17). -[Psa. 81:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.81.html" \l "Ps.81.10).[Isa. 55:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.55.html" \l "Isa.55.2). -[John 6:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.6.html" \l "John.6.35).

“I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.” [Jeremiah 33:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.33.html" \l "Jer.33.3)

There are different translations of these words. One version renders it, “I will shew thee great and fortified things.” Another, “Great and reserved things.” Now, there are reserved and special things in Christian experience: all the developments of spiritual life are not alike easy of attainment. There are the common frames and feelings of repentance, and faith, and joy, and hope, which are enjoyed by the entire family; but there is an upper realm of rapture, of communion, and conscious union with Christ, which is far from being the common dwelling-place of believers. We have not all the high privilege of John, to lean upon Jesus’ bosom; nor of Paul, to be caught up into the third heaven. There are heights in experimental knowledge of the things of God which the eagle’s eye of acumen and philosophic thought hath never seen: God alone can bear us there; but the chariot in which he takes us up, and the fiery steeds with which that chariot is dragged, are prevailing prayers. Prevailing prayer is victorious over the God of mercy, “By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Beth-el, and there he spake with us.” Prevailing prayer takes the Christian to Carmel, and enables him to cover heaven with clouds of blessing, and earth with floods of mercy. Prevailing prayer bears the Christian aloft to Pisgah, and shows him the inheritance reserved; it elevates us to Tabor and transfigures us, till in the likeness of his Lord, as he is, so are we also in this world. If you would reach to something higher than ordinary grovelling experience, look to the Rock that is higher than you, and gaze with the eye of faith through the window of importunate prayer. When you open the window on your side, it will not be bolted on the other.

# Word Live – 9/9/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/9/20

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

# Today in the Word – 9/9/20

# Divine Coincidence

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 9:1–27**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+9%3a1%e2%80%9327)

### Samuel Anoints Saul

9 There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bekorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin. 2Kish had a son named Saul, as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else.

3Now the donkeys belonging to Saul’s father Kish were lost, and Kish said to his son Saul, “Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys.” 4So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and through the area around Shalisha, but they did not find them. They went on into the district of Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there. Then he passed through the territory of Benjamin, but they did not find them.

5When they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, “Come, let’s go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us.”

6But the servant replied, “Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let’s go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take.”

7Saul said to his servant, “If we go, what can we give the man? The food in our sacks is gone. We have no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?”

8The servant answered him again. “Look,” he said, “I have a quarter of a shekel[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+9%3a1%e2%80%9327#fen-NIV-7400a)] of silver. I will give it to the man of God so that he will tell us what way to take.” 9(Formerly in Israel, if someone went to inquire of God, they would say, “Come, let us go to the seer,” because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.)

10“Good,” Saul said to his servant. “Come, let’s go.” So they set out for the town where the man of God was.

11As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some young women coming out to draw water, and they asked them, “Is the seer here?”

12“He is,” they answered. “He’s ahead of you. Hurry now; he has just come to our town today, for the people have a sacrifice at the high place. 13As soon as you enter the town, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not begin eating until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward, those who are invited will eat. Go up now; you should find him about this time.”

14They went up to the town, and as they were entering it, there was Samuel, coming toward them on his way up to the high place.

15Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel: 16“About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over my people Israel; he will deliver them from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked on my people, for their cry has reached me.”

17When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, “This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.”

18Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, “Would you please tell me where the seer’s house is?”

19“I am the seer,” Samuel replied. “Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning I will send you on your way and will tell you all that is in your heart. 20As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found. And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and your whole family line?”

21Saul answered, “But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?”

22Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the hall and seated them at the head of those who were invited—about thirty in number. 23Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the piece of meat I gave you, the one I told you to lay aside.”

24So the cook took up the thigh with what was on it and set it in front of Saul. Samuel said, “Here is what has been kept for you. Eat, because it was set aside for you for this occasion from the time I said, ‘I have invited guests.’” And Saul dined with Samuel that day.

25After they came down from the high place to the town, Samuel talked with Saul on the roof of his house. 26They rose about daybreak, and Samuel called to Saul on the roof, “Get ready, and I will send you on your way.” When Saul got ready, he and Samuel went outside together. 27As they were going down to the edge of the town, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to go on ahead of us”—and the servant did so—“but you stay here for a while, so that I may give you a message from God.”

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 9:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+9%3a1%e2%80%9327#en-NIV-7400) That is, about 1/10 ounce or about 3 grams

G. K. Chesterton once observed, “Coincidences are spiritual puns.” In other words, what we view as coincidence may be God’s intervention in our life. Today’s passage describes a series of coincidences in Saul’s life that turned out to be divine appointments. We also get a glimpse into this future king’s character.

In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps. Proverbs 16:9

Saul’s appearance was striking. He was tall and “as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel” (v. 2). He was also a son of privilege. Saul’s father was “a man of standing” (v. 1). After an unfruitful three-day search for his father’s lost donkeys, Saul suggested that they call it off. Saul’s decision began a series of divine coincidences that led to an encounter with God’s prophet. Saul just happened to decide to end the search near the town where Samuel lives. They arrived on a day and at the time when Samuel was about to officiate an important sacrifice. They ran into a group of women who could tell them where to find the prophet. There were too many coincidences for it to be anything but a divine appointment.

Indeed, verse 15 indicates that none of this was accidental. God had orchestrated the whole thing to move His plan forward. But there were also storm clouds on the horizon. The fact that Saul did not know anything about Samuel, combined with his reluctance and passivity, was a foreshadowing of the kind of king he would eventually become. On the surface, Saul looked like the perfect choice for a king. He had a strong pedigree. What they could not know was that Saul was deficient in faith.

**Apply the Word**

What may appear to be a happy coincidence in your life could actually be God’s divine intervention. This is another reason to place our full confidence in God: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5–6).

### Pray with Us

What we may view as coincidences are, in reality, God’s work in our lives. Ask God to show you how He is working in your life, even in small events, and thank Him for H

# Our Daily Bread – 9/9/20

# Printed on Our Hearts

**Read:** [**Proverbs 7:1–5**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%207.1%E2%80%935)

### Warning Against the Adulterous Woman

7 My son, keep my words  
    and store up my commands within you.  
2Keep my commands and you will live;  
    guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.  
3Bind them on your fingers;  
    write them on the tablet of your heart.  
4Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,”  
    and to insight, “You are my relative.”  
5They will keep you from the adulterous woman,  
    from the wayward woman with her seductive words.

Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. [Proverbs 7:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%207.3)

When Johannes Gutenberg combined the printing press with moveable type in 1450, he ushered in the era of mass communications in the West, spreading learning into new social realms. Literacy increased across the globe and new ideas produced rapid transformations in social and religious contexts. Gutenberg produced the first-ever printed version of the Bible. Prior to this, Bibles were painstakingly hand-copied, taking scribes up to a year to produce.

For centuries since, the printing press has provided people like you and me the privilege of direct access to Scripture. While we also have electronic versions available to us, many of us often hold a physical Bible in our hands because of his invention. What was once inaccessible given the sheer cost and time to have a Bible copied is readily at our fingertips today.

Having access to God’s truth is an amazing privilege. The writer of Proverbs indicates we should treat His instructions to us in the Scriptures as something to be cherished, as “the apple of [our] eye” ([Proverbs 7:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%207.2)) and to write His words of wisdom on “the tablet of [our] heart” (v. 3). As we seek to understand the Bible and live according to its wisdom, we, like scribes, are drawing God’s truth from our “fingers” down into our hearts, to be taken with us wherever we go.

By:  [Kirsten Holmberg](https://odb.org/author/kirstenholmberg/)

#### Reflect & Pray

How has having Scripture stored in your heart benefitted you? How can you begin to internalize more of God’s wisdom?

Loving God, help me to know Your Word intimately that I might live in the way You desire.

#### Insight

In [Proverbs 7:1–5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%207.1%E2%80%935), Solomon warns his son (or sons, as v. 24 notes) to obey his words. He uses the illustration of an adulterous woman leading a man astray to explain the importance of obedience and describes the danger of this woman’s house as “a highway to the grave” (v. 27).

To keep Solomon’s commands and avoid the seductive woman, the reader is told to “bind them [the commands] on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart” (v. 3). This metaphor implies the need for external action (the physicality of fingers) and internal character change (the character of the heart). The reference to wisdom as a “sister” in verse 4 uses a word that generally means a close or intimate female relative. Depending on the context, it can sometimes refer to a wife or bride. Both suggest an intimate connection and emphasize the importance of adhering to this advice.

# God Calling – 9/9/20

# Cultivate  --  Yourself

**In Thy Strength we conquer.**

Yes! Your conquering Power you gain from Me. There can be no failure with me. The secret of success then is Life with Me.

Do you want to make the best of life? Then live very near to Me, the Master and Giver of all Life.

Your reward will be sure. It will be perfect success, but My success.

Sometimes the success of souls won, sometimes the success of disease cured, and devils cast out. Sometimes the success of a finished sacrifice as on Calvary. Sometimes the success of one who answered never a word in the face of the scorn and torture and jeering cries of his enemies, or the success of a Risen Savior as He walked through the Garden of Joseph of Arimathea on that first Easter morning.

But My success. The world may deem you failures. The world judges not as I judge.

Bend your knees in wonder before My revelation. The joy of seeing Spiritual Truths is a great Joy. When the Heavens are opened and the Voice speaks, not to all hearts, but to the faithful loving hearts.

Remember your great field of labor is yourself. That is your first task, the weeding, the planting, digging, pruning, bearing fruit. When that is done I lead you out into other fields.

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savior of his knowledge by us in every place. 2 Corinthians 2:14

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/10/20

# Missionary Weapons (1)



When you were under the fig tree, I saw you. —[John 1:48](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+1%3A48)

**Worshiping in Everyday Occasions**. We presume that we would be ready for battle if confronted with a great crisis, but it is not the crisis that builds something within us— it simply reveals what we are made of already. Do you find yourself saying, “If God calls me to battle, of course I will rise to the occasion”? Yet you won’t rise to the occasion unless you have done so on God’s training ground. If you are not doing the task that is closest to you now, which God has engineered into your life, when the crisis comes, instead of being fit for battle, you will be revealed as being unfit. Crises always reveal a person’s true character.

A private relationship of worshiping God is the greatest essential element of spiritual fitness. The time will come, as Nathanael experienced in this passage, that a private “fig-tree” life will no longer be possible. Everything will be out in the open, and you will find yourself to be of no value there if you have not been worshiping in everyday occasions in your own home. If your worship is right in your private relationship with God, then when He sets you free, you will be ready. It is in the unseen life, which only God saw, that you have become perfectly fit. And when the strain of the crisis comes, you can be relied upon by God.

Are you saying, “But I can’t be expected to live a sanctified life in my present circumstances; I have no time for prayer or Bible study right now; besides, my opportunity for battle hasn’t come yet, but when it does, of course I will be ready”? No, you will not. If you have not been worshiping in everyday occasions, when you get involved in God’s work, you will not only be useless yourself but also a hindrance to those around you.

God’s training ground, where the missionary weapons are found, is the hidden, personal, worshiping life of the saint.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Wherever the providence of God may dump us down, in a slum, in a shop, in the desert, we have to labour along the line of His direction. Never allow this thought—“I am of no use where I am,” because you certainly can be of no use where you are not! Wherever He has engineered your circumstances, pray. So Send I You, 1325 L

# CCEL – 9/10/20

**I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.**—[JER. 32:39.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.32.html" \l "Jer.32.39)

A new heart . . . will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you.—Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

I . . . beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, . . . endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

[Ezek. 36:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.36.html" \l "Ezek.36.26). -[Psa. 25:8-10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.25.html" \l "Ps.25.8).[John 17:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.21).[Eph. 4:1-6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.1).

“And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.” **[Mark 3:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.3.html" \l "Mark.3.13)**

Here was sovereignty. Impatient spirits may fret and fume, because they are not called to the highest places in the ministry; but reader be it thine to rejoice that Jesus calleth whom he wills. If he shall leave me to be a doorkeeper in his house, I will cheerfully bless him for his grace in permitting me to do anything in his service. The call of Christ’s servants comes from above. Jesus stands on the mountain, evermore above the world in holiness, earnestness, love and power. Those whom he calls must go up the mountain to him, they must seek to rise to his level by living in constant communion with him. They may not be able to mount to classic honours, or attain scholastic eminence, but they must like Moses go up into the mount of God and have familiar intercourse with the unseen God, or they will never be fitted to proclaim the gospel of peace. Jesus went apart to hold high fellowship with the Father, and we must enter into the same divine companionship if we would bless our fellowmen. No wonder that the apostles were clothed with power when they came down fresh from the mountain where Jesus was. This morning we must endeavour to ascend the mount of communion, that there we may be ordained to the lifework for which we are set apart. Let us not see the face of man today till we have seen Jesus. Time spent with him is laid out at blessed interest. We too shall cast out devils and work wonders if we go down into the world girded with that divine energy which Christ alone can give. It is of no use going to the Lord’s battle till we are armed with heavenly weapons. We must see Jesus, this is essential. At the mercy-seat we will linger till he shall manifest himself unto us as he doth not unto the world, and until we can truthfully say, “We were with him in the Holy Mount.”

# Word Live – 9/10/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/10/20

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

# Today in the Word – 9/10/20

# Confirming God's Call

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 10:1–27**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+10%3a1%e2%80%9327)

10 Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul’s head and kissed him, saying, “Has not the Lord anointed you ruler over his inheritance?[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+10%3a1%e2%80%9327#fen-NIV-7420a)] 2When you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel’s tomb, at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you, ‘The donkeys you set out to look for have been found. And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you. He is asking, “What shall I do about my son?”’

3“Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor. Three men going up to worship God at Bethel will meet you there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine. 4They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them.

5“After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, timbrels, pipes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying. 6The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. 7Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.

8“Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do.”

### Saul Made King

9As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul’s heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. 10When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he joined in their prophesying. 11When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, “What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?”

12A man who lived there answered, “And who is their father?” So it became a saying: “Is Saul also among the prophets?” 13After Saul stopped prophesying, he went to the high place.

14Now Saul’s uncle asked him and his servant, “Where have you been?”

“Looking for the donkeys,” he said. “But when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel.”

15Saul’s uncle said, “Tell me what Samuel said to you.”

16Saul replied, “He assured us that the donkeys had been found.” But he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship.

17Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the Lord at Mizpah 18and said to them, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.’ 19But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities. And you have said, ‘No, appoint a king over us.’ So now present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and clans.”

20When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. 21Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri’s clan was taken. Finally Saul son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. 22So they inquired further of the Lord, “Has the man come here yet?”

And the Lord said, “Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies.”

23They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. 24Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see the man the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.”

Then the people shouted, “Long live the king!”

25Samuel explained to the people the rights and duties of kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the Lord. Then Samuel dismissed the people to go to their own homes.

26Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. 27But some scoundrels said, “How can this fellow save us?” They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 10:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+10%3a1%e2%80%9327#en-NIV-7420) Hebrew; Septuagint and Vulgate over his people Israel? You will reign over the Lord’s people and save them from the power of their enemies round about. And this will be a sign to you that the Lord has anointed you ruler over his inheritance:

The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of England took place on June 2, 1953, in Westminster Abbey. The queen arrived in a gold coach pulled by eight horses. Over eight thousand guests witnessed the public ceremony. Saul’s coronation was much different. Samuel declared Saul to be Israel’s leader (literally “prince”) by anointing him with oil on the outskirts of town. The ceremony was private, not even Saul’s servant attended (1 Sam. 9:27).

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Galatians 5:25

A series of three signs followed that confirmed God’s call. Each was a demonstration of the power of God’s Spirit. In the third, Saul joined a procession of prophets and spoke while temporarily under the influence of the Holy Spirit (1 Sam. 10:9–11). Those who saw were so startled that they turned the event into a proverb. This demonstration of the power of God’s Spirit to change Saul into “a different person” (v. 6) offered a glimpse into the kind of king Saul might have been if he had responded in faith. On the other hand, Samuel’s stipulation that Saul should wait for him at Gilgal foreshadowed the catastrophic failure that was yet to come (see 1 Sam. 13:8–14). Saul was no automaton. While the power came from God, the response would be Saul’s. God’s Spirit was able to transform Saul, but it did not relieve Saul of the responsibilities of faith or obedience.

It is unclear why Saul failed to mention the kingship upon returning home. Perhaps he had doubts about what Samuel had said. More likely, Samuel wanted Saul to keep the fact a secret until the public reveal at Mizpah (v. 17).

>> God’s power and our response are not equal partners. The kind of faith that bears fruit in obedience flows from the assurance that God’s Spirit will empower us. Obedience is the fruit of faith. Will you obey and follow Him today?

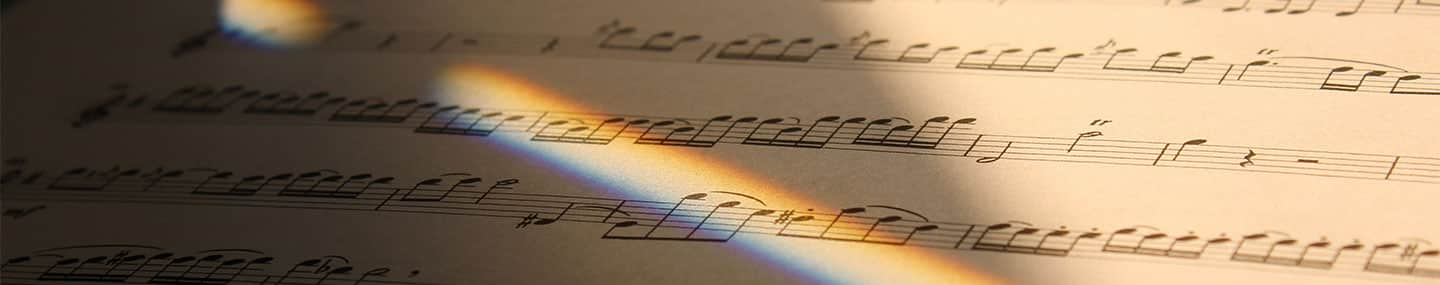
### Pray with Us

Today, ask the Lord to show you what you can learn from the initial success and the ultimate failure of Saul’s life. Let us learn from this example to follow God faithfully all the days of our life.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/10/20

# Making His Music

**Read:** [**2 Corinthians 3:17–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%203.17%E2%80%9318)

17Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+3%3A17%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28860a)] the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

#### Footnotes:

1. [2 Corinthians 3:18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+3%3A17%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-28860) Or reflect

We all . . . are being transformed into his image. [2 Corinthians 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%203.18)

Choir director Arianne Abela spent her childhood sitting on her hands—to hide them. Born with fingers missing or fused together on both hands, she also had no left leg and was missing toes on her right foot. A music lover and lyric soprano, she’d planned to major in government at Smith College. But one day her choir teacher asked her to conduct the choir, which made her hands quite visible. From that moment, she found her career, going on to conduct church choirs and serving now as director of choirs at another university. “My teachers saw something in me,” Abela explains.

Her inspiring story invites believers to ask, What does God, our holy Teacher, see in us, regardless of our “limits”? More than anything, He sees Himself. “So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” ([Genesis 1:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%201.27) nlt).

As His glorious “image bearers,” when others see us, we should reflect Him. For Abela, that means Jesus, not her hands—or her lack of fingers—matters most. The same is true for all believers. “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image,” says [2 Corinthians 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%203.18).

Similar to Abela, we can conduct our lives by Christ’s transforming power (v. 18), offering a life song that rings out to the honor of God.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How does knowing you are God’s “image-bearer” help you to see yourself differently? How does it help you in your interactions with others?

Thank You, God, for making me in Your image. Help me to apply this fact to all of my life.

#### Insight

When Paul writes about “unveiled faces” ([2 Corinthians 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%203.18)), we must understand his words in the context of [Exodus 33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2033) and [34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exodus%2034). After his first ascent of Mount Sinai, Moses had earnestly asked God to see His glory. God agreed, and then instructed Moses to climb Sinai again (see [Exodus 33:18–34:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2033.18%E2%80%9334.3)). Upon his return from the mountain, Moses’ face shone with the glory of being in the presence of God. It was too much for the people, and he covered his face with a veil (34:29–35). In [2 Corinthians 3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%203), Paul compares the glory of the old covenant (the giving of the law) as visibly demonstrated in Moses’ face, with the glory of the new covenant (the giving and ministry of the Holy Spirit). Through the work of Jesus (vv. 13–15), God’s Holy Spirit brings us freedom to consider His glory with “unveiled faces,” and we’re “transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory” (v. 18).

# God Calling – 9/10/20

# God or Mammon?

You must be ready to stand apart from the world. Do you want the full and complete satisfaction that you find in Me, and the satisfaction of the world too? Then you are trying to serve God and Mammon, or if not trying to serve, then claiming the wages of both God and Mammon.

If you work for Me, you have your reward. But then you turn to the world, to human beings, and expect that reward too. This is not right.

Do not expect love or gratitude or acknowledgement from any. All reward necessary I will give you.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; ... Ye cannot serve God and mammon.  Matthew 6:24

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/11/20

# Missionary Weapons (2)



If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. —[John 13:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+13%3A14)

**Ministering in Everyday Opportunities.** Ministering in everyday opportunities that surround us does not mean that we select our own surroundings— it means being God’s very special choice to be available for use in any of the seemingly random surroundings which He has engineered for us. The very character we exhibit in our present surroundings is an indication of what we will be like in other surroundings.

The things Jesus did were the most menial of everyday tasks, and this is an indication that it takes all of God’s power in me to accomplish even the most common tasks in His way. Can I use a towel as He did? Towels, dishes, sandals, and all the other ordinary things in our lives reveal what we are made of more quickly than anything else. It takes God Almighty Incarnate in us to do the most menial duty as it ought to be done.

Jesus said, “I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” ([John 13:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+13:15)). Notice the kind of people that God brings around you, and you will be humiliated once you realize that this is actually His way of revealing to you the kind of person you have been to Him. Now He says we should exhibit to those around us exactly what He has exhibited to us.

Do you find yourself responding by saying, “Oh, I will do all that once I’m out on the mission field”? Talking in this way is like trying to produce the weapons of war while in the trenches of the battlefield— you will be killed while trying to do it.

We have to go the “second mile” with God (see [Matthew 5:41](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:41)). Yet some of us become worn out in the first ten steps. Then we say, “Well, I’ll just wait until I get closer to the next big crisis in my life.” But if we do not steadily minister in everyday opportunities, we will do nothing when the crisis comes.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The attitude of a Christian towards the providential order in which he is placed is to recognize that God is behind it for purposes of His own.  Biblical Ethics, 99 R

# CCEL – 9/11/20

**Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.**—[ROM. 12:2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.2)

Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.

Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?—Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.—Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, . . . as the truth is in Jesus.

[Exo. 23:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.23.html" \l "Exod.23.2).[Jas. 4:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.4.html" \l "Jas.4.4).[II Cor. 6:14-16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.14). -[I John 2:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.15),[17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.17).[Eph. 2:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.2). -[Eph. 4:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.20).

“Be ye separate.” **[2 Corinthians 6:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.17)**

The Christian, while in the world, is not to be of the world. He should be distinguished from it in the great object of his life. To him, “to live,” should be “Christ.” Whether he eats, or drinks, or whatever he does, he should do all to God’s glory. You may lay up treasure; but lay it up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, where thieves break not through nor steal. You may strive to be rich; but be it your ambition to be “rich in faith,” and good works. You may have pleasure; but when you are merry, sing psalms and make melody in your hearts to the Lord. In your spirit, as well as in your aim, you should differ from the world. Waiting humbly before God, always conscious of his presence, delighting in communion with him, and seeking to know his will, you will prove that you are of heavenly race. And you should be separate from the world in your actions. If a thing be right, though you lose by it, it must be done; if it be wrong, though you would gain by it, you must scorn the sin for your Master’s sake. You must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Walk worthy of your high calling and dignity. Remember, O Christian, that thou art a son of the King of kings. Therefore, keep thyself unspotted from the world. Soil not the fingers which are soon to sweep celestial strings; let not these eyes become the windows of lust which are soon to see the King in his beauty—let not those feet be defiled in miry places, which are soon to walk the golden streets—let not those hearts be filled with pride and bitterness which are ere long to be filled with heaven, and to overflow with ecstatic joy.

Then rise my soul! and soar away,

Above the thoughtless crowd;

Above the pleasures of the gay,

And splendours of the proud;

Up where eternal beauties bloom,

And pleasures all divine;

Where wealth, that never can consume,

And endless glories shine.

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# Word Live – 9/11/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/11/20

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

# Today in the Word – 9/11/20

# Fear of the Lord

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 11:1–14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+11%3a1%e2%80%9314)

### Saul Rescues the City of Jabesh

11 Nahash[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+11%3a1%e2%80%9314#fen-NIV-7447a)] the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to him, “Make a treaty with us, and we will be subject to you.”

2But Nahash the Ammonite replied, “I will make a treaty with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israel.”

3The elders of Jabesh said to him, “Give us seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you.”

4When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these terms to the people, they all wept aloud. 5Just then Saul was returning from the fields, behind his oxen, and he asked, “What is wrong with everyone? Why are they weeping?” Then they repeated to him what the men of Jabesh had said.

6When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he burned with anger. 7He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, “This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel.” Then the terror of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out together as one. 8When Saul mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel numbered three hundred thousand and those of Judah thirty thousand.

9They told the messengers who had come, “Say to the men of Jabesh Gilead, ‘By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be rescued.’” When the messengers went and reported this to the men of Jabesh, they were elated. 10They said to the Ammonites, “Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever you like.”

11The next day Saul separated his men into three divisions; during the last watch of the night they broke into the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

### Saul Confirmed as King

12The people then said to Samuel, “Who was it that asked, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Turn these men over to us so that we may put them to death.”

13But Saul said, “No one will be put to death today, for this day the Lord has rescued Israel.”

14Then Samuel said to the people, “Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingship.”

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 11:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+11%3a1%e2%80%9314#en-NIV-7447) Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls gifts. Now Nahash king of the Ammonites oppressed the Gadites and Reubenites severely. He gouged out all their right eyes and struck terror and dread in Israel. Not a man remained among the Israelites beyond the Jordan whose right eye was not gouged out by Nahash king of the Ammonites, except that seven thousand men fled from the Ammonites and entered Jabesh Gilead. About a month later, 1Nahash

We usually think of fear as a reaction to something that causes negative emotions: enclosed spaces, snakes, heights, darkness, or even public speaking. But in the Bible, the term “fear” is often used to communicate the reverence we have for God. This includes a healthy fear of disappointing Him. In today’s passage, the “terror” of the Lord motivated the Israelites to respond to Saul’s first kingly act, a call to arms to deliver the people of Jabesh Gilead from Nahash the Ammonite. Was this the fear of the Lord or something else?

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. Proverbs 9:10

The Ammonites, the descendants of Lot, were the second major power that threatened Israel in Samuel’s day. Their threat to gouge out the right eye of all the men of Jabesh was typical of Ammonite brutality (v. 2). Mutilation of this sort would have been a mark of disgrace for the people of Jabesh and probably would have impeded their ability to fight.

When Saul learned of their plight, the Spirit of God came upon him. He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent them throughout Israel with the message: “This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel” (v. 7). The terror that this message produced was more than a fear of the consequences they might suffer if they disobeyed their earthly ruler. It was a fear produced by God Himself.

Their obedience to Saul’s command enabled Israel’s new king to rescue the people of Jabesh Gilead and to consolidate support for his reign. Saul was acclaimed, but he rightly attributed the victory to God (v. 13).

**Apply the Word**

Do you have a healthy “fear” or reverence for God? When we have an appropriate reverence for God, we honor Him with our thoughts, our speech, and our behavior. As you go about your day today, consider how this influences your life.

### Pray with Us

Let’s pray that our lives will be guided by the fear of the Lord the way the Bible teaches it—reverence for God—and not by how the world sees fear. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10).

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/11/20

# Fire in the Desert

**Read:** [**Exodus 3:1–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%203.1%E2%80%9310)

### Moses and the Burning Bush

3 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

4When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

And Moses said, “Here I am.”

5“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” 6Then he said, “I am the God of your father,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-1586a" \o "See footnote a)] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

#### Footnotes:

1. [Exodus 3:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-1586) Masoretic Text; Samaritan Pentateuch (see Acts 7:32) fathers

I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt. [Exodus 3:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%203.10)

While riding in the Chihuahuan Desert in the late 1800s, Jim White spotted a strange cloud of smoke spiraling skyward. Suspecting a wildfire, the young cowboy rode toward the source, only to learn that the “smoke” was a vast swarm of bats spilling from a hole in the ground. White had come across New Mexico’s Carlsbad Caverns, an immense and spectacular system of caves.

As Moses was tending sheep in a Middle Eastern desert, he too saw an odd sight that grabbed his attention—a flaming bush that didn’t burn up ([Exodus 3:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%203.2)). When God Himself spoke from the bush, Moses realized he had come to something far grander than it had first appeared. He told Moses, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham” (v. 6). God was about to lead an enslaved people to freedom and show them their true identity as His children (v. 10).

More than six hundred years earlier, God had made this promise to Abraham: “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you” ([Genesis 12:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2012.3)). The flight of the Israelites from Egypt was but one step in that blessing—God’s plan to rescue His creation through the Messiah, Abraham’s descendant.

Today we can enjoy the benefits of that blessing, for God offers this rescue to everyone. Christ came to die for the sins of the whole world. By faith in Him, we too become children of the living God.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What surprising things have helped you learn about God? How are you living in the knowledge that you are one of His children?

Thank You, Father, for making Yourself accessible to me despite Your great power, holiness, and overwhelming presence.

#### Insight

God’s call to Moses on the mountain is representative of how God often works, for a season of training in the wilderness is often His instrument of equipping for ministry. Joseph served in a wilderness of slavery before becoming God’s instrument of rescue. Both Elijah and Paul spent time in the wilderness. Even Jesus Himself spent forty days in the wilderness before starting His public ministry.

# God Calling – 9/11/20

# A Generous Giver

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

Yes, I, your Master, am a generous Giver. Abundant Life, in overflowing measure, I give to you. For that I came. Life for souls. The Life, Eternal Life, that pulses through your whole being, that animates your mind and body too.

A generous Giver. A Kingly Giver. For this I came that man might live in Me. Life it was of which I spoke when I said "I am the Vine and ye are the branches." The life flow of the Vine is in the branches.

Our lives are one - yours and Mine. All that is in  My Nature must therefore pass into yours, where the contact is so close a one.

I am Love and Joy and Peace and Strength and Power and Healing and Humility and Patience, and all else you see in Me your Lord. Then these, too, you must have as My Life flows through you. So courage.

You do not make yourselves loving and strong and patient and humble. You live with Me, and then My Life accomplishes the miracle-change.

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. John 6:33

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/12/20

# Going Through Spiritual Confusion



Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask." —[Matthew 20:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+20%3A22)

There are times in your spiritual life when there is confusion, and the way out of it is not simply to say that you should not be confused. It is not a matter of right and wrong, but a matter of God taking you through a way that you temporarily do not understand. And it is only by going through the spiritual confusion that you will come to the understanding of what God wants for you.

**The Shrouding of His Friendship** (see [Luke 11:5-8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11:5-8)). Jesus gave the illustration here of a man who appears not to care for his friend. He was saying, in effect, that is how the heavenly Father will appear to you at times. You will think that He is an unkind friend, but remember— He is not. The time will come when everything will be explained. There seems to be a cloud on the friendship of the heart, and often even love itself has to wait in pain and tears for the blessing of fuller fellowship and oneness. When God appears to be completely shrouded, will you hang on with confidence in Him?

**The Shadow on His Fatherhood** (see [Luke 11:11-13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11:11-13)). Jesus said that there are times when your Father will appear as if He were an unnatural father— as if He were callous and indifferent— but remember, He is not. “Everyone who asks receives…” ([Luke 11:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11:10)). If all you see is a shadow on the face of the Father right now, hang on to the fact that He will ultimately give you clear understanding and will fully justify Himself in everything that He has allowed into your life.

**The Strangeness of His Faithfulness** (see [Luke 18:1-8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+18:1-8)). “When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” ([Luke 18:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+18:8)). Will He find the kind of faith that counts on Him in spite of the confusion? Stand firm in faith, believing that what Jesus said is true, although in the meantime you do not understand what God is doing. He has bigger issues at stake than the particular things you are asking of Him right now.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The Bible is the only Book that gives us any indication of the true nature of sin, and where it came from. The Philosophy of Sin, 1107 R

# CCEL – 9/12/20

**I have seen his ways, and will heal him.**—[ISA. 57:18.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.57.html" \l "Isa.57.18)

I am the Lord that healeth thee.

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.—Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.—All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.—He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.—He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed.—He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted.—Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

[Exo. 15:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.15.html" \l "Exod.15.26).[Psa. 139:1-3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.1). -[Psa. 90:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.90.html" \l "Ps.90.8). -[Heb. 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.13).[Isa. 1:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.1.html" \l "Isa.1.18). -[Job 33:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.33.html#Job.33.24). -[Isa. 53:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.5). -[Isa. 61:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.61.html" \l "Isa.61.1). -[Mark 5:34](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.5.html" \l "Mark.5.34).

“God is jealous.” **[Nahum 1:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Nah.1.html" \l "Nah.1.2)**

Your Lord is very jealous of your love, O believer. Did he choose you? He cannot bear that you should choose another. Did he buy you with his own blood? He cannot endure that you should think that you are your own, or that you belong to this world. He loved you with such a love that he would not stop in heaven without you; he would sooner die than you should perish, and he cannot endure that anything should stand between your heart’s love and himself. He is very jealous of your trust. He will not permit you to trust in an arm of flesh. He cannot bear that you should hew out broken cisterns, when the overflowing fountain is always free to you. When we lean upon him, he is glad, but when we transfer our dependence to another, when we rely upon our own wisdom, or the wisdom of a friend—worst of all, when we trust in any works of our own, he is displeased, and will chasten us that he may bring us to himself. He is also very jealous of our company. There should be no one with whom we converse so much as with Jesus. To abide in him only, this is true love; but to commune with the world, to find sufficient solace in our carnal comforts, to prefer even the society of our fellow Christians to secret intercourse with him, this is grievous to our jealous Lord. He would fain have us abide in him, and enjoy constant fellowship with himself; and many of the trials which he sends us are for the purpose of weaning our hearts from the creature, and fixing them more closely upon himself. Let this jealousy which would keep us near to Christ be also a comfort to us, for if he loves us so much as to care thus about our love we may be sure that he will suffer nothing to harm us, and will protect us from all our enemies. Oh that we may have grace this day to keep our hearts in sacred chastity for our Beloved alone, with sacred jealousy shutting our eyes to all the fascinations of the world!

# Word Live – 9/12/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/12/20

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

# Today in the Word – 9/12/20

# A Leader Says Goodbye

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 12:1–25**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+12%3a1%e2%80%9325)

### Samuel’s Farewell Speech

12 Samuel said to all Israel, “I have listened to everything you said to me and have set a king over you. 2Now you have a king as your leader. As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you. I have been your leader from my youth until this day. 3Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the Lord and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these things, I will make it right.”

4“You have not cheated or oppressed us,” they replied. “You have not taken anything from anyone’s hand.”

5Samuel said to them, “The Lord is witness against you, and also his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand.”

“He is witness,” they said.

6Then Samuel said to the people, “It is the Lord who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your ancestors up out of Egypt. 7Now then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the Lord as to all the righteous acts performed by the Lord for you and your ancestors.

8“After Jacob entered Egypt, they cried to the Lord for help, and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your ancestors out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

9“But they forgot the Lord their God; so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against them. 10They cried out to the Lord and said, ‘We have sinned; we have forsaken the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.’ 11Then the Lord sent Jerub-Baal,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+12%3a1%e2%80%9325#fen-NIV-7472a)] Barak,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+12%3a1%e2%80%9325#fen-NIV-7472b)] Jephthah and Samuel,[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+12%3a1%e2%80%9325#fen-NIV-7472c)] and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around you, so that you lived in safety.

12“But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, ‘No, we want a king to rule over us’—even though the Lord your God was your king. 13Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for; see, the Lord has set a king over you. 14If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God—good! 15But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your ancestors.

16“Now then, stand still and see this great thing the Lord is about to do before your eyes! 17Is it not wheat harvest now? I will call on the Lord to send thunder and rain. And you will realize what an evil thing you did in the eyes of the Lord when you asked for a king.”

18Then Samuel called on the Lord, and that same day the Lord sent thunder and rain. So all the people stood in awe of the Lord and of Samuel.

19The people all said to Samuel, “Pray to the Lord your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king.”

20“Do not be afraid,” Samuel replied. “You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. 21Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. 22For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own. 23As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. 24But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. 25Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will perish.”

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 12:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+12%3a1%e2%80%9325#en-NIV-7472) Also called Gideon
2. [1 Samuel 12:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+12%3a1%e2%80%9325#en-NIV-7472) Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac; Hebrew Bedan
3. [1 Samuel 12:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+12%3a1%e2%80%9325#en-NIV-7472) Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac Samson

As he set out for his presidential inauguration in 1861, Abraham Lincoln knew he faced a seemingly impossible task. “I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington,” Lincoln declared. This was no exaggeration. The union was dissolving, and in months the nation would be embroiled in a bloody civil war.

Fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. 1 Samuel 12:24

Samuel had a similar sense of foreboding during the public ceremony that ratified Saul as Israel’s king. More than an inauguration for Saul, it was also a farewell speech for Samuel, who was stepping down as Israel’s judge. It was time. Samuel was “old and gray” and the Israelites wanted a different leader (v. 2). True to his role as God’s spokesman, Samuel reminded the people of their history of disobedience during the days of the judges (vv. 9–11). He also pointed out the lack of faith that prompted them to ask Samuel to appoint a king: “We want a king to rule over us” (vv. 12–13). Their demand betrayed a lack of confidence in God.

Now that God had granted their request, God’s people had a choice to make. “If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God—good!” Samuel declared. “But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your ancestors” (v. 15). Although he was stepping down as judge, Samuel promised not to abandon God’s people (v. 23).

**Apply the Word**

Do you fear the Lord? Are you following Him well today? No matter what foolish choices you have made in the past, if you turn to Christ, He will receive you. Ask Him to forgive you and show you “what is good and right” (v. 23).

### Pray with Us

Samuel didn’t shy away from rebuking his people: “If you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you” (v. 15). Ask God if there’s anything you need to change in your life.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/12/20

# Day of Encouragement

**Read:** [**1 Thessalonians 5:12–28**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thess%205.12%E2%80%9328)

### Final Instructions

12Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 14And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

16Rejoice always, 17pray continually, 18give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

19Do not quench the Spirit. 20Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22reject every kind of evil.

23May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

25Brothers and sisters, pray for us. 26Greet all God’s people with a holy kiss. 27I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.

28The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

We urge you, brothers and sisters, . . . encourage the disheartened. [1 Thessalonians 5:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thess%205.14)

First responders show dedication and courage daily by being on the front lines when disasters occur. In the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City in 2001 when thousands of people were killed or injured, more than four hundred emergency workers also lost their lives. In honor of first responders, the US Senate designated September 12 as the National Day of Encouragement.

While it may seem unique that a government would declare a national day of encouragement, the apostle Paul certainly thought this was needed for the growth of a church. He commended the young church in Thessalonica, a city in Macedonia, to “encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone” ([1 Thessalonians 5:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thess%205.14)). Although they were going through persecution, Paul encouraged the believers to “always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else” (v. 15). He knew that as humans, they would be prone to despair, selfishness, and conflict. But he also knew they would not be able to uplift one another without God’s help and strength.

Things are no different today. We all need to be uplifted, and we need to do the same for those around us. Yet we can’t do it in our own strength. That’s why Paul’s encouragement that “the one who calls you [Jesus] is faithful, and he will do it” is so reassuring (v. 24). With His help, we can encourage one another every day.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How can a word of encouragement keep despair away? Who can you encourage today?

Jesus, thank You for the encouragement You give me each day. Show me who I need to encourage as well.

#### Insight

Today’s passage is drawn from Paul’s first letter to the church at Thessalonica in Macedonia. Thessalonica was an important city strategically located on the Ignatian Way, an important Roman highway. It was also situated on the Aegean Sea, which added to its status as a city of commerce. [Acts 17:1–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2017.1%E2%80%939) describes Paul’s ministry there. For three Sabbaths, he taught about Jesus in the city’s synagogue. As a result, some Jews, many Greeks, and several women turned to Jesus (v. 4). However, others started a riot, and Paul and his coworker Silas had to flee the city (vv. 5–10). Paul begins 1 Thessalonians with affirmation and prayer, and throughout we see his concern for these new believers.

# God Calling – 9/12/20

# Money Values

**But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.      - Matthew 6:33**

**If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.      -   Matthew 6:22**

The eye of the soul is the will.  If your one desire is My Kingdom, to find that Kingdom, to serve that Kingdom, then truly shall your whole body be full of light.

When you are told to seek first the Kingdom of God, the first step is to secure that your will is for that Kingdom.  A single eye to God's glory. Desiring nothing less than that His Kingdom come. Seeking in all things the advance of His Kingdom.

Know no values but Spiritual values. No profit but that of Spiritual gain. Seek in all things His Kingdom first.

Only seek material gain when that gain will mean a gain for My Kingdom. Get away from money values altogether. Walk with Me. Learn of Me. Talk to Me. Here lies your true happiness.

But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.  Luke 12:31

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/13/20

# After Surrender— Then What?



I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. —[John 17:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+17%3A4)

True surrender is not simply surrender of our external life but surrender of our will— and once that is done, surrender is complete. The greatest crisis we ever face is the surrender of our will. Yet God never forces a person’s will into surrender, and He never begs. He patiently waits until that person willingly yields to Him. And once that battle has been fought, it never needs to be fought again.

**Surrender for Deliverance.** “Come to Me…and I will give you rest” ([Matthew 11:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+11:28)). It is only after we have begun to experience what salvation really means that we surrender our will to Jesus for rest. Whatever is causing us a sense of uncertainty is actually a call to our will— “Come to Me.” And it is a voluntary coming.

**Surrender for Devotion.** “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself…” (Matthew 16:24). The surrender here is of my self to Jesus, with His rest at the heart of my being. He says, “If you want to be My disciple, you must give up your right to yourself to Me.” And once this is done, the remainder of your life will exhibit nothing but the evidence of this surrender, and you never need to be concerned again with what the future may hold for you. Whatever your circumstances may be, Jesus is totally sufficient (see [2 Corinthians 12:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+12:9) and [Philippians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+4:19)).

**Surrender for Death.** “…another will gird you…” ([John 21:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+21:18); also see [John 21:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John21:19)). Have you learned what it means to be girded for death? Beware of some surrender that you make to God in an ecstatic moment in your life, because you are apt to take it back again. True surrender is a matter of being “united together [with Jesus] in the likeness of His death” ([Romans 6:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+6:5)) until nothing ever appeals to you that did not appeal to Him.

And after you surrender— then what? Your entire life should be characterized by an eagerness to maintain unbroken fellowship and oneness with God.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

It is not what a man does that is of final importance, but what he is in what he does. The atmosphere produced by a man, much more than his activities, has the lasting influence.  Baffled to Fight Better, 51 L

# CCEL – 9/13/20

**If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.**—[JOHN 7:37.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.7.html" \l "John.7.37)

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.—O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.—The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.—Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.—My blood is drink indeed.

Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

[Psa. 84:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.84.html" \l "Ps.84.2). -[Psa. 63:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.63.html" \l "Ps.63.1).[Isa. 55:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.55.html" \l "Isa.55.1). -[Rev. 22:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.22.html" \l "Rev.22.17). -[John 4:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.4.html" \l "John.4.14). -[John 6:55](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.6.html" \l "John.6.55).[Song 5:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.1).

“Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well, the rain also filleth the pools.” **[Psalm 84:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.84.html" \l "Ps.84.6)**

This teaches us that the comfort obtained by a one may often prove serviceable to another; just as wells would be used by the company who came after. We read some book full of consolation, which is like Jonathan’s rod, dropping with honey. Ah! we think our brother has been here before us, and digged this well for us as well as for himself. Many a “Night of Weeping,” “Midnight Harmonies,” an “Eternal Day,” “A Crook in the Lot,” a “Comfort for Mourners,” has been a well digged by a pilgrim for himself, but has proved quite as useful to others. Specially we notice this in the Psalms, such as that beginning, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” Travellers have been delighted to see the footprint of man on a barren shore, and we love to see the waymarks of pilgrims while passing through the vale of tears.

The pilgrims dig the well, but, strange enough, it fills from the top instead of the bottom. We use the means, but the blessing does not spring from the means. We dig a well, but heaven fills it with rain. The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord. The means are connected with the end, but they do not of themselves produce it. See here the rain fills the pools, so that the wells become useful as reservoirs for the water; labour is not lost, but yet it does not supersede divine help.

Grace may well be compared to rain for its purity, for its refreshing and vivifying influence, for its coming alone from above, and for the sovereignty with which it is given or withheld. May our readers have showers of blessing, and may the wells they have digged be filled with water! Oh, what are means and ordinances without the smile of heaven! They are as clouds without rain, and pools without water. O God of love, open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing!

# Word Live – 9/13/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/13/20

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

# Today in the Word – 9/13/20

# A False Start

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 13:1–15**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a1%e2%80%9315)

### Samuel Rebukes Saul

13 Saul was thirty[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a1%e2%80%9315#fen-NIV-7487a)] years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a1%e2%80%9315#fen-NIV-7487b)] two years.

2Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand were with him at Mikmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes.

3Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, “Let the Hebrews hear!” 4So all Israel heard the news: “Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become obnoxious to the Philistines.” And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

5The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a1%e2%80%9315#fen-NIV-7491c)] chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Mikmash, east of Beth Aven. 6When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns. 7Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. 8He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul’s men began to scatter. 9So he said, “Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.” And Saul offered up the burnt offering. 10Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.

11“What have you done?” asked Samuel.

Saul replied, “When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Mikmash, 12I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord’s favor.’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.”

13“You have done a foolish thing,” Samuel said. “You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. 14But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command.”

15Then Samuel left Gilgal[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a1%e2%80%9315#fen-NIV-7501d)] and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 13:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a1%e2%80%9315#en-NIV-7487) A few late manuscripts of the Septuagint; Hebrew does not have thirty.
2. [1 Samuel 13:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a1%e2%80%9315#en-NIV-7487) Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Acts 13:21); Masoretic Text does not have forty-.
3. [1 Samuel 13:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a1%e2%80%9315#en-NIV-7491) Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac; Hebrew thirty thousand
4. [1 Samuel 13:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a1%e2%80%9315#en-NIV-7501) Hebrew; Septuagint Gilgal and went his way; the rest of the people went after Saul to meet the army, and they went out of Gilgal

At the track meet, I watched in dismay as the front runner for our team lost his footing and fell. The cheers of the crowd quickly turned to groans. We all know that a strong start does not always guarantee a good finish.

The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart. 1 Samuel 13:14

In today’s reading, Saul’s future seemed promising. The handsome king would reign over Israel from age 30 to 72. But while Saul’s victory over the Ammonites at the beginning of his reign seemed like an omen of good things to come, it would turn out to be a false start.

Saul divided his troops between himself and his son Jonathan. Jonathan’s victory in Geba provoked a strong reaction when the Philistines responded with overwhelming force (v. 5). Not only their vast numbers but also their ability to deploy chariots gave the Philistines a significant advantage over the Israelite troops. Terrified by this disparity in force, many in Saul’s army began to desert. Some took refuge in caves while others fled across the Jordan. Those troops who remained “were quaking with fear” (v. 7).

Samuel had commanded Saul to wait at Gilgal for direction (1 Sam. 10:8). Instead, affected by the fear of his troops and anxious about the number of deserters, Saul attempted to force God’s hand by fulfilling Samuel’s role (v. 9). In his rebuke, Samuel revealed what would have happened had Saul obeyed, along with the tragic outcome of his disobedience (vv. 10–14).

Here and later, we find that Saul is a tragic figure. We are tempted to feel sorry for him. But there was more to Saul’s failure than inept leadership. His refusal to wait and the decision to sacrifice sprang from a desire to manipulate God. This proved to be Saul’s pattern, and, sadly, it would ultimately cost him the kingdom.

**Apply the Word**

What’s the difference between praying in faith and attempting to manipulate God? Ultimately it is our attitude of submission. We pray, but God controls the outcome. God is sympathetic to our cry, but He is not under our control.

### Pray with Us

Saul’s life teaches us a great deal about the lack of faith and failure. If you have made similar mistakes in your own life, ask God to make you a stronger, more committed follower of Christ.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/13/20

# Friendly Fin

**Read:** [**Genesis 4:8–16**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%204.8%E2%80%9316)

8Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#fen-NIV-88a)] While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

9Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

10The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. 11Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. 12When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

13Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear. 14Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

15But the Lord said to him, “Not so[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#fen-NIV-95b)]; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. 16So Cain went out from the Lord’s presence and lived in the land of Nod,[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-96c" \o "See footnote c)] east of Eden.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Genesis 4:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-88) Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Masoretic Text does not have “Let’s go out to the field.”
2. [Genesis 4:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-95) Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew Very well
3. [Genesis 4:16](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-96) Nod means wandering (see verses 12 and 14).

Am I my brother’s keeper? [Genesis 4:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%204.9)

A marine biologist was swimming near the Cook Islands in the South Pacific when a 50,000-pound humpback whale suddenly appeared and tucked her under its fin. The woman thought her life was over. But after swimming slowly in circles, the whale let her go. It’s then that the biologist saw a tiger shark leaving the area. The woman believes the whale had been protecting her—keeping her from danger.

In a world of danger, we’re called to watch out for others. But you might ask yourself, Should I really be expected to be responsible for someone else? Or in Cain’s words: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” ([Genesis 4:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%204.9)). The rest of the Old Testament resounds with the thunderous response: Yes! Just as Adam was to care for the garden, so Cain was to care for Abel. Israel was to keep watch over the vulnerable and care for the needy. Yet they did the opposite—exploiting the people, oppressing the poor, and abdicating the calling to love their neighbors as themselves ([Isaiah 3:14–15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%203.14%E2%80%9315)).

Yet, in the Cain and Abel story, God continued to watch over Cain, even after he was sent away ([Genesis 4:15–16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%204.15%E2%80%9316)). God did for Cain what Cain should have done for Abel. It’s a beautiful foreshadowing of what God in Jesus would come to do for us. Jesus keeps us in His care, and He empowers us to go and do likewise for others.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

Who has God entrusted to your care? How have you embraced that responsibility? How have you tried to evade or avoid it?

Compassionate God, thank You for Your care for me. You keep me and watch over me. Help me to do the same for others.

#### Insight

[Genesis 2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%202) describes how God placed Adam and Eve in the garden to work it and take care of it. In turn, the garden would take care of them by providing them with all the food they’d need. However, sin disrupted this mutual relationship between humanity and the earth. When Adam and Eve sinned, one of the consequences was that the earth wouldn’t be as fruitful for them as it had once been. “[The earth] will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field” ([Genesis 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%203.18)).

A broken relationship with the ground was also a consequence for Cain when God punished him for killing Abel. God said the ground wouldn’t produce anything for him (4:12). Cain splattered the ground with his brother’s blood and the ground became barren for him.

# God Calling – 9/13/20

# No Other Name

My Name is the Power that turns evil aside, that summons all good to your aid.  Spirits of evil flee at the sound of "Jesus."  Spoken in fear, in weakness, in sorrow, in pain, it is an appeal I never fail to answer.  "Jesus."

Use My Name often. Think of the unending call of "Mother" made by her children. To help, to care, to decide, to appeal, "Mother." Use My Name in that same way - simply, naturally, forcefully.  "Jesus."

Use it not only when you need help but to express Love. Uttered aloud, or in the silence of your hearts, it will alter an atmosphere from one of discord to one of Love. It will raise the standard of talk and thought.  "Jesus."

"There is none other Name under Heaven whereby you can be saved."

Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth. Song of Solomon 1:3

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/14/20

# Arguments or Obedience



…the simplicity that is in Christ.  —[2 Corinthians 11:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+11%3A3)

Simplicity is the secret to seeing things clearly. A saint does not think clearly until a long time passes, but a saint ought to see clearly without any difficulty. You cannot think through spiritual confusion to make things clear; to make things clear, you must obey. In intellectual matters you can think things out, but in spiritual matters you will only think yourself into further wandering thoughts and more confusion. If there is something in your life upon which God has put His pressure, then obey Him in that matter. Bring all your “arguments and…every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” regarding the matter, and everything will become as clear as daylight to you ([2 Corinthians 10:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+10:5)). Your reasoning capacity will come later, but reasoning is not how we see. We see like children, and when we try to be wise we see nothing (see [Matthew 11:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+11:25)).

Even the very smallest thing that we allow in our lives that is not under the control of the Holy Spirit is completely sufficient to account for spiritual confusion, and spending all of our time thinking about it will still never make it clear. Spiritual confusion can only be conquered through obedience. As soon as we obey, we have discernment. This is humiliating, because when we are confused we know that the reason lies in the state of our mind. But when our natural power of sight is devoted and submitted in obedience to the Holy Spirit, it becomes the very power by which we perceive God’s will, and our entire life is kept in simplicity.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One Who is leading.  My Utmost for His Highest, March 19, 761 L

# CCEL – 9/14/20

**I, even I, am he that comforteth you.**—[ISA. 51:12.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.51.html" \l "Isa.51.12)

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.—Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.—As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.—Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

Another Comforter . . . even the Spirit of truth.—The Spirit . . . helpeth our infirmities.

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

[II Cor. 1:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.3). -[Psa. 103:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.13). -[Isa. 66:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.66.html" \l "Isa.66.13). -[I Pet. 5:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.7).[Psa. 86:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.86.html" \l "Ps.86.15).[John 14:16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.16). -[Rom. 8:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.26).[Rev. 21:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.21.html" \l "Rev.21.4).

“There were also with him other little ships.” **[Mark 4:36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.4.html" \l "Mark.4.36)**

Jesus was the Lord High Admiral of the sea that night, and his presence preserved the whole convoy. It is well to sail with Jesus, even though it be in a little ship. When we sail in Christ’s company, we may not make sure of fair weather, for great storms may toss the vessel which carries the Lord himself, and we must not expect to find the sea less boisterous around our little boat. If we go with Jesus we must be content to fare as he fares; and when the waves are rough to him, they will be rough to us. It is by tempest and tossing that we shall come to land, as he did before us.

When the storm swept over Galilee’s dark lake all faces gathered blackness, and all hearts dreaded shipwreck. When all creature help was useless, the slumbering Saviour arose, and with a word, transformed the riot of the tempest into the deep quiet of a calm; then were the little vessels at rest as well as that which carried the Lord. Jesus is the star of the sea; and though there be sorrow upon the sea, when Jesus is on it there is joy too. May our hearts make Jesus their anchor, their rudder, their lighthouse, their life-boat, and their harbour. His Church is the Admiral’s flagship, let us attend her movements, and cheer her officers with our presence. He himself is the great attraction; let us follow ever in his wake, mark his signals, steer by his chart, and never fear while he is within hail. Not one ship in the convoy shall suffer wreck; the great Commodore will steer every barque in safety to the desired haven. By faith we will slip our cable for another day’s cruise, and sail forth with Jesus into a sea of tribulation. Winds and waves will not spare us, but they all obey him; and, therefore, whatever squalls may occur without, faith shall feel a blessed calm within. He is ever in the centre of the weather-beaten company: let us rejoice in him. His vessel has reached the haven, and so shall ours.

# Word Live – 9/14/20

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

# Scripture Union – 9/14/20

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

# Today in the Word – 9/14/20

# A Rash Vow

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 13:16–14:52**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52)

### Israel Without Weapons

16Saul and his son Jonathan and the men with them were staying in Gibeah[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#fen-NIV-7502a)] in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Mikmash. 17Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp in three detachments. One turned toward Ophrah in the vicinity of Shual, 18another toward Beth Horon, and the third toward the borderland overlooking the Valley of Zeboyim facing the wilderness.

19Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, “Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!” 20So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plow points, mattocks, axes and sickles[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#fen-NIV-7506b)] sharpened. 21The price was two-thirds of a shekel[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#fen-NIV-7507c)] for sharpening plow points and mattocks, and a third of a shekel[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#fen-NIV-7507d)] for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing goads.

22So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

### Jonathan Attacks the Philistines

23Now a detachment of Philistines had gone out to the pass at Mikmash. 14 1One day Jonathan son of Saul said to his young armor-bearer, “Come, let’s go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side.” But he did not tell his father.

2Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men, 3among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod’s brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord’s priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left.

4On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff; one was called Bozez and the other Seneh. 5One cliff stood to the north toward Mikmash, the other to the south toward Geba.

6Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, “Come, let’s go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.”

7“Do all that you have in mind,” his armor-bearer said. “Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul.”

8Jonathan said, “Come on, then; we will cross over toward them and let them see us. 9If they say to us, ‘Wait there until we come to you,’ we will stay where we are and not go up to them. 10But if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands.”

11So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. “Look!” said the Philistines. “The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in.” 12The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, “Come up to us and we’ll teach you a lesson.”

So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, “Climb up after me; the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.”

13Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him. 14In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.

### Israel Routs the Philistines

15Then panic struck the whole army—those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties—and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52" \l "fen-NIV-7524e" \o "See footnote e)]

16Saul’s lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions. 17Then Saul said to the men who were with him, “Muster the forces and see who has left us.” When they did, it was Jonathan and his armor-bearer who were not there.

18Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ark of God.” (At that time it was with the Israelites.)[[f](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#fen-NIV-7527f)] 19While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.”

20Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords. 21Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. 22When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit. 23So on that day the Lord saved Israel, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.

### Jonathan Eats Honey

24Now the Israelites were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, “Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!” So none of the troops tasted food.

25The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground. 26When they went into the woods, they saw the honey oozing out; yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath. 27But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.[[g](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52" \l "fen-NIV-7536g" \o "See footnote g)] 28Then one of the soldiers told him, “Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, ‘Cursed be anyone who eats food today!’ That is why the men are faint.”

29Jonathan said, “My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey. 30How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?”

31That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Mikmash to Aijalon, they were exhausted. 32They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood. 33Then someone said to Saul, “Look, the men are sinning against the Lord by eating meat that has blood in it.”

“You have broken faith,” he said. “Roll a large stone over here at once.” 34Then he said, “Go out among the men and tell them, ‘Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the Lord by eating meat with blood still in it.’”

So everyone brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there. 35Then Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first time he had done this.

36Saul said, “Let us go down and pursue the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive.”

“Do whatever seems best to you,” they replied.

But the priest said, “Let us inquire of God here.”

37So Saul asked God, “Shall I go down and pursue the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel’s hand?” But God did not answer him that day.

38Saul therefore said, “Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and let us find out what sin has been committed today. 39As surely as the Lord who rescues Israel lives, even if the guilt lies with my son Jonathan, he must die.” But not one of them said a word.

40Saul then said to all the Israelites, “You stand over there; I and Jonathan my son will stand over here.”

“Do what seems best to you,” they replied.

41Then Saul prayed to the Lord, the God of Israel, “Why have you not answered your servant today? If the fault is in me or my son Jonathan, respond with Urim, but if the men of Israel are at fault,[[h](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52" \l "fen-NIV-7550h" \o "See footnote h)] respond with Thummim.” Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared. 42Saul said, “Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son.” And Jonathan was taken.

43Then Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you have done.”

So Jonathan told him, “I tasted a little honey with the end of my staff. And now I must die!”

44Saul said, “May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan.”

45But the men said to Saul, “Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the Lord lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God’s help.” So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

46Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they withdrew to their own land.

47After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought against their enemies on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings[[i](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52" \l "fen-NIV-7556i" \o "See footnote i)] of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment on them.[[j](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52" \l "fen-NIV-7556j" \o "See footnote j)] 48He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them.

### Saul’s Family

49Saul’s sons were Jonathan, Ishvi and Malki-Shua. The name of his older daughter was Merab, and that of the younger was Michal. 50His wife’s name was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of Saul’s army was Abner son of Ner, and Ner was Saul’s uncle. 51Saul’s father Kish and Abner’s father Ner were sons of Abiel.

52All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines, and whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him into his service.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 13:16](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#en-NIV-7502) Two Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts Geba, a variant of Gibeah
2. [1 Samuel 13:20](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#en-NIV-7506) Septuagint; Hebrew plow points
3. [1 Samuel 13:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#en-NIV-7507) That is, about 1/4 ounce or about 8 grams
4. [1 Samuel 13:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#en-NIV-7507) That is, about 1/8 ounce or about 4 grams
5. [1 Samuel 14:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#en-NIV-7524) Or a terrible panic
6. [1 Samuel 14:18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#en-NIV-7527) Hebrew; Septuagint “Bring the ephod.” (At that time he wore the ephod before the Israelites.)
7. [1 Samuel 14:27](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#en-NIV-7536) Or his strength was renewed; similarly in verse 29
8. [1 Samuel 14:41](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#en-NIV-7550) Septuagint; Hebrew does not have “Why … at fault.
9. [1 Samuel 14:47](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#en-NIV-7556) Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint king
10. [1 Samuel 14:47](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+13%3a16%e2%80%9314%3a52#en-NIV-7556) Hebrew; Septuagint he was victorious

Did you ever make a promise you couldn’t keep? Maybe you agreed to something in haste, later regretting what you vowed? As Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 5:6, “Do not let your mouth lead you into sin.” In today’s passage, Saul acted contrary to this advice. Israel had demanded that God provide them with “a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles” (1 Sam. 8:20). Yet after a promising start, Saul faltered. In chapter 13, we find Saul seated under a pomegranate tree on the outskirts of Gibeah, surrounded by his troops. While Saul was holding court, God’s people were hard-pressed by the Philistines.

Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. Ecclesiastes 5:6

Compared to the more professional Philistine army, Israel was outnumbered and underequipped. The Philistines had chariots and swords, while God’s people had to pay their enemies to sharpen their farm implements. Only Saul and his son Jonathan had proper weapons. Between these two, it was Jonathan who proved the more daring. Eager to engage the enemy, he and his armor-bearer executed a daring raid. Saul joined the fight when he saw that God had sent such a panic among the Philistine troops that they fought amongst themselves. Jonathan’s actions demonstrated a boldness born of faith.

Saul bound his troops with a harmful oath when he pronounced a curse on anyone who ate food before the king’s enemies were defeated. Saul’s primary motivation was not God’s glory or Israel’s protection but personal revenge. The consequences of Saul’s rash vow cascaded from Jonathan to the whole army, whose hunger drove them to eat the captured sheep, cattle, and calves without first draining the blood as was required by the law of Moses (Lev. 3:17; 7:25–26).

**Apply the Word**

How does a rash commitment differ from taking a leap of faith? It may be helpful to remember that faith is focused on God and shaped by the guidelines of His Word. Think and pray before you promise.

### Pray with Us

Today’s devotional encourages us to be faithful to our word and to seek spiritual maturity. May the Lord grant us spiritual discernment, humility, and a desire to live in a way that’s pleasing to Him!

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/14/20

# Goodbyes and Hellos

**Read:** [**Revelation 21:1–5**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.1%E2%80%935)

### A New Heaven and a New Earth

21 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-31055a" \o "See footnote a)] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-31058b" \o "See footnote b)] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

5He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

#### Footnotes:

1. [Revelation 21:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#en-NIV-31055) Isaiah 65:17
2. [Revelation 21:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#en-NIV-31058) Isaiah 25:8

God himself will be with them and be their God. “He will wipe every tear from their eyes.” [Revelation 21:3–4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.3%E2%80%934)

When my brother David suddenly died of cardiac failure, my perspectives on life changed dramatically. Dave was the fourth of seven children, but he was the first of us to pass—and the unexpected nature of that passing gave me much to ponder. It became apparent that as age began to catch up with us, our family’s future was going to be marked more by loss than by gain. It was going to be characterized as much by goodbyes as hellos.

None of this was a surprise intellectually—that is just how life works. But this realization was an emotional lightning bolt to the brain. It gave a fresh, new significance to every moment life gives us and every opportunity time allows. And it placed a huge new value on the reality of a future reunion, where no goodbyes will ever be needed.

This ultimate reality is at the heart of what we find in [Revelation 21:3–4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.3%E2%80%934): “God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Though today we may find ourselves experiencing seasons of long goodbyes, our trust in Christ’s death and resurrection promises an eternity of hellos.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How do you cope with grief and the loss of loved ones? What comfort does it bring to know that you will one day see them again?

Father, I thank You that You’re the living God who gives everlasting life. I pray that You would use our eternal hope to comfort us in our seasons of loss and grief.

#### Insight

Today’s passage gives us a glimpse of heaven, describing it as a physical place (vv. 1–2). Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for us ([John 14:2–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.2%E2%80%933)), and this promise is fulfilled in the New Jerusalem, the Holy City ([Revelation 21:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.2)). While it’s a great comfort that heaven is a perfect place (v. 4), the most important thing is that it’s the dwelling place of God (v. 3). In this final vision of the beginning of eternity (21:1–22:9), John hears Christ declaring, “It is done” (21:6). The New Living Translation renders it, “It is finished!” echoing Christ’s victorious cry from the cross ([John 19:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2019.30)). Sin’s curse will one day be completely removed and reversed ([Revelation 21:4–5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.4%E2%80%935); see [Genesis 3:16–19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%203.16%E2%80%9319)).

# God Calling – 9/14/20

# When Faith Fails

**Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.     Mark 9:24**

This cry of the human heart is as expressive of human need as it was when uttered to Me while I was on earth. It expresses the soul's progress.

As a soul realizes Me and My Power, and knows Me as Helper and Savior, that soul believes in Me more and more. At the same time it is more conscious than before of its falling short of absolute trust in Me.

"Lord, I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief." The soul's progress - an increased belief - then a cry for more faith - a plea to conquer all unbelief, all lack of trust.

That cry heard. That prayer answered. More faith, and at the same time more power to see where trust is lacking.

My children seek to go up this path, leading by each stage, nearer to Me.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.    Hebrews 3:12