# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/21/21

# The Missionary’s Predestined Purpose



Now the Lord says, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant… —[Isaiah 49:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Isaiah+49%3A5)

The first thing that happens after we recognize our election by God in Christ Jesus is the destruction of our preconceived ideas, our narrow-minded thinking, and all of our other allegiances— we are turned solely into servants of God’s own purpose. The entire human race was created to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Sin has diverted the human race onto another course, but it has not altered God’s purpose to the slightest degree. And when we are born again we are brought into the realization of God’s great purpose for the human race, namely, that He created us for Himself. This realization of our election by God is the most joyful on earth, and we must learn to rely on this tremendous creative purpose of God. The first thing God will do is force the interests of the whole world through the channel of our hearts. The love of God, and even His very nature, is introduced into us. And we see the nature of Almighty God purely focused in [John 3:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3:16)— “For God so loved the world….”

We must continually keep our soul open to the fact of God’s creative purpose, and never confuse or cloud it with our own intentions. If we do, God will have to force our intentions aside no matter how much it may hurt. A missionary is created for the purpose of being God’s servant, one in whom God is glorified. Once we realize that it is through the salvation of Jesus Christ that we are made perfectly fit for the purpose of God, we will understand why Jesus Christ is so strict and relentless in His demands. He demands absolute righteousness from His servants, because He has put into them the very nature of God.

Beware lest you forget God’s purpose for your life.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

To read the Bible according to God’s providential order in your circumstances is the only way to read it, viz., in the blood and passion of personal life. Disciples Indeed, 387 R

# CCEL – 9/21/21

**We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.**—[ROM. 8:28.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.28)

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.—Ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good.

All things are yours; whether . . . the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.—All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

[Psa. 76:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.76.html" \l "Ps.76.10). -[Gen. 50:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.50.html" \l "Gen.50.20).[I Cor. 3:21-23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.3.html" \l "iCor.3.21). -[II Cor. 4:15-17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html" \l "iiCor.4.15).[Jas. 1:2-4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.2).

“I will rejoice over them to do them good.” **[Jeremiah 32:41](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.32.html" \l "Jer.32.41)**

How heart-cheering to the believer is the delight which God has in his saints! We cannot see any reason in ourselves why the Lord should take pleasure in us; we cannot take delight in ourselves, for we often have to groan, being burdened; conscious of our sinfulness, and deploring our unfaithfulness; and we fear that God’s people cannot take much delight in us, for they must perceive so much of our imperfections and our follies, that they may rather lament our infirmities than admire our graces. But we love to dwell upon this transcendent truth, this glorious mystery: that as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so does the Lord rejoice over us. We do not read anywhere that God delighteth in the cloud-capped mountains, or the sparkling stars, but we do read that he delighteth in the habitable parts of the earth, and that his delights are with the sons of men. We do not find it written that even angels give his soul delight; nor doth he say, concerning cherubim and seraphim, “Thou shalt be called Hephzibah, for the Lord delighteth in thee”; but he does say all that to poor fallen creatures like ourselves, debased and depraved by sin, but saved, exalted, and glorified by his grace. In what strong language he expresses his delight in his people! Who could have conceived of the eternal One as bursting forth into a song? Yet it is written, “He will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” As he looked upon the world he had made, he said, “It is very good”; but when he beheld those who are the purchase of Jesus’ blood, his own chosen ones, it seemed as if the great heart of the Infinite could restrain itself no longer, but overflowed in divine exclamations of joy. Should not we utter our grateful response to such a marvellous declaration of his love, and sing, “I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation?”

# Word Live – 9/21/21

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

# Scripture Union – 9/21/21

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

# Today in the Word – 9/21/21

# Empowered by God

**Read:** [**2 Corinthians 4**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+4)

### **Present Weakness and Resurrection Life**

4 Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God. 3And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. 6For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+4+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28866a)] made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

7But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. 12So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

13It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+4+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28873b)] Since we have that same spirit of[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+4+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28873c)] faith, we also believe and therefore speak, 14because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. 15All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

16Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [2 Corinthians 4:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+4+&version=NIV#en-NIV-28866) Gen. 1:3
2. [2 Corinthians 4:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+4+&version=NIV#en-NIV-28873) Psalm 116:10 (see Septuagint)
3. [2 Corinthians 4:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+4+&version=NIV#en-NIV-28873) Or Spirit-given

A pair of scientists from Texas A&M University have calculated that the human eye can detect the light of a candle flame from a distance of 2.76 kilometers or 1.71 miles. While this is not nearly as far as the 30 miles that some people claim on the internet, it’s still pretty impressive!

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 2 Corinthians 4:7

Jesus told His disciples, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matt. 5:14). In today’s reading Paul echoes this saying to explain why he is not discouraged. The apostle was motivated to proclaim the gospel by God’s mercy shown to him (v. 1). Paul considered himself to be the least of the apostles because he had persecuted the church. Yet he could also say, “[B]y the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect” (1 Cor. 15:10).

Paul’s strategy for preaching the gospel was to rely on the power of God instead of an elaborate speaking style or clever arguments.

In contrast, his opponents, who passed themselves off as “super-apostles,” seemed to be one thing but were really something else (2 Cor. 4:2). Paul’s style seemed bare, but the results showed that his message’s power came from God (v. 7).

If the gospel is so powerful, why do some reject his message? The gospel is veiled to those who are perishing. They refuse to believe because they are blinded by Satan, who Paul describes as “the god of this age” (vv. 3–4). This did not discourage Paul because he was also once an unbeliever. His troubles were part of God’s plan, “so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God” (v. 15).

**Apply the Word**

Do not lose heart when someone resists the gospel. Share it as plainly as you are able. Ask God to open the eyes of the blind. Those who reject now may respond later.

### **Pray with Us**

Grant us courage and conviction in proclaiming the gospel. Let us fear You more than man, and care more about sinners’ eternal fate than their opinion of us. No one is truly safe until they know You.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/21/21

# Truth, Lies, and Vigilantes

### Today's Devotional **Read:** [**Exodus 23:1–9**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2023.1%E2%80%939)

### **Laws of Justice and Mercy**

23 “Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness.

2“Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, 3and do not show favoritism to a poor person in a lawsuit.

4“If you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it. 5If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help them with it.

6“Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits. 7Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty.

8“Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the innocent.

9“Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt.

Do not spread false reports. [Exodus 23:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2023.1)

During the 2018 baseball season, a Chicago Cubs coach wanted to give a baseball to a young boy sitting by the dugout. But when the coach tossed the ball toward him, a man scooped it up instead. Video of the event went viral. News outlets and social media skewered this “brute” of a man. Except viewers didn’t know the whole story. Earlier, the man had helped the young boy snag a foul ball, and they agreed to share any additional balls that came their way. Unfortunately, it took twenty-four hours before the true story emerged. The mob had already done its damage, demonizing an innocent man.

Too often, we think we have all the facts when we only have fragments. In our modern gotcha culture, with snippets of dramatic video and inflamed tweets, it’s easy to condemn people without hearing the full story. However, Scripture warns us not to “spread false reports” ([Exodus 23:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2023.1)). We must do everything possible to confirm the truth before leveling accusations, making sure not to participate in lies. We should be cautious whenever a vigilante spirit takes hold, whenever passions ignite and waves of judgment swell. We want to safeguard ourselves from “follow[ing] the crowd in doing wrong” (v. 2).

 As believers in Jesus, may God help us not to spread falsehoods. May He provide what we need to exhibit wisdom and to make certain our words are actually true.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Take a moment to recollect a time when someone was falsely accused. What was the damage, and how was the wrong made right?

God, with things moving so fast these days, it’s often hard to know what’s real. Help me to listen, pay attention, and speak only the truth.

#### **Insight**

God gave the Ten Commandments so His people could know how to love Him faithfully and wholeheartedly ([Exodus 20:1–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2020.1%E2%80%9311); [Matthew 22:38](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2022.38)) and love their neighbor as they’d love themselves ([Exodus 20:12–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2020.12%E2%80%9317); [Matthew 22:39](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2022.39)). Moses then laid down various stipulations that if followed would enable the Israelites to love their neighbors ([Exodus 21:1–23:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2021.1%E2%80%9323.9)). Because “the Lord is righteous, [and] he loves justice” ([Psalm 11:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2011.7)), Moses commanded them to “follow justice and justice alone” ([Deuteronomy 16:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2016.20)). “To act justly and to love mercy” is mandated of God’s people ([Micah 6:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Micah%206.8)). Love for neighbors means justice for everyone. Today’s passage, [Exodus 23:1–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2023.1%E2%80%939), is an application of the ninth commandment, which ensured evenhanded, impartial justice for all: “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor” (20:16). False accusation, malicious testimony, slander, and withholding justice because of external pressure, favoritism, or bribery all contribute to the perversion of true justice and repudiation of neighborly love.

By: [**K. T. Sim**](https://odb.org/author/ktsim/)

# God Calling – 9/21/21

# See The Father

**Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.  - John 14:8**

My children, have I been so long time with you, coming to you, speaking to you and yet have you not known the Father.

Your Father is the God and Controller of a mighty Universe.  But He is as I am.  All the Love and the Strength and Beauty you have seen in Me are in My Father.

If you see that, and know Him and Me as we really are, then that sufficeth you - is really sufficient for you - completes your life - satisfies you - is all you need.

See the Father, see Me, and it sufficeth you.  This is Love in abundance.  Joy in abundance.  All you need.

Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Phillip?  He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.  - John 14:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/22/21

# The Missionary’s Master and Teacher



You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am ….I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master… —[John 13:13, 16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+13%3A13%2C+16)

To have a master and teacher is not the same thing as being mastered and taught. Having a master and teacher means that there is someone who knows me better than I know myself, who is closer than a friend, and who understands the remotest depths of my heart and is able to satisfy them fully. It means having someone who has made me secure in the knowledge that he has met and solved all the doubts, uncertainties, and problems in my mind. To have a master and teacher is this and nothing less— “…for One is your Teacher, the Christ…” ([Matthew 23:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23:8)).

Our Lord never takes measures to make me do what He wants. Sometimes I wish God would master and control me to make me do what He wants, but He will not. And at other times I wish He would leave me alone, and He does not.

“You call Me Teacher and Lord…”— but is He? Teacher, Master, and Lord have little place in our vocabulary. We prefer the words Savior, Sanctifier, and Healer. The only word that truly describes the experience of being mastered is love, and we know little about love as God reveals it in His Word. The way we use the word obey is proof of this. In the Bible, obedience is based on a relationship between equals; for example, that of a son with his father. Our Lord was not simply God’s servant— He was His Son. “…though He was a Son,yet He learned obedience…” ([Hebrews 5:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+5:8)). If we are consciously aware that we are being mastered, that idea itself is proof that we have no master. If that is our attitude toward Jesus, we are far away from having the relationship He wants with us. He wants us in a relationship where He is so easily our Master and Teacher that we have no conscious awareness of it— a relationship where all we know is that we are His to obey.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

We are all based on a conception of importance, either our own importance, or the importance of someone else; Jesus tells us to go and teach based on the revelation of His importance. “All power is given unto Me.… Go ye therefore ….”  So Send I You, 1325 R

# CCEL – 9/22/21

**My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.**—[PSA. 104:34.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.104.html" \l "Ps.104.34)

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.—For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.—One pearl of great price.—The prince of the kings of the earth.

His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.—The head over all things.—He is the head of the body, the church.

His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.—He could not be hid.

His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.—Never man spake like this man.

His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.—Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.—Lord, lift thou up the light thy countenance upon us.

[Song 2:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.2.html" \l "Song.2.3). -[Psa. 89:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.89.html" \l "Ps.89.6).[Song 5:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.10). -[Matt. 13:46](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.13.html" \l "Matt.13.46). -[Rev. 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.1.html" \l "Rev.1.5).[Song 5:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.11). -[Eph. 1:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.22). -[Col. 1:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.18).[Song 5:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.13). -[Mark 7:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.7.html" \l "Mark.7.24).[Song 5:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html#Song.5.13). -[John 7:46](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.7.html" \l "John.7.46).[Song 5:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.15). -[Psa. 31:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.31.html" \l "Ps.31.16). -[Psa. 4:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.4.html" \l "Ps.4.6).

“Let Israel rejoice in him.” [Psalm 149:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.149.html" \l "Ps.149.2)

Be glad of heart, O believer, but take care that thy gladness has its spring in the Lord. Thou hast much cause for gladness in thy God, for thou canst sing with David, “God, my exceeding joy.” Be glad that the Lord reigneth, that Jehovah is King! Rejoice that he sits upon the throne, and ruleth all things! Every attribute of God should become a fresh ray in the sunlight of our gladness. That he is wise should make us glad, knowing as we do our own foolishness. That he is mighty, should cause us to rejoice who tremble at our weakness. That he is everlasting, should always be a theme of joy when we know that we wither as the grass. That he is unchanging, should perpetually yield us a song, since we change every hour. That he is full of grace, that he is overflowing with it, and that this grace in covenant he has given to us; that it is ours to cleanse us, ours to keep us, ours to sanctify us, ours to perfect us, ours to bring us to glory—all this should tend to make us glad in him. This gladness in God is as a deep river; we have only as yet touched its brink, we know a little of its clear sweet, heavenly streams, but onward the depth is greater, and the current more impetuous in its joy. The Christian feels that he may delight himself not only in what God is, but also in all that God has done in the past. The Psalms show us that God’s people in olden times were wont to think much of God’s actions, and to have a song concerning each of them. So let God’s people now rehearse the deeds of the Lord! Let them tell of his mighty acts, and “sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously.” Nor let them ever cease to sing, for as new mercies flow to them day by day, so should their gladness in the Lord’s loving acts in providence and in grace show itself in continued thanksgiving. Be glad ye children of Zion and rejoice in the Lord your God.

# Word Live – 9/22/21

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

# Scripture Union – 9/22/21

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

# Today in the Word – 9/22/21

# Strike the Tent

**Read:** [**2 Corinthians 5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5)

### **Awaiting the New Body**

5 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, 3because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

6Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7For we live by faith, not by sight. 8We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

### **The Ministry of Reconciliation**

11Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. 12We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. 13If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

16So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%205&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28895a)] The old has gone, the new is here! 18All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21God made him who had no sin to be sin[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%205&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28899b)] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [2 Corinthians 5:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%205&version=NIV#en-NIV-28895) Or Christ, that person is a new creation.
2. [2 Corinthians 5:21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%205&version=NIV#en-NIV-28899) Or be a sin offering

One of 19th-century hymn writer John R. Sweney’s gospel songs begins, Strike our tents, the night is over! / See, the shadows one by one / Fade before the coming splendor / Of the morning’s golden sun.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Corinthians 5:1

Perhaps Sweney was thinking of today’s passage when he penned these words. Paul, who was a tentmaker by trade, calls the body “the earthly tent we live in” and assures his readers that “when it is destroyed we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands” (v. 1). The indwelling Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee of this promise (v. 5). He calls the Spirit a “deposit,” a Greek term that appears in contemporary writings to refer to earnest money paid in advance to someone to show that the rest will follow.

This assurance gave Paul confidence when he despaired of life because it meant that the worst that could happen would only usher him into the Lord’s glorious presence. Although he was not eager to die, Paul’s preference was “to be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (v. 8). With such hope, why would Paul even want to remain? The awareness that all must one day appear before the judgment seat of Christ motivated him to “try to persuade others” (v. 11).

Paul saw himself as an agent of reconciliation. In his first letter to the Corinthians, he summarized his message by stating the facts about Christ (1 Cor. 15:3–8). Here the apostle expresses it in terms of God’s intent: “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (v. 20). Reconciliation is possible only because Jesus Christ took our sin upon Himself (v. 21).

**Apply the Word**

Have you been reconciled to God? There is only one way. Accept Jesus’ payment on your behalf. You will be made righteous and receive the guarantee of the Holy Spirit.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord God, reconcile us to You; no longer count our sin against us, but make us new. We accept Your Son, Jesus Christ, who became sin for us, and ask to become Your righteousness.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/22/21

# No Misunderstanding

**Read:** [**Romans 8:26–30**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.26%E2%80%9330)

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

28And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A26%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28145a)] have been called according to his purpose. 29For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

[Read full chapter](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8&version=NIV)

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Romans 8:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A26%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#en-NIV-28145) Or that all things work together for good to those who love God, who; or that in all things God works together with those who love him to bring about what is good—with those who

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. [Romans 8:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.28)

Alexa, Siri, and other voice assistants embedded in smart devices in our homes occasionally misunderstand what we’re saying. A six-year-old talked to her family’s new device about cookies and a dollhouse. Later her mom received an email saying that an order of seven pounds of cookies and a $170 dollhouse were on their way to her home. Even a talking parrot in London, whose owner had never bought anything online, somehow ordered a package of golden gift boxes without her knowledge. One person asked their device to “turn on the living room lights,” and it replied, “There is no pudding room.”

There’s no such misunderstanding on God’s part when we talk with Him. He’s never confused, because He knows our hearts better than we do. The Spirit both searches our hearts and understands God’s will. The apostle Paul told the churches in Rome that God promises He’ll accomplish His good purpose of maturing us and making us more like His Son ([Romans 8:28–29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.28%E2%80%9329)). Even when because of “our weakness” we don’t know what we need in order to grow, the Spirit prays according to God’s will for us (vv. 26–27).

Troubled about how to express yourself to God? Not understanding what or how to pray? Say what you can from the heart. The Spirit will understand and accomplish God’s purpose.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What’s on your mind right now that you should share with God? How are you encouraged by the truth that He knows and understands what you’re facing?

Thank You, God, that You know my heart. I love You for that and many other reasons. Help me to express my thoughts to You and to trust You to understand.

#### **Insight**

The book of Romans was written by the apostle Paul to the believers in Christ in Rome most likely during his third missionary journey (around ad 57). He wrote this letter while in Corinth for a short while before heading to Jerusalem to deliver the offerings gathered by the churches of Asia to help the needy church in Jerusalem. Paul hadn’t planted the church in Rome, nor had he ever met its members, but he’d heard of their faith, which was “being reported all over the world” ([Romans 1:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%201.8)). Therefore, Paul longed to visit to encourage and help make them strong in their faith (v. 11). Thus we have this wonderful explanation of the gospel: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (v. 16).

By: [**Alyson Kieda**](https://odb.org/author/akieda/)

# God Calling – 9/22/21

# Joy Tribute

Jesus, Our Lord, we Thee adore.

Sing unto Me from a glad heart.  Sing and praise My Holy Name.  Praise is man's joy-tribute to Me, and as you praise, thrills of joy surge through your being, and you learn something of the joy of the Heavenly Host.

Sing unto him a new song, play skillfully with a loud noise.  For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth.  Psalm 33:3-4

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/23/21

# The Missionary’s Goal



He…said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem…" —[Luke 18:31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+18%3A31)

In our natural life our ambitions change as we grow, but in the Christian life the goal is given at the very beginning, and the beginning and the end are exactly the same, namely, our Lord Himself. We start with Christ and we end with Him— “…till we all come…to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ…” ([Ephesians 4:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+4:13)), not simply to our own idea of what the Christian life should be. The goal of the missionary is to do God’s will, not to be useful or to win the lost. A missionary is useful and he does win the lost, but that is not his goal. His goal is to do the will of his Lord.

In our Lord’s life, Jerusalem was the place where He reached the culmination of His Father’s will upon the cross, and unless we go there with Jesus we will have no friendship or fellowship with Him. Nothing ever diverted our Lord on His way to Jerusalem. He never hurried through certain villages where He was persecuted, or lingered in others where He was blessed. Neither gratitude nor ingratitude turned our Lord even the slightest degree away from His purpose to go “up to Jerusalem.”

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master” ([Matthew 10:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+10:24)). In other words, the same things that happened to our Lord will happen to us on our way to our “Jerusalem.” There will be works of God exhibited through us, people will get blessed, and one or two will show gratitude while the rest will show total ingratitude, but nothing must divert us from going “up to [our] Jerusalem.”

“…there they crucified Him…” ([Luke 23:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+23:33)). That is what happened when our Lord reached Jerusalem, and that event is the doorway to our salvation. The saints, however, do not end in crucifixion; by the Lord’s grace they end in glory. In the meantime our watchword should be summed up by each of us saying, “I too go ‘up to Jerusalem.’ ”

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 9/23/21

**Our God hath not forsaken us.**—[EZRA 9:9.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezra.9.html" \l "Ezra.9.9)

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.—If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.—Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.—Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.

Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.

[I Pet. 4:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.12). -[Heb. 12:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.7).[Deut. 13:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.13.html" \l "Deut.13.3).[I Sam. 12:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.12.html" \l "iSam.12.22). -[Isa. 49:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.49.html" \l "Isa.49.15). -[Psa. 146:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.146.html" \l "Ps.146.5).[Luke 18:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.18.html" \l "Luke.18.7).

“Accepted in the beloved.” [Ephesians 1:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.6)

What a state of privilege! It includes our justification before God, but the term “acceptance” in the Greek means more than that. It signifies that we are the objects of divine complacence, nay, even of divine delight. How marvellous that we, worms, mortals, sinners, should be the objects of divine love! But it is only “in the beloved.” Some Christians seem to be accepted in their own experience, at least, that is their apprehension. When their spirit is lively, and their hopes bright, they think God accepts them, for they feel so high, so heavenly-minded, so drawn above the earth! But when their souls cleave to the dust, they are the victims of the fear that they are no longer accepted. If they could but see that all their high joys do not exalt them, and all their low despondencies do not really depress them in their Father’s sight, but that they stand accepted in One who never alters, in One who is always the beloved of God, always perfect, always without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, how much happier they would be, and how much more they would honour the Saviour! Rejoice then, believer, in this: thou art accepted “in the beloved.” Thou lookest within, and thou sayest, “There is nothing acceptable here!” But look at Christ, and see if there is not everything acceptable there. Thy sins trouble thee; but God has cast thy sins behind his back, and thou art accepted in the Righteous One. Thou hast to fight with corruption, and to wrestle with temptation, but thou art already accepted in him who has overcome the powers of evil. The devil tempts thee; be of good cheer, he cannot destroy thee, for thou art accepted in him who has broken Satan’s head. Know by full assurance thy glorious standing. Even glorified souls are not more accepted than thou art. They are only accepted in heaven “in the beloved,” and thou art even now accepted in Christ after the same manner.

# Word Live – 9/23/21

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

# Scripture Union – 9/23/21

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

# Today in the Word – 9/23/21

# God's Fellow Workers

**Read:** [**2 Corinthians 6:1–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+6%3a1%e2%80%9313)

As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. 2For he says,

“In the time of my favor I heard you,  
    and in the day of salvation I helped you.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%206&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28901a)]

I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

### **Paul’s Hardships**

3We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. 4Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; 5in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; 6in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; 8through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; 9known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; 10sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

11We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. 12We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. 13As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [2 Corinthians 6:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%206&version=NIV#en-NIV-28901) Isaiah 49:8

When my son Drew was a little boy, he had a toy lawnmower. Whenever I cut the grass, he would position himself a few yards away and push his toy mower in tandem with me. He was very serious about it, even though his mower never cut a single blade.

As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. 2 Corinthians 6:1

Paul saw himself as a co-laborer with God in the ministry of reconciliation, but this was no child’s play. As God’s ambassador, the apostle made every effort not to give anyone a reason to discredit his ministry (v. 3). The false super-apostles who competed for the Corinthians’ attention boasted of their accomplishments and skills. On the other hand, Paul’s resume is a list of hardships suffered along with proofs of the grace God gave to endure them (vv. 3–10).

Although Paul considered himself to be God’s co-worker in the gospel, he was not a hired hand. Unlike the hired hand that Jesus criticized in John 10:13, who runs away because he “cares nothing for the sheep,” Paul felt a deep affection for the Corinthians. In verses 11–13 he pleads with them the way parents might plead with their children.

Although some of the Corinthians had closed their hearts to Paul, he refused to answer in kind. He continued to keep his heart open to them and risked further rejection by reaching out to them. Paul was able to do this because he recognized that God’s grace had created a window of opportunity that would not always remain open. This was the time of God’s favor. It is the age of grace, when salvation is offered as a gift to those who deserve only wrath. Those who “receive God’s grace in vain” (v. 1) are those who have been invited to receive this gift but dismiss it.

**Apply the Word**

God’s offer of grace is not indefinite. The day of salvation will give way to the day of judgment. Do not dismiss His mercy and ignore His grace. You may not have another opportunity tomorrow.

### **Pray with Us**

You are merciful. You give us each day as a new opportunity to submit and receive Your forgiveness, for You do not desire any to perish (2 Peter 3:9). We who have been forgiven thank You. Use us to bring more into the fold.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/23/21

# Frolicking in Freedom

 **Read:** [**Malachi 4:1–3**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mal%204.1%E2%80%933)

### **Judgment and Covenant Renewal**

4 [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+4%3A1%E2%80%933&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23140a)]“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. 2But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. 3Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,” says the Lord Almighty.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Malachi 4:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+4%3A1%E2%80%933&version=NIV#en-NIV-23140) In Hebrew texts 4:1-6 is numbered 3:19-24.

You will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. [Malachi 4:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mal%204.2)

A third-generation farmer, Jim was so moved when he read “You who revere my name . . . will go out and frolic like well-fed calves” ([Malachi 4:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mal%204.2)) that he prayed to receive Jesus’ offer of eternal life. Vividly recalling his own calves’ leaps of excitement after exiting their confined stalls at high speed, Jim finally understood God’s promise of true freedom.

Jim’s daughter told me this story because we’d been discussing the imagery in [Malachi 4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mal%204), where the prophet made a distinction between those who revered God’s name, or remained faithful to Him, and those who only trusted in themselves (4:1–2). The prophet was encouraging the Israelites to follow God at a time when so many, including the religious leaders, disregarded God and His standards for faithful living (1:12–14; 3:5–9). Malachi called the people to live faithfully because of a coming time when God would make the final distinction between these two groups. In this context, Malachi used the unexpected imagery of a frolicking calf to describe the unspeakable joy that the faithful group will experience when “the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays” (4:2).

Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of this promise, bringing the good news that true freedom is available to all people ([Luke 4:16–21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%204.16%E2%80%9321)). And one day, in God’s renewed and restored creation, we’ll experience this freedom fully. What indescribable joy it will be to frolic there!

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How have you experienced freedom in Jesus? What other images help you to visualize joy?

Jesus, help me to live joyfully as I remember the freedom only You provide.

#### **Insight**

The two word pictures used in [Malachi 4:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mal%204.2)—“the sun of righteousness” and “healing in its rays—”stand in contrast with the verses on either side. Judgment comes into focus in verse 1, “[the day] will burn like a furnace,” and in verse 3, the prophet says the wicked “will be ashes under the soles of your feet.” On the other hand, how exhilarating it is to think of “healing rays” from the “sun of righteousness” (referring to the manifestations of God’s kindness; see [Luke 1:78–79](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%201.78%E2%80%9379)). Then there’s the lively activity pictured in the words, “And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves” ([Malachi 4:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mal%204.2)). The blessed well-being vividly portrayed in this verse is the portion of those “who revere my name.” Revere is the translation of the Hebrew word yaw-ray'. This word is also used in 2:5 and 3:5 to remind God’s people to revere and fear Him in their worship.

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

# God Calling – 9/23/21

# Turn Again

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.   James 4:8

This is a law in the Spiritual Life.  You must turn to Me before you are conscious of My nearness.  It is that turning to Me you must cultivate in every circumstance.  A glad turning of thankfulness, or a turning of weak appeal.

It is so wonderful that naught is needed but that mute appeal.  You have no need to voice your longing.  No need to plead, no need to bring gifts.  How wonderful to feel you can so simply claim help, and so promptly, so lovingly, it is there.

Not only Help but the comfort and joy of Divine Nearness and Companionship.  A nearness that brings sweetness into life, and confidence, and peace.

Never fear, never lose heart.  Draw nigh to Me, and in that nearness is all you need.  My Presence alone can transform conditions and lives - bring Harmony and Beauty , Peace and Love.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.  James 1:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/24/21

# The “Go” of Preparation



If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. —[Matthew 5:23-24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+5%3A23-24%C2%A0)

It is easy for us to imagine that we will suddenly come to a point in our lives where we are fully prepared, but preparation is not suddenly accomplished. In fact, it is a process that must be steadily maintained. It is dangerous to become settled and complacent in our present level of experience. The Christian life requires preparation and more preparation.

The sense of sacrifice in the Christian life is readily appealing to a new Christian. From a human standpoint, the one thing that attracts us to Jesus Christ is our sense of the heroic, and a close examination of us by our Lord’s words suddenly puts this tide of enthusiasm to the test.

“…go your way. First be reconciled to your brother….” The “go” of preparation is to allow the Word of God to examine you closely. Your sense of heroic sacrifice is not good enough. The thing the Holy Spirit will detect in you is your nature that can never work in His service. And no one but God can detect that nature in you. Do you have anything to hide from God? If you do, then let God search you with His light. If there is sin in your life, don’t just admit it— confess it. Are you willing to obey your Lord and Master, whatever the humiliation to your right to yourself may be?

Never disregard a conviction that the Holy Spirit brings to you. If it is important enough for the Spirit of God to bring it to your mind, it is the very thing He is detecting in you. You were looking for some big thing to give up, while God is telling you of some tiny thing that must go. But behind that tiny thing lies the stronghold of obstinacy, and you say, “I will not give up my right to myself”— the very thing that God intends you to give up if you are to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

When you are joyful, be joyful; when you are sad, be sad. If God has given you a sweet cup, don’t make it bitter; and if He has given you a bitter cup, don’t try and make it sweet; take things as they come.  Shade of His Hand, 1226 L

# CCEL – 9/24/21

**It is good for me to draw near to God.**—[PSA. 73:28.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.73.html" \l "Ps.73.28)

Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.—A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.—Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.—Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us: . . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

[Psa. 26:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.26.html" \l "Ps.26.8). -[Psa. 84:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.84.html" \l "Ps.84.10). -[Psa. 65:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.65.html" \l "Ps.65.4).[Lam. 3:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.25). -[Isa. 30:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.30.html" \l "Isa.30.18).[Heb. 10:19,20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.19),[22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.22).

“For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.” [Ezra 8:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezra.8.html" \l "Ezra.8.22)

A convoy on many accounts would have been desirable for the pilgrim band, but a holy shame-facedness would not allow Ezra to seek one. He feared lest the heathen king should think his professions of faith in God to be mere hypocrisy, or imagine that the God of Israel was not able to preserve his own worshippers. He could not bring his mind to lean on an arm of flesh in a matter so evidently of the Lord, and therefore the caravan set out with no visible protection, guarded by him who is the sword and shield of his people. It is to be feared that few believers feel this holy jealousy for God; even those who in a measure walk by faith, occasionally mar the lustre of their life by craving aid from man. It is a most blessed thing to have no props and no buttresses, but to stand upright on the Rock of Ages, upheld by the Lord alone. Would any believers seek state endowments for their Church, if they remembered that the Lord is dishonoured by their asking Caesar’s aid? as if the Lord could not supply the needs of his own cause! Should we run so hastily to friends and relations for assistance, if we remembered that the Lord is magnified by our implicit reliance upon his solitary arm? My soul, wait thou only upon God. “But,” says one, “are not means to be used?” Assuredly they are; but our fault seldom lies in their neglect: far more frequently it springs out of foolishly believing in them instead of believing in God. Few run too far in neglecting the creature’s arm; but very many sin greatly in making too much of it. Learn, dear reader, to glorify the Lord by leaving means untried, if by using them thou wouldst dishonour the name of the Lord.

# Word Live – 9/24/21

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

# Scripture Union – 9/24/21

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

# Today in the Word – 9/24/21

# Godly Sorrow

**Read:** [**2 Corinthians 6:14-7:16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+6%3a14-7%3a16)

### **Warning Against Idolatry**

14Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15What harmony is there between Christ and Belial[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%206&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28914b)]? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will live with them  
    and walk among them,  
and I will be their God,  
    and they will be my people.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%206&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28915c)]

17Therefore,

“Come out from them  
    and be separate,  
says the Lord.  
Touch no unclean thing,  
    and I will receive you.”[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%206&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28916d)]

18And,

“I will be a Father to you,  
    and you will be my sons and daughters,  
says the Lord Almighty.”[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%206&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28917e)]

7 Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

### **Paul’s Joy Over the Church’s Repentance**

2Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. 3I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. 4I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

5For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. 6But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

8Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— 9yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 11See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. 12So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. 13By all this we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. 14I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. 15And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. 16I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [2 Corinthians 6:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%206&version=NIV#en-NIV-28914) Greek Beliar, a variant of Belial
2. [2 Corinthians 6:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%206&version=NIV#en-NIV-28915) Lev. 26:12; Jer. 32:38; Ezek. 37:27
3. [2 Corinthians 6:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%206&version=NIV#en-NIV-28916) Isaiah 52:11; Ezek. 20:34,41
4. [2 Corinthians 6:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%206&version=NIV#en-NIV-28917) 2 Samuel 7:14; 7:8

In one of his fables, Aesop told the story of a farmer who wanted to purchase a new donkey and took it home to test it out first. But when the animal chose a place next to the barn’s laziest beast, the farmer promptly returned it to the original owner. “I don’t need to test it any further,” the farmer said. “I could see the sort of beast he is from the companion he chose for himself.” Aesop’s moral: “A person is known by the company they keep.”

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 2 Corinthians 7:10

Paul made a similar point when he urged the Corinthians to separate themselves from those who opposed his teaching. To support his point, he asked five questions and quoted several Old Testament passages that emphasized the need for God’s people to distinguish themselves from unbelievers (6:14–7:1). This strong language reveals that the traits of the so-called “super-apostles” who had stirred the Corinthians against Paul were more than differences of personality and style. They were morally compromised false teachers who opposed the gospel.

However, not everyone had turned against Paul. The apostle was encouraged by news from Titus that many in the church had repented (7:8–9). The apostle provides a helpful description of true repentance in verses 10–11. There is more to repentance than feeling bad about what we have done. There is sorrow, but it is combined with a turning to God for forgiveness and an earnest desire to put things right. This kind of repentance is not a “guilt trip” but a prompting evoked by the Holy Spirit (John 16:8). In other words, the mark of godly sorrow is that it causes us to move toward God instead of away from Him.

**Apply the Word**

Do you feel regret over your sin? The sorrow you feel will do you no good unless it moves you to look to Christ for forgiveness. Repentance is a turning from sin to God. You may regret your sins, but nobody regrets true repentance.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, as we grieve over our sins, we ask that You help us direct this grief not into efforts to alleviate our sense of guilt but into repenting and making things right with You.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/24/21

# The Whatevers

 **Read:** [**Philippians 4:1–9**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%204.1%E2%80%939)

### **Closing Appeal for Steadfastness and Unity**

4 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

2I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

### **Final Exhortations**

4Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Brothers and sisters, whatever . . . is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. [Philippians 4:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%204.8)

Every Friday evening, the national news my family views concludes the broadcast by highlighting an uplifting story. In contrast to the rest of the news, it’s always a breath of fresh air. A recent “good” Friday story focused on a reporter who had suffered from COVID-19, fully recovered, and then decided to donate plasma to possibly help others in their fight against the virus. At the time, the jury was still out on how effective antibodies would be. But when many of us felt helpless and even in light of the discomfort of donating plasma (via needle), she felt it “was a small price to pay for the potential payoff.”

After that Friday broadcast, my family and I felt encouraged—dare I say hope-filled. That’s the power of the “whatevers” Paul described in [Philippians 4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%204): “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable” (v. 8). Did Paul have in mind plasma donation? Of course not. But did he have in mind sacrificial actions on behalf of someone in need—in other words, Christlike behavior? I’ve no doubt the answer is yes.

But that hopeful news wouldn’t have had its full effect if it hadn’t been broadcast. It’s our privilege as witnesses to God’s goodness to look and listen for the “whatevers” all around us and then share that good news with others that they may be encouraged.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What’s a “whatever” story that’s encouraged you lately? Who might want or need to hear your story?

Father, I know that behind whatever is excellent and praiseworthy is You. I love You.

#### **Insight**

Joy is a recurring theme in Philippians (1:4, 25; 2:2, 29; 4:1). “Rejoice in the Lord always,” Paul says. “I will say it again: Rejoice!” (4:4). He prays with joy for his beloved brothers and sisters, rejoicing because of their growth in faith, their firm stand and union in Jesus in the midst of persecution (1:27–2:2), and their faithful partnership in the gospel work (1:5, 18). As he closes his short letter, Paul acknowledges their great concern for him (4:10, 14–18), describing the believers as his “joy and crown” (v. 1). He encourages them to rejoice even in unfavorable and difficult circumstances, for joy in Christ transcends circumstances. (Paul was imprisoned when he wrote this letter, 1:14.) He affirms that even if he’s killed for preaching the gospel, he’ll rejoice, and he commands the Philippian believers to rejoice as well (2:17–18).

By: [**K. T. Sim**](https://odb.org/author/ktsim/)

# God Calling – 9/24/21

# Learn of Me

Lord, to whom shall we go?  Thou has the words of eternal life.  John 6:68

Learn of no one but Me. Teachers are to point the way to Me.  After that you must accept Me, the Great Teacher.

The words of Eternal Life are all the words controlling your being, even controlling your temporal life.  Take these too from Me. Have no fear. Abide in Me and accept My ruling.

Be full of gratitude.  Wing up your prayers on Praise to Heaven.  Take all that happens as My planning.  All is well.  I have all prepared in My Love.  Let your heart sing.

But whom say ye that I am?  And Simon Peter answered and said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."  Matthew 16:15-16

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/25/21

# The “Go” of Relationship



Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. —[Matthew 5:41](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew%205:41&version=KJV)

Our Lord’s teaching can be summed up in this: the relationship that He demands for us is an impossible one unless He has done a supernatural work in us. Jesus Christ demands that His disciple does not allow even the slightest trace of resentment in his heart when faced with tyranny and injustice. No amount of enthusiasm will ever stand up to the strain that Jesus Christ will put upon His servant. Only one thing will bear the strain, and that is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ Himself— a relationship that has been examined, purified, and tested until only one purpose remains and I can truly say, “I am here for God to send me where He will.” Everything else may become blurred, but this relationship with Jesus Christ must never be.

The Sermon on the Mount is not some unattainable goal; it is a statement of what will happen in me when Jesus Christ has changed my nature by putting His own nature in me. Jesus Christ is the only One who can fulfill the Sermon on the Mount.

If we are to be disciples of Jesus, we must be made disciples supernaturally. And as long as we consciously maintain the determined purpose to be His disciples, we can be sure that we are not disciples. Jesus says, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you…” ([John 15:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:16)). That is the way the grace of God begins. It is a constraint we can never escape; we can disobey it, but we can never start it or produce it ourselves. We are drawn to God by a work of His supernatural grace, and we can never trace back to find where the work began. Our Lord’s making of a disciple is supernatural. He does not build on any natural capacity of ours at all. God does not ask us to do the things that are naturally easy for us— He only asks us to do the things that we are perfectly fit to do through His grace, and that is where the cross we must bear will always come.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 9/25/21

**Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.**—[JAS. 1:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.4)

Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.—We glory in tribulations: . . . knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.

It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.—Ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.—Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts.

[I Pet. 1:6,7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.6). -[Rom. 5:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.3).[Lam. 3:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.26). -[Heb. 10:34-36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.34). -[II Thes. 2:16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiThess.2.html" \l "iiThess.2.16).

“Just, and the justifier of him which believeth.” [Romans 3:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.3.html" \l "Rom.3.26)

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. Conscience accuses no longer. Judgment now decides for the sinner instead of against him. Memory looks back upon past sins, with deep sorrow for the sin, but yet with no dread of any penalty to come; for Christ has paid the debt of his people to the last jot and tittle, and received the divine receipt; and unless God can be so unjust as to demand double payment for one debt, no soul for whom Jesus died as a substitute can ever be cast into hell. It seems to be one of the very principles of our enlightened nature to believe that God is just; we feel that it must be so, and this gives us our terror at first; but is it not marvellous that this very same belief that God is just, becomes afterwards the pillar of our confidence and peace! If God be just, I, a sinner, alone and without a substitute, must be punished; but Jesus stands in my stead and is punished for me; and now, if God be just, I, a sinner, standing in Christ, can never be punished. God must change his nature before one soul, for whom Jesus was a substitute, can ever by any possibility suffer the lash of the law. Therefore, Jesus having taken the place of the believer—having rendered a full equivalent to divine wrath for all that his people ought to have suffered as the result of sin, the believer can shout with glorious triumph, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Not God, for he hath justified; not Christ, for he hath died, “yea rather hath risen again.” My hope lives not because I am not a sinner, but because I am a sinner for whom Christ died; my trust is not that I am holy, but that being unholy, he is my righteousness. My faith rests not upon what I am, or shall be, or feel, or know, but in what Christ is, in what he has done, and in what he is now doing for me. On the lion of justice the fair maid of hope rides like a queen.

# Word Live – 9/25/21

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

# Scripture Union – 9/25/21

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

# Today in the Word – 9/25/21

# The Grace of Giving

**Read:** [**2 Corinthians 8**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+8)

### **The Collection for the Lord’s People**

8 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. 5And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. 6So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%208&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28940a)]—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

8I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

10And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. 11Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. 12For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

13Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, 15as it is written: “The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%208&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28948b)]

### **Titus Sent to Receive the Collection**

16Thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. 17For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. 18And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. 19What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 20We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. 21For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.

22In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. 23As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. 24Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [2 Corinthians 8:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%208&version=NIV#en-NIV-28940) Some manuscripts and in your love for us
2. [2 Corinthians 8:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%208&version=NIV#en-NIV-28948) Exodus 16:18

Some have criticized the church for talking too much about money. But Jesus made it clear that our attitude toward our finances is a spiritual matter. He urged His disciples to store up treasures in heaven, warning: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21).

See that you also excel in this grace of giving. 2 Corinthians 8:7

Paul calls giving a “grace” in today’s passage. For the Christian, giving is not a duty but a gift. The apostle did not command the Corinthians to participate in the offering for the poor believers in Jerusalem (v. 8). Instead, he encouraged them to follow the example of the Macedonian believers, who were poor themselves. They were so eager to share that they begged Paul (vv. 3–4). There is an edge in Paul’s observation that the Corinthians ought to “excel” in the grace of giving since they excel in the other gifts (v. 7). It may suggest that Corinthian commitment to participate in the offering had begun to waver.

The apostle wanted the Corinthians to understand that the offering was not intended to create hardship for the Corinthians so that others might be relieved. Instead, the goal was sufficiency—that there would be enough for everyone (v. 14). This standard was established by God when He provided manna in the wilderness (v. 15; Ex. 16:18). Paul was also concerned that the procedure for collecting and distributing these funds would be above board. Paul made the Corinthians aware of the need, urged them to give, and described how he wanted the money to be collected (see 1 Cor. 16:1–4). He ensured accountability by sending the money to Jerusalem by authorized representatives (2 Cor. 8:16–24).

**Apply the Word**

Recent financial scandals involving several high-profile churches can often be traced to irresponsible financial practices. A biblical approach to giving includes generosity as well as accountability. The church should take pains “to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man” (v. 20).

### **Pray with Us**

Lord God, we confess that everything we own belongs to You, and it is right to submit our finances and resources to You. Teach us the joy of giving and grant us discernment as we choose whom to support.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/25/21

# God Knows We Feel

### Today's Devotional**Read:** [**Psalm 42**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042) **[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14557a)**][**[**b**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14557b)**]**

#### **For the director of music. A maskil[**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14557c)**] of the Sons of Korah.**

1As the deer pants for streams of water,  
    so my soul pants for you, my God.  
2My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
    When can I go and meet with God?  
3My tears have been my food  
    day and night,  
while people say to me all day long,  
    “Where is your God?”  
4These things I remember  
    as I pour out my soul:  
how I used to go to the house of God  
    under the protection of the Mighty One[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14560d)]  
with shouts of joy and praise  
    among the festive throng.

5Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
    Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
    for I will yet praise him,  
    my Savior and my God.

6My soul is downcast within me;  
    therefore I will remember you  
from the land of the Jordan,  
    the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.  
7Deep calls to deep  
    in the roar of your waterfalls;  
all your waves and breakers  
    have swept over me.

8By day the Lord directs his love,  
    at night his song is with me—  
    a prayer to the God of my life.

9I say to God my Rock,  
    “Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I go about mourning,  
    oppressed by the enemy?”  
10My bones suffer mortal agony  
    as my foes taunt me,  
saying to me all day long,  
    “Where is your God?”

11Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
    Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
    for I will yet praise him,  
    my Savior and my God.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Psalm 42:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#en-NIV-14557) In many Hebrew manuscripts Psalms 42 and 43 constitute one psalm.
2. [Psalm 42:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#en-NIV-14557) In Hebrew texts 42:1-11 is numbered 42:2-12.
3. [Psalm 42:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#en-NIV-14557) Title: Probably a literary or musical term
4. [Psalm 42:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#en-NIV-14560) See Septuagint and Syriac; the meaning of the Hebrew for this line is uncertain.

By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life. [Psalm 42:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042.8)

Feeling overwhelmed, Sierra grieved her son’s fight with addiction. “I feel bad,” she said. “Does God think I have no faith because I can’t stop crying when I’m praying?”

“I don’t know what God thinks,” I said. “But I know He can handle real emotions. It’s not like He doesn’t know we feel.” I prayed and shed tears with Sierra as we pleaded for her son’s deliverance.

Scripture contains many examples of people wrestling with God while struggling. The writer of [Psalm 42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042) expresses a deep longing to experience the peace of God’s constant and powerful presence. He acknowledges his tears and his depression over the grief he’s endured. His inner turmoil ebbs and flows with confident praises, as he reminds himself of God’s faithfulness. Encouraging his “soul,” the psalmist writes, “Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God” (v. 11). He’s tugged back and forth between what he knows to be true about God and the undeniable reality of his overwhelming emotions.

God designed us in His image and with emotions. Our tears for others reveal deep love and compassion, not necessarily a lack of faith. We can approach God with raw wounds or old scars because He knows we feel. Each prayer, whether silent, sobbed, or shouted with confidence, demonstrates our trust in His promise to hear and care for us.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What emotion have you tried to hide from God? Why is it often hard to be honest with God about difficult or overwhelming emotions?

Unchanging Father, thank You for assuring me that You know I feel and need to process my ever-changing emotions.

#### **Insight**

Eleven psalms, including [Psalm 42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042), are attributed to “the Sons of Korah.” [Numbers 16:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2016.1%E2%80%933) identifies Korah as the leader of an insurrection in the days of Moses and Aaron that resulted in deaths by earthquake (vv. 31–33), fire (v. 35), and plague (vv. 46–50). Yet even though the earth literally opened up and swallowed the leaders and followers of this rebellion, Korah’s children weren’t wiped out (26:8–11). Responsible for the care of the sacred tent of worship, members of this family became worship leaders of Israel who gave us some of the most memorable words in the Psalms ([Psalms 42:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042.1); [46:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2046.1); [84:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2084.1)).

By: [**Mart DeHaan**](https://odb.org/author/martdehaan-2/)

# God Calling – 9/25/21

# Come and Stay

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.   Matthew 11:28

Yes, come for rest.  But stay for rest, too.  Stop all feverish haste and be calm and untroubled. Come unto Me, not only for petitions to be granted but for nearness to Me.

Be sure of My Help, be conscious of My Presence, and wait until My Rest fills your soul.

Rest knows no fear.  Rest knows no want.  Rest is strong, sure.  The rest of soft glades and peacefully flowing rivers, of strong, immovable hills.  Rest, and all you need to gain this rest is to come to Me. So come.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment.  He that feareth is not made perfect in love.  1 John 4:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/26/21

# The “Go” of Reconciliation



If you…remember that your brother has something against you… —[Matthew 5:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+5%3A23)

This verse says, “If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you….” It is not saying, “If you search and find something because of your unbalanced sensitivity,” but, “If you…remember….” In other words, if something is brought to your conscious mind by the Spirit of God— “First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” ([Matthew 5:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:24)). Never object to the intense sensitivity of the Spirit of God in you when He is instructing you down to the smallest detail.

“First be reconciled to your brother….” Our Lord’s directive is simple— “First be reconciled….” He says, in effect, “Go back the way you came— the way indicated to you by the conviction given to you at the altar; have an attitude in your mind and soul toward the person who has something against you that makes reconciliation as natural as breathing.” Jesus does not mention the other person— He says for you to go. It is not a matter of your rights. The true mark of the saint is that he can waive his own rights and obey the Lord Jesus.

“…and then come and offer your gift.” The process of reconciliation is clearly marked. First we have the heroic spirit of self-sacrifice, then the sudden restraint by the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit, and then we are stopped at the point of our conviction. This is followed by obedience to the Word of God, which builds an attitude or state of mind that places no blame on the one with whom you have been in the wrong. And finally there is the glad, simple, unhindered offering of your gift to God.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

To live a life alone with God does not mean that we live it apart from everyone else. The connection between godly men and women and those associated with them is continually revealed in the Bible, e.g., 1 Timothy 4:10.  Not Knowing Whither, 867 L

# CCEL – 9/26/21

**A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.**[DEUT. 32:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.32.html#Deut.32.4)

Him that judgeth righteously.—We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.—Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.—The soul that sinneth it shall die.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd.—The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.—Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.—Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.—The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.—Just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.—Justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

[I Pet. 2:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.23). -[II Cor. 5:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.10). -[Rom. 14:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.14.html" \l "Rom.14.12). -[Ezek. 18:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.18.html" \l "Ezek.18.4).[Zech. 13:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.13.html" \l "Zech.13.7).[Isa. 53:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html#Isa.53.6). -[Psa. 85:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.85.html" \l "Ps.85.10). -[Jas. 2:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.2.html" \l "Jas.2.13). -[Rom. 6:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.23).[Isa. 45:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.45.html" \l "Isa.45.21). -[Rom. 3:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.3.html#Rom.3.26). -[Rom. 3:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.3.html" \l "Rom.3.24).

“The myrtle trees that were in the bottom.” [Zechariah 1:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.1.html" \l "Zech.1.8)

The vision in this chapter describes the condition of Israel in Zechariah’s day; but being interpreted in its aspect towards us, it describes the Church of God as we find it now in the world. The Church is compared to a myrtle grove flourishing in a valley. It is hidden, unobserved, secreted; courting no honour and attracting no observation from the careless gazer. The Church, like her head, has a glory, but it is concealed from carnal eyes, for the time of her breaking forth in all her splendour is not yet come. The idea of tranquil security is also suggested to us: for the myrtle grove in the valley is still and calm, while the storm sweeps over the mountain summits. Tempests spend their force upon the craggy peaks of the Alps, but down yonder where flows the stream which maketh glad the city of our God, the myrtles flourish by the still waters, all unshaken by the impetuous wind. How great is the inward tranquility of God’s Church! Even when opposed and persecuted, she has a peace which the world gives not, and which, therefore, it cannot take away: the peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps the hearts and minds of God’s people. Does not the metaphor forcibly picture the peaceful, perpetual growth of the saints? The myrtle sheds not her leaves, she is always green; and the Church in her worst time still hath a blessed verdure of grace about her; nay, she has sometimes exhibited most verdure when her winter has been sharpest. She has prospered most when her adversities have been most severe. Hence the text hints at victory. The myrtle is the emblem of peace, and a significant token of triumph. The brows of conquerors were bound with myrtle and with laurel; and is not the Church ever victorious? Is not every Christian more than a conqueror through him that loved him? Living in peace, do not the saints fall asleep in the arms of victory?

# Word Live – 9/26/21

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

# Scripture Union – 9/26/21

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

# Today in the Word – 9/26/21

# The Rewards of Generosity

**Read:** [**2 Corinthians 9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+9)

9 There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord’s people. 2For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. 3But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. 4For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. 5So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

### **Generosity Encouraged**

6Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;  
    their righteousness endures forever.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%209&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28966a)]

10Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

12This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 13Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 14And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 15Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

#### **Footnotes**

1. [2 Corinthians 9:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%209&version=NIV#en-NIV-28966) Psalm 112:9

According to an apocryphal story, when someone asked John D. Rockefeller how much money is enough, he replied, “Just a little more.” Today’s passage reveals that the secret to Christian giving is not the amount of money one has but an awareness of God’s generosity. Those who give recognize that God has supplied all they possess (v. 10). Our giving begins with God’s gift given to us.

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:15

In these verses, Paul outlines the marks of Spirit-motivated giving. First, it is freely offered. Verse 7 explains: “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” If we think that by our giving we can manipulate God into giving us more, we have missed the point. However, Paul notes that those who give will find that God will provide for them as well (vv. 8–11).

Second, the aim of Christian giving is not prosperity but praise. We give so that others’ needs will be met and God will get the glory (vv. 12–13). Paul describes Christians who give as channels of divine generosity. Although the money may pass through our hands, ultimately, it is God who is doing the giving.

Third, those who are on the receiving end have something to offer as well. Although they may not be able to contribute financially, they can respond with grateful prayers (v. 14). Our generosity is not limited to money alone. Although money is important, many of the needs that people have lie outside the financial realm. They need friendship or encouragement. We can also be generous with our time, our praise, and our prayers.

**Apply the Word**

The greatest reward of giving is not measured in financial return. It is that we get to be a channel of God’s generosity to others. As the old song says, “Channels only, blessed Master, But with all Thy wondrous power. Flowing through us, Thou canst use us, Every day and every hour.”

### **Pray with Us**

“Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold. Take my intellect and use every power as thou shalt choose.” With the words of this classic hymn, we offer everything we have to You, Lord God.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/26/21

# Rest Well

 **Read:** [**Matthew 11:25–30**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2011.25%E2%80%9330)

### **The Father Revealed in the Son**

25At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. 26Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

27“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

28“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. [Matthew 11:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2011.28)

The clock blinked 1:55 a.m. Burdened by a late-night text conversation, sleep wasn’t coming. I unwound the mummy-like clutch of my tangled sheets and padded quietly to the couch. I Googled what to do to fall asleep but instead found what not to do: don’t take a nap or drink caffeine or work out late in the day. Check. Reading further on my tablet, I was advised not to use “screen time” late either. Oops. Texting hadn’t been a good idea. When it comes to resting well, there are lists of what not to do.

In the Old Testament, God handed down rules regarding what not to do on the Sabbath in order to embrace rest. In the New Testament, Jesus offered a new way. Rather than stressing regulations, Jesus called the disciples into relationship. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” ([Matthew 11:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2011.28)). In the preceding verse, Jesus pointed to His own ongoing relationship of oneness with His Father—the One He’s revealed to us. The provision of ongoing help Jesus enjoyed from the Father is one we can experience as well.

While we’re wise to avoid certain pastimes that can interrupt our sleep, resting well in Christ has more to do with relationship than regulation. I clicked my reader off and laid my burdened heart down on the pillow of Jesus’ invitation: “Come to me . . .”

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How does viewing rest as a relationship rather than a regulation change your view of rest? In what area of your life is Jesus calling you to rest in relationship with Him?

Dear Jesus, thank You for the rest You call me to in an ongoing relationship with You.

#### **Insight**

Implicit in [Matthew 11:25–30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2011.25%E2%80%9330) is the truth that we’re all under some type of “yoke,” that is, we each have a burden to bear in this world. Those who are “weary and burdened” (v. 28)—which at some point is all of us—have a choice to make. We can choose to remain under the yoke that comes from living in this world apart from God, or we can follow Jesus and wear His yoke. He assures us it’s easy and light (v. 30). That may be hard to believe as we encounter life’s many challenges, but choosing to run from God brings a far greater burden—one that leads ultimately to despair. Life will bring all kinds of burdens, but how much better to follow after Christ. He promises a peace that the world can’t give ([John 14:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.27)).

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

# God Calling – 9/26/21

# Serve All

I am among you as one that serveth.

Yes! remember to serve all.  Be ready to prove your Sonship by service.  Look on all you meet as guests in your Father's House, to be treated with Love, with all consideration, with gentleness.

As a servant of all think no work beneath you.  Be ever ready to do all you can for others.  Serve. Serve. Serve.

There is a gladness in service, a Joy in doing My Will for others, in being My expression of all good for them.

Remember that, when you serve others, you are acting for your Master and Lord who washed His disciples' feet.  So, in service for others, express your Love for Me.

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.  Matthew 20:27

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/27/21

# The “Go” of Renunciation



…someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." —[Luke 9:57](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209:57&version=KJV)

Our Lord’s attitude toward this man was one of severe discouragement, “for He knew what was in man” ([John 2:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+2:25)). We would have said, “I can’t imagine why He lost the opportunity of winning that man! Imagine being so cold to him and turning him away so discouraged!” Never apologize for your Lord. The words of the Lord hurt and offend until there is nothing left to be hurt or offended. Jesus Christ had no tenderness whatsoever toward anything that was ultimately going to ruin a person in his service to God. Our Lord’s answers were not based on some whim or impulsive thought, but on the knowledge of “what was in man.” If the Spirit of God brings to your mind a word of the Lord that hurts you, you can be sure that there is something in you that He wants to hurt to the point of its death.

[Luke 9:58](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209:58&version=KJV). These words destroy the argument of serving Jesus Christ because it is a pleasant thing to do. And the strictness of the rejection that He demands of me allows for nothing to remain in my life but my Lord, myself, and a sense of desperate hope. He says that I must let everyone else come or go, and that I must be guided solely by my relationship to Him. And He says, “…the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

[Luke 9:59](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209:59&version=KJV). This man did not want to disappoint Jesus, nor did he want to show a lack of respect for his father. We put our sense of loyalty to our relatives ahead of our loyalty to Jesus Christ, forcing Him to take last place. When your loyalties conflict, always obey Jesus Christ whatever the cost.

[Luke 9:61](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209:61&version=KJV). The person who says, “Lord, I will follow You, but…,” is the person who is intensely ready to go, but never goes. This man had reservations about going. The exacting call of Jesus has no room for good-byes; good-byes, as we often use them, are pagan, not Christian, because they divert us from the call. Once the call of God comes to you, start going and never stop.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Beware of pronouncing any verdict on the life of faith if you are not living it. Not Knowing Whither, 900 R

# CCEL – 9/27/21

**Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.**—[I PET. 5:6.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.6)

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see we beseech thee, we are all thy people.—Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.—It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

[Prov. 16:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.16.html" \l "Prov.16.5).[Isa. 64:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.64.html" \l "Isa.64.8). -[Jer. 31:18,19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.31.html" \l "Jer.31.18). -[Lam. 3:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.27).[Job 5:6,7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.5.html" \l "Job.5.6).

“Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!” [Deuteronomy 33:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.33.html" \l "Deut.33.29)

He who affirms that Christianity makes men miserable, is himself an utter stranger to it. It were strange indeed, if it made us wretched, for see to what a position it exalts us! It makes us sons of God. Suppose you that God will give all the happiness to his enemies, and reserve all the mourning for his own family? Shall his foes have mirth and joy, and shall his home-born children inherit sorrow and wretchedness? Shall the sinner, who has no part in Christ, call himself rich in happiness, and shall we go mourning as if we were penniless beggars? No, we will rejoice in the Lord always, and glory in our inheritance, for we “have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” The rod of chastisement must rest upon us in our measure, but it worketh for us the comfortable fruits of righteousness; and therefore by the aid of the divine Comforter, we, the “people saved of the Lord,” will joy in the God of our salvation. We are married unto Christ; and shall our great Bridegroom permit his spouse to linger in constant grief? Our hearts are knit unto him: we are his members, and though for awhile we may suffer as our Head once suffered, yet we are even now blessed with heavenly blessings in him. We have the earnest of our inheritance in the comforts of the Spirit, which are neither few nor small. Inheritors of joy forever, we have foretastes of our portion. There are streaks of the light of joy to herald our eternal sunrising. Our riches are beyond the sea; our city with firm foundations lies on the other side the river; gleams of glory from the spirit-world cheer our hearts, and urge us onward. Truly is it said of us, “Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?”

# Word Live – 9/27/21

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

# Scripture Union – 9/27/21

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

# Today in the Word – 9/27/21

# Humble Brag

**Read:** [**2 Corinthians 10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+10)

### **Paul’s Defense of His Ministry**

10 By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am “timid” when face to face with you, but “bold” toward you when away! 2I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. 3For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 6And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

7You are judging by appearances.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2010&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28979a)] If anyone is confident that they belong to Christ, they should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as they do. 8So even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. 9I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters. 10For some say, “His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.” 11Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present.

12We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. 13We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you. 14We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ. 15Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand, 16so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in someone else’s territory. 17But, “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2010&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28989b)] 18For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [2 Corinthians 10:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2010&version=NIV#en-NIV-28979) Or Look at the obvious facts
2. [2 Corinthians 10:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2010&version=NIV#en-NIV-28989) Jer. 9:24

A while back, I saw a post on Facebook that began with the letters IMHO. When I looked up the meaning, I discovered that it stands for the phrase “In my humble opinion.” I’ve noticed, however, that often when people begin their comments this way, what follows doesn’t seem very humble.

Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord. 2 Corinthians 10:17

Paul’s opponents in Corinth felt that he had a credibility problem. They accused him of being timid when he was face to face with them but confident when he was away (v. 1). The real problem was that they were superficial in their assessment of him. The language of verse 7 is ambiguous. It might be a statement about the Corinthians themselves. If so, the apostle accuses them of “judging by appearances.” Or it might be a command, demanding that his critics consider the proof of his ministry that was plainly in view.

Paul’s ministry offered all the credentials he needed: “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (v. 5). The Corinthians themselves were proof of the validity of his ministry (v. 13). Paul was not boasting as he reviewed the facts of his own ministry. He was merely stating facts.

Those false teachers who opposed Paul arrogantly claimed that he did not measure up to their standard. But this was because they had rigged the grading scale in their own favor. They measured themselves by themselves and compared themselves with themselves (v. 12). The only standard that really counts is the standard of God’s approval: “For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends” (v. 18).

**Apply the Word**

Be wary of teachers who talk about themselves all the time. This is often a sign that someone is more interested in themselves than the gospel. Bragging, arrogance, and bullying are not marks of “one whom the Lord commends” (v. 18).

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, protect Your sheep from the thrall of leaders who speak with charisma but without conviction. Make us wise to see through those who promote themselves instead of You. In all of this keep us humble.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 9/27/21

# Unlimited

 **Read:** [**Isaiah 40:21–28**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2040.21%E2%80%9328)

21Do you not know?  
    Have you not heard?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
    Have you not understood since the earth was founded?  
22He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,  
    and its people are like grasshoppers.  
He stretches out the heavens like a canopy,  
    and spreads them out like a tent to live in.  
23He brings princes to naught  
    and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.  
24No sooner are they planted,  
    no sooner are they sown,  
    no sooner do they take root in the ground,  
than he blows on them and they wither,  
    and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

25“To whom will you compare me?  
    Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One.  
26Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens:  
    Who created all these?  
He who brings out the starry host one by one  
    and calls forth each of them by name.  
Because of his great power and mighty strength,  
    not one of them is missing.

27Why do you complain, Jacob?  
    Why do you say, Israel,  
“My way is hidden from the Lord;  
    my cause is disregarded by my God”?  
28Do you not know?  
    Have you not heard?  
The Lord is the everlasting God,  
    the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He will not grow tired or weary,  
    and his understanding no one can fathom.

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary. [Isaiah 40:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2040.28)

There I am, sitting in the shopping mall food court, my body tense and my stomach knotted over looming work deadlines. As I unwrap my burger and take a bite, people rush around me, fretting over their own tasks. How limited we all are, I think to myself, limited in time, energy, and capacity.

I consider writing a new to-do list and prioritizing the urgent tasks, but as I pull out a pen another thought enters my mind: a thought of One who is infinite and unlimited, who effortlessly accomplishes all that He desires.

This God, Isaiah says, can measure the oceans in the hollow of His hand and collect the dust of the earth in a basket ([Isaiah 40:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2040.12)). He names the stars of the heavens and directs their path (v. 26), knows the rulers of the world and oversees their careers (v. 23), considers islands mere specks of dust and the nations like drops in the sea (v. 15). “To whom will you compare me?” He asks (v. 25). “The Lord is the everlasting God,” Isaiah replies. “He will not grow tired or weary” (v. 28).

Stress and strain are never good for us, but on this day they deliver a powerful lesson. The unlimited God is not like me. He accomplishes everything He wishes. I finish my burger, and then pause once more. And silently worship.

By:  [Sheridan Voysey](https://odb.org/author/svoysey/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How will you draw on God’s unlimited strength today? (vv. 29–31). In the midst of your tasks and deadlines, how will you pause to worship the infinite One?

Loving God, You’re the unlimited One who’ll accomplish all You’ve promised.

#### **Insight**

Isaiah contains the fullest revelation of Christ in the Old Testament. So much so, that this book is sometimes referred to as the “gospel according to Isaiah.” In [Isaiah 40](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2040), the author paints a majestic picture of God as the powerful Creator and Sustainer of the heavens and earth. Compared to Him, we’re “like grasshoppers” (v. 22). Yet even though He can bring “the rulers of this world to nothing” (v. 23), like the starry host, He calls those who love and follow Him by name (v. 26; see 43:1). This holy, eternal “high and exalted One . . . [lives] with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the . . . heart of the contrite” (57:15).

By: [**Alyson Kieda**](https://odb.org/author/akieda/)

# God Calling – 9/27/21

# Divine Restraint

Is My Hand shortened that it cannot save?  No! My power to save increases as your power to understand My Salvation increases.  So from Strength to Strength, from Power to Power, we go in Union.

Limitless is My miracle-working Power in the Universe, though it has limitations in each individual life, but only to the extent of the lack of vision of that individual.  There is no limit to My Power to save.  Also there is no limit to My desire and longing to save.  My Hand is not shortened and it is "stretched out still," longing and waiting to be allowed to bless and help and save.

Think how tenderly I respect the right of each individual soul.  Never forcing upon it My Help, My Salvation.  Perhaps in all My suffering for humanity that is the hardest, the restraining of the Divine Impatience and longing to help, until the call of the soul gives Me My right to act.

Think of Love shown in this. Comfort My waiting, loving, longing Heart by claiming My Help, Guidance, and Miracle-working Power.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.  Isaiah 9:7